Iowa Research Online
The University of Iowa's Institutional Repository

University of Iowa
Iowa Research Online

Theses and Dissertations

Spring 2015

Land, power and social relations in northeastern ZImbabwe from precolonial times to the 1950s

Admire Mseba
University of Iowa

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.uiowa.edu/etd

Part of the History Commons

Copyright © 2015 Admire Mseba

This dissertation is available at Iowa Research Online: https://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/5575

Recommended Citation
Mseba, Admire. "Land, power and social relations in northeastern ZImbabwe from precolonial times to the 1950s." PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) thesis, University of Iowa, 2015.
https://doi.org/10.17077/etd.ryqwczw9

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.uiowa.edu/etd

Part of the History Commons

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

LAND, POWER AND SOCIAL RELATIONS IN NORTHEASTERN ZIMBABWE FROM PRECOLONIAL TIMES TO THE 1950S

by

Admire Mseba

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in History
in the
Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

May 2015

Thesis Supervisor: Professor James L. Giblin

المنارة للاستشارات

www.manaraa.com

Copyright by

ADMIRE MSEBA

2015

All Rights Reserved

المنارة للاستشارات

www.manaraa.com

Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

PH.D. THESIS

This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

ADMIRE MSEBA

has been approved by the Examining Committee for
the thesis requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy degree
in History at the May 2015 graduation.

Thesis Committee: ___________________________________
James L. Giblin, Thesis Supervisor

____
Jeffrey L. Cox

____
Michel Gobat

____
Catherine Komisaruk

____
Edward A Miner

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

To the memory of my father, Elisha Nemanga Mseba and my siblings Alford and Nomsa, for whom this would have been a cause for celebration, but came too late; to Precious, Admire Chikomborero, mom, and my siblings.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

[W]e, in Zimbabwe, understand only too well…that land comes first before all else, and that all else grows from and off it. This is the one asset that not only defines the Zimbabwean personality and demarcates sovereignty but also that has a direct bearing on the fortunes of the poor and prospects for their immediate empowerment and sustainable development. Indeed, ours is an agrarian economy, an imperative that renders the issue of access to land paramount.

Robert G.
Mugabe, President,
Republic of Zimbabwe,
Statement
delivered at the World
Summit on Sustainable
Development (WSSD),
Johannesburg, 2 September
2002

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the process of preparing for this dissertation, I incurred many personal debts. At the risk of forgetting some, I would like to express my gratitude to the many institutions and individuals whose support enabled me to complete this study. I would not have completed my graduate studies at the University of Iowa without the financial assistance that the Department of History offered me through a number of teaching and research assistantships. I thank the faculty and staff in the Department for this wonderful opportunity. I thank the following institutions at the University of Iowa for providing the financial support that enabled me to carry out research in Zimbabwe: The Department of History, for a Laurence Lafore Fellowship; the Graduate College, for a T Anne Cleary International Dissertation Research Fellowship and a Graduate College Summer Fellowship and the Executive Council for Graduate and Professional Studies, for a Research Grant. I also thank the Graduate College for the Ada Louisa Ballard and Seashore Dissertation Year Fellowship award. The fellowship enabled me to concentrate on writing my dissertation. Without it, I would have taken a much longer time to complete this dissertation than I did and for this I am very thankful.

I am also thankful to the staff at the institutions where I conducted research for this dissertation. I appreciate the help I received from the archivists and staff at the National Archives of Zimbabwe. I extend my thanks to Livingstone Muchefa, Tafadzwa Chigodora, George Bishi, Alfred Chikomba and all the members of staff for the immense help they provided at this magnificent institution. I am very thankful to Father Steven Buckland, the Provincial Superior of the Jesuit Province of Zimbabwe, and Father Anthony Bex, the Librarian at the Jesuits Archives, Garnett House, Harare, for granting

www.manaraa.com

me permission to consult their Archives. At the University of Iowa Library, I received immense help from the inter-library Loan staff and from Dr. Edward Miner, the librarian for African studies.

I am especially grateful to my oral informants in Zimbabwe. Without their stories, it was going to be difficult for me to reconstruct the narrative of land and power in the precolonial period. Many of them left their important businesses to attend to my questions about matters of the past. I left some of my interviewees' homesteads with kernels of maize, baskets (*tswanda*) of ground nuts and *madhumbe*. Through their hospitality, these villagers not only fed me intellectually but also gave me something to fill my stomach.

I owe a huge intellectual debt to my Advisor, Professor James L Giblin. Professor Giblin challenged me to think critically and to strive to write with clarity. He read and commented on numerous draft chapters and saved me from many errors of substance and style. I also thank members of my dissertation committee: Professors Jeffrey L Cox, Michel Gobat, Catherine Komisaruk and Dr. Edward A Miner. I also learned a lot from Professors Laura Gotkowitz and Elke Stockreter and would like to extend my gratitude to them.

My academic journey began in the Department of Economic History at the University of Zimbabwe. The Department hosted me when I returned to conduct research in 2012. I am thankful to my lecturers: Dr. J.P Mtisi, Dr V.E.M. Machingaidze, Dr. Pius Nyambara, the late Mr. Government Phiri and the other members of the Department for their support over the years. Joseph Mujere of the History Department at the University of Zimbabwe read drafts of Chapters Two and Three and offered very valuable comments. I extend my thanks to him. My colleagues, Albertus K Onyiego, Nathaniel

للاستشارات المنارة
www.manaraa.com

Chimhete, Aldrin Tinashe Magaya and Joseph Jakarasi helped me in various ways and to them I say thank you.

My family has carried me through all the years that I have spent in school. For the support that you gave me over the years, I say thank you to my late father, my mother, and siblings, Happias, Alford (may your soul rest in peace), Abinel, Afios and your spouses and kids. To my wife, Precious, and son, Admire Chikomborero, words fail me. I am very grateful for your support.

Despite the support I received from various institutions and individuals, they are, in no way, responsible for the statements and judgments contained in this dissertation. I, alone, bear responsibility for the errors and shortcomings in this study.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the history of land inequality. Historians have long assumed that unequal distribution of land in Zimbabwe was a consequence of colonial rule. I show that unequal distribution of land long predated colonialism, and that the interaction between pre-existing and new forms of inequality fundamentally shaped the colonial experience.

I begin with basic perspectives from environmental and agrarian history. I emphasize that access to land has determined whether Africans will be able to obtain subsistence, but that productive land is always a relatively scarce resource. I look very closely at the differences in soil productivity within particular landscapes, micro-environments and even individual tracts. Such differences in soil quality and the resulting scarcity of the most productive lands, I argue, provoked competition for land long before shortages caused by colonial land policies.

I situate this competition within the intimate social settings of households, kinships and, after the imposition of British rule in 1890, farms and mission stations. In them, I find political and social dynamics which, together with colonial rule, created inequality among Africans and contributed to unequal access to land. They include gender, kinship, status and generation. Through an analysis of stories of precolonial migration and settlement, I examine claims to political and ritual control over territory made by chiefs, spirit mediums and 'first-comers'. Colonial land alienation deepened this competition, while the contingencies of colonial administration often forced officials to relate to European settlers in ways that opened opportunities for Africans to contest their subordinated access to land.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the history of access to land. Historians have long assumed that unequal distribution of land in Zimbabwe was a consequence of colonial rule. I show that unequal distribution of land long predated colonialism, and that the interaction between pre-existing and new forms of inequality fundamentally shaped the colonial experience.

I begin with basic perspectives from environmental and agrarian history. I emphasize that access to land has determined whether Africans will be able to obtain subsistence, but that productive land is always a relatively scarce resource. I look very closely at the differences in soil productivity within particular landscapes, micro-environments and even individual tracts. Such differences in soil quality and the resulting scarcity of the most productive lands, I argue, provoked competition for land long before shortages caused by colonial land policies.

I situate this competition within the intimate social settings of households, kinships and, after the imposition of British rule in 1890, farms and mission stations. In them, I find political and social dynamics which, together with colonial rule, created inequality among Africans and contributed to unequal access to land. They include gender, kinship, status and generation. Through an analysis of stories of precolonial migration and settlement, I examine claims to political and ritual control over territory made by chiefs, spirit mediums and 'first-comers'. Colonial land alienation deepened this competition, while the contingencies of colonial administration often forced officials to relate to European settlers in ways that opened opportunities for Africans to contest their subordinated access to land.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES………………………………………………………… xi

LIST OF FIGURES…………………………………………………… xii

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ……………………………………… xiii

GLOSSARY OF TERMS…………………………………………… xiv

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: LAND, POWER AND SOCIAL RELATIONS FROM PRECOLONIAL TIMES TO THE 1950S……………… 1

Introduction……………………………………………………… 1
Land and Power in Precolonial Africa……………………….…… 5
Racialized Land; Racialized Narratives……………………………7
African Social Organization, Land Tenure and Power………………10
Northeastern Zimbabwe: Place, People and Landscape………………… 15
The Place and its People…………………………………………… 15
The Landscape……………………………………………………… 20
Sources and Methods………………………………………………… 27
Dissertation Outline…………………………………………………….. 33

CHAPTER 2: MIGRATION, KINSHIP, TRIBUTE AND TERITORY: LAND AND POLITICAL IMAGINATIONS IN PRECOLONIAL NORTHEASTERN ZIMBABWE, *c*.1560- 1890……………………………… 38

Introduction…………………………………………………… 38
Migration, Kinship and Territorial Claims: Claims Making to Land and Power in Zimbabwe's Eastern Highlands from *c*.1560-1890…………….. 40
Kinship, Tribute, and Territory: The Politics of Claims Making to Land and Power on the Central Watershed, *c*.1700-1890……………………… 58
Marangeni: Gender, Kinship and Territory…………………………… 68
Contesting Chiefly Hegemony over Land in Northeastern Zimbabwe…… 75
Conclusion……………………………………………………………79

CHAPTER 3: LIVELIHOODS, SOCIAL RELATIONS AND LAND: THE MICRO-OLITICS OF LAND AND POWER IN PRECOLONIALNORTHEASTERN ZIMBABWE……………………… ….. 81

Introduction……………………………………………………………. 81
The Historical Basis for Competition and Control over Productive Land in Precolonial Northeastern Zimbabwe…………………………………… 83
Belonging, Social Relations and Access to Land………………………… 102
Cropping Systems, Gender and Differential Access to Land…………….. 111

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Retaining Claims to the Land.. 120
Conclusion...128

CHAPTER 4: "SPAWNING CONFLICTS, EMASCULATING POWER?" COLONIAL RULE AND THE POLTICS OF LAND IN RURAL NORTHEASTERN ZIMBABWE, 1890-1950s...... 129

Introduction.. 129
Colonial Rule and the Fate of Precolonial Elites, 1890-1898............... 131
Law, Practice and the Politics of Authority over Land, 1898-1930s....... 135
Administrative Intervention, Intra-African Conflicts and the Challenges of Rural Rule.. 142
The Politics of Land, *c.*1927 to the 1950s...................................... 151
Competing Religious Practices: Christians, Chiefs and Power over Land.. 159
Conclusion.. 165

CHAPTER 5: COLONIAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE, STATE INTERVENTION AND THE SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF ACCESS TO LAND, 1890-1950S.. 166
Introduction... 166
Socio-Economic Change, Agricultural Innovation, and Differential Access to Land, 1890s-1920s..168
State Intervention, Local Conflicts and Social Dynamics of Land, 1930s-1950s... 187
Colonial Intervention, the Language of Land Tenure and the Social Reality of Landholding... 198
Conclusion.. 213

CHAPTER 6: LIFE IN THE CREVICIES OF COLONIAL POWER: 'SQUATTERS', TENANTS, LANDLORDS AND THE STATE, 1890-c.1950.. 215
Introduction... 215
The Making of 'Squatters'... 217
The Contradictions of Colonial Power and the Experiences of African 'Squatters'... 227
Contesting Power, Negotiating Access to Land: African Initiative and the Politics of Tenancy.. 236
'Land for Souls; Souls for Land?' Missionary Landlords, African Tenants... 246
Segregation, Environmentalism and the Changing Fortunes of African Tenants: 1930s-1950s.. 254
Conclusion.. 259

CONCLUSION.. 260

BIBLIOGRAPHY... 270

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

LIST OF TABLES

Table 5.1 African owned Ploughs and the Estimated Number of Africans resident in each of the five Districts of Goromonzi (Salisbury), Marandellas, Makoni, Umtali and Inyanga from 1909 to 1922………………………………………………………….. 174

المنارة للاستشارات

www.manaraa.com

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1. Map of Zimbabwe showing contemporary administrative districts and the area of study…………………………………………….…………… 17

Figure 1.2. Picture showing the landscape in Makoni near Rusape............. 24

Figure 1.3. Picture showing the landscape of the Eastern Highlands in Zimunya Communal Lands………………………………………………….. 26

Figure 5.1. Master Farmer Certificate awarded to an African farmer in Marandellas district………………………………………………………. 192

Figure 5.2. Master of Tillage Certificate awarded to an African farmer in Marandellas district………………. ………………………………………. 193

Figure 6.1 Map showing surveyed farms and reserves in Umtali, Inyanga and Makoni districts in 1901……………………………………………… 221

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BSAC:	British South Africa Company
BSAP:	British South Africa Police
FTLRP:	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
ITCZ:	Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone
NAD:	Native Affairs Department
NADA:	Native Affairs Department Annual
NLHA:	Native Land Husbandry Act.
ZANU (PF):	Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front).

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Churu:	*undertaker*
Dunhu:	*ward*
Gura:	Formerly cultivated land left to fallow
Jambanja:	violence or angry argument
kutema rupango:	Putting the first peg during the construction of a new homestead.
Makunakuna:	incest
Maropa:	Fine paid to the chief by a family if a member committed murder.
Masadunhu/Machinda	Headmen
Madhumbe:	*Colocosia esculenta*.
Madzisekuru:	uncles/Grandfathers
Mbuya:	grandmother
Mhunga:	pearl millet
Mhondoro:	Territorial Spirit Medium
Muchinda/sadunhu:	Headman
Mukwerera:	rain-making ceremonies
Muzukuru (Pl. Vazukuru)	nephew(s)/sister's son(s)
Mvura:	Rian/Water
Nhimbe/ hoka/ humwe:	a communal work party
Njera/rukweza:	finger millet
Nyimo:	groundnuts
Roora/Lobola:	bridewealth
Tsenza:	*Plectran thus esculentus*
Vlei:	Wetland
Zvidzidzo:	lessons

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: LAND, POWER AND SOCIAL RELATIONS IN NORTHEASTERN ZIMBABWE FROM PRECOLONIAL TIMES TO THE 1950S.

Introduction

Land occupies a central place in the lives of Zimbabweans. Land, noted Zimbabwe's President, Robert Mugabe, "is the one asset that not only defines the Zimbabwean personality and demarcates sovereignty but also that has a direct bearing on the fortunes of the poor and prospects for their immediate empowerment and sustainable development." Zimbabwe's, he added, "is an agrarian economy, an imperative that renders the issue of access to land paramount. Inequitable access to land is at the heart of poverty, food insecurity and lack of development in Zimbabwe."[1]

This dissertation, tells the history of inequitable access to land and the power relations that underline it from the second half of the sixteenth century to the 1950s. It discusses the relationships among old forms of inequality based on kinship, gender, generation and status together with colonial policies and land inequality among the African inhabitants of northeastern Zimbabwe (see Figure 1.1). The study rests on the premise that contestations over land were contestations over multiple forms of power. The asymmetries of power within households, kin groups, mission stations, farms and the wider society all determined who could or could not access land. This power was articulated in many forms of exclusion and inclusion including those of gender, generation, kinship, status, race and class. The historical actors that form the subject of

[1] Statement by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe Comrade R.G. Mugabe, on the Occasion of the World summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Johannesburg, 2 September 2002, http://www.un.org/events/wssd/statements/zimbabweE.htm, Accessed on 7 January 2015.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

this study—the African inhabitants of northeastern Zimbabwe together with the Europeans with whom they interacted from the late nineteenth century, used all of these tools of articulating difference and negotiating power over land and people. They appropriated generation, gender, kinship, status, race and class contingently to gain access or to take control over land at the expense of others.

By examining conflicts over land as contestations over multiple forms of power over the *longue durée*, I resist three deeply rooted tendencies in discussions of access to land both in Zimbabwe and in other parts of the former colonial world. The first tendency is to argue that, in the precolonial period, land was abundant and hence it was not a subject of contest and control, and that the scarce factor of production was labor. This ignored the climatological, agronomic and social factors that informed how precolonial families farmed and lived. By paying attention to these factors, I demonstrate that precolonial societies understood that cultivable land suitable to sustain an agricultural economy was, in fact, scarce, hence the employment of gender, kinship, status and generation as ways of excluding and including others from the resource.

The second tendency is to treat the problem of land scarcity as something that was created by colonial land policies and only relates to questions of colonial land grabbing, economic development, race relations, nationalism and state-making.[2] President Mugabe

---

[2] See for example, the discussions in Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977, Henry V Moyana, *The Political Economy of Land in Zimbabwe* Gweru: Mambo Press, 2002 (first published in 1984); Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla Warfare: A Comparative Study,* London: James Currey, 1985; Kenneth D Manungo, "The Role Peasants Played in the Zimbabwe War of Liberation with Special Emphasis on Chiweshe," Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Ohio University, 1991; Joyce M. Chadya, Missionary Land Ownership: The Case of Catholics at Chishawasha," Unpublished MA Dissertation, University of Zimbabwe, p 18. Joseph Hanlon, Jenneatte Manjengwa and Teresa Smart, *Zimbabwe Takes Back its Land*, Boulder and London, Kumarian Press, 2013; Prosper B Matondi, *Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform*, London, Zed Books, 2012; Ian Scoones *etal*, *Zimbabwe's Land Reform: Myths and Realities*, Suffolk,

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

summed up this thinking. "In our situation in Zimbabwe," he said, "this fundamental question has pitted the black majority who are the right-holders, and, therefore, primary stakeholders, to our land against an obdurate and internationally well-connected racial minority, largely of British descent and brought in and sustained by British colonialism. Economically," he maintained, "we are an occupied country, 22 years after our independence."[3] This, I argue, is a diagnosis that only partially identifies the underlying power relations that have produced unequal access to land and is based on an erroneous belief that, in precolonial times, land was abundant. By emphasizing colonial land scarcity and conflicts over land between European settlers backed by a colonial state and the indigenous Africans, this trope also discourages an examination of conflicts over land within African and settler communities.

While colonial dispossession contributed to land inequality in twentieth century Zimbabwe, it was one among many factors that led to disparities in landholding. Access to land also depended on one's standing in relation to gender, generation, status and kinship. These factors predated and outlived colonial rule. Even the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) that the Zimbabwean government implemented at the beginning of the millennium left these older forms of inequality intact. While land reform has the potential to improve the livelihoods of beneficiaries, it neither addressed inequities in access to land based on gender, age, status, and class, nor extinguished

---

James Currey, 2010, Sam Moyo and Walter Chambati (eds), *Land and Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe: Beyond White-Settler Capitalism*, Dakar, CODESRIA, 2013.

[3] Statement by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe Comrade R.G. Mugabe. See also Terence Ranger, "Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: The Struggles over the Past in Zimbabwe." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, No.30, Vol. 2, 2004; Jocelyn Alexander, "The Historiography of Land in Zimbabwe: Strengths, Silences and Questions." *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies,* Vol.8, No. 2, 2007, p 183; Blessing Miles Tendi, *Making History in Mugabe's Zimbabwe: Politics, Intellectuals and the Media*, Oxford, Peter Lang, 2010.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

multiple forms of conflicts based on locality and tradition.[4] In fact, the pattern of land allocation during the post-2000 Fast Track Land Reform Programme also points to a connection between the politics of identity, belonging and access to land. Amongst the casualties of this land reform were farm workers. Many of them were of Malawian, Zambian and Mozambican origins.[5] Moreover, fifteen years after land reform dismantled the colonial legacy of racialized landholding, land invasions and evictions of villagers, allegedly at the instigation of politically powerful figures, headline Zimbabwean newspapers.[6] These developments force us to rethink the narrative of land inequalities and power beyond those predicated on colonial domination and race.

The third tendency is to see African land holding as dependent not on individual initiative but on membership within corporate groups, usually clans or 'tribes'. This overlooks other factors that shaped access to land, not least gender and generation. I demonstrate that, in the precolonial period these identities were as crucial as clan in

---

[4] For the potential benefits of the land reform to beneficiaries, see Ian Scoones etal, *Zimbabwe's Land Reform*, especially chapter 9 and Joseph Hanlon, Jeannette Manjengwa and Theresa Smart, *Zimbabwe Takes Back its Land*. For continued disparities and conflicts see Prosper B Matondi, *Zimbabawe's Fast Track Land Reform*, especially chapter 7; Joost Fontein , "We Want to Belong to Our Roots and We Want to Be Modern People: New Farmers, Old Claims Around Lake Mutirikwi, Southern Zimbabwe." *African Studies Quarterly* Vol. 10. No.4, 2009; Joseph Mujere, "Land, Graves and Belonging: Land Reform and the Politics of Belonging in Newly Resettled Farms in Gutu, 2000-2009." *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 5, 2011.

[5] Lloyd M. Sachikonye "The Situation of Commercial Farm Workers in Zimbabwe after Land Reform." A Report Prepared for the Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe (FCTZ), Harare, 2003; Lloyd M. Sachikonye, "Land Reform for Poverty Reduction? Social Exclusion and Farm Workers in Zimbabwe," Paper Prepared For a Conference on ''Staying Poor: Chronic Poverty and Development Policy'' Organized By the IDMP, Manchester University, April 2003; Blair Rutherford, "Conditional Belonging: Farm Workers and the Cultural Politics of Recognition in Zimbabwe," *Development and Change*, Vol. 39, No. 1, 2008. Tinashe Nyamunda, "Did Zimbabweans Take Their Land Back? *Journal of Southern African Studies* Vol. 40, No. 4, 2014.

[6] Lloyd Mbiba, "Police boot out villagers to make way for Grace," Daily News, 8 January 2015; Staff Writer, "Chinotimba invades 300ha farm," Daily News, 8 January 2015; Staff Reporter, "Chiefs join Zanu PF fight, target Kaukonde farm" http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-19812-Chiefs+join+squabbles,+target+Kaukonde+farm/news.aspx, Accessed on 6 January 2015.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

ensuring one's claims to land. In the colonial period, the cultural ideals of belonging shaped access to land in tension with ideas about gender, generation and the interests of individuals, colonial officials, European settler farmers as well as missionaries.

In the remainder of this introduction, I elaborate on the ways in which scholars have framed the questions of land scarcity and the forms of social difference that it produces. These were questions of control over land, of how farming men and women accessed the resource and of power and community. I follow this up with a description of northeastern Zimbabwe and its inhabitants. I then discuss the research methods and sources and finish up by giving an overview of the chapters.

Land and Power in Precolonial Africa

For a long time, scholars suggested that, in precolonial Africa, land was plentiful and the scarce factor of production was labor. They downplayed the significance of land in precolonial power dynamics. Political and social control, so the argument went, 'tended to be over people rather than over land' and 'neither individuals nor kin groups bother[ed] to lay specific claims to large tracts of territory."[7] The reasoning behind this argument was that, because land was plentiful and the population was sparse and mobile, there was no need for long term claims to specific geographic spaces or territory. Paul Bohannan, for example, argued that farming men and women only claimed temporary

---

[7] Jack Goody, quoted in Carola Lentz, *Land, Mobility, and Belonging in West Africa*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2013, p 9. Apart from Goody, who is cited by Lentz in the above quotation, other anthropologists include Paul Bohanna and Elizabeth Colson. See, Paul Bohannan "'Land', 'Tenure' and Land Tenure," in Daniel Biebuyck, (ed), *African Agrarian Systems*, Oxford University Press, 1963; Elizabeth Colson, "Land Rights and Land Use Among the Valley Tonga of the Rhodesian Federation: The Background to the Kariba Resettlement Scheme," in Daniel Biebuyck, (ed), *African Agrarian Systems*, Oxford University Press, 1963; Elizabeth Colson, "The Impact of the Colonial Period on the Definition of Land Rights," in Victor Turner (ed), *colonialism in Africa: Vol.3. Profiles of Change: African Society and Colonial Rule,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1971.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

sites of production, but once the farm returned to fallow the rights lapsed.[8] Amongst the Tonga of the Zambezi valley, wrote Elizabeth Colson, land that had not been subjected to cultivation could be cleared by anyone, including strangers, without consultation with headmen or *sikatongo*—the ritual leader of each lineage.[9] Terence Ranger claimed that "in the pre-colonial times men were much more concerned with contestations over other goods than they were in seeking to control productive land." "Chiefs, headmen, and their leading followers" Ranger maintained, "contested for women and cattle above all, and though the women obtained by raiding and in war were employed in cultivation, these contestations took up much male energy."[10]

Scholars believe that access to land changed with the advent of colonial rule. As Colson put it, in the colonial period, unoccupied land became subject to highly specific rights due to rapid population growth and to the intervention of colonial officials in land matters.[11] Similarly, David McDermott Hughes argues that as the colonial and postcolonial states alienated African lands in eastern Zimbabwe and central Mozambique respectively, leading to land scarcity, chiefs shifted their attention from efforts at controlling people towards the control of land.[12] An added impetus to control land was, according to this scholarship, given by the colonial transformation of the value of land

---

[8] Paul Bohannan "'Land', 'Tenure' and Land Tenure," in Daniel Biebuyck, (ed), *African Agrarian Systems*, Oxford University Press, 1963, pp 105-106.
[9] Elizabeth Colson, Land Rights and Land Use Among the Valley Tonga, p 141.

[10] Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla Warfare,* p28.

[11] Elizabeth Colson, The Impact of the Colonial Period on the Definition of Land Rights, p 196.

[12] David McDermott Hughes, *From Enslavement to Environmentalism: Politics on a Southern African Frontier*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2006.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

stimulated by the production of cash crops. Consequently, African men and women competed for land suitable for cash crops.

Claims that land was abundant in the precolonial period emphasized the quantitative rather than the qualitative aspects of land. They did not take into consideration the availability of productive land. However, land that could sustain agriculture was scarce, prompting some precolonial farmers to construct irrigation networks and terraces and forcing others to depend on riverside plots.[13] These were surely subject to competition. In this dissertation, I extend the discussion of land scarcity by looking very closely at the differences in soil productivity within particular landscapes, micro-environments and even individual tracts. Examining the qualities of land reveals that land was a relatively scarce resource. Consequently, farmers competed for land long before colonial dispossession.

Racialized Land; Racialized Narratives

Arguments that colonial intervention led to a shift in the focus of power from control over people to control over land testify to the impact of colonialism on how we understand the questions of land and power in the former colonial world. In former settler

[13] For investments in irrigation see John E.G. Sutton, "Engaruka: The Success and Abandonment of an Integrated Irrigation System in an Arid Part of the Rift Valley, *c.* Fifteenth to Sixteenth Centuries," in Mats Widgren and John E.G. Sutton (eds), *Islands of Intensive Agriculture in Eastern Africa*, Oxford, James Currey, 2004. For investments in terraces see, Robert Soper, *Nyanga: Ancient Fields, Settlements and Agricultural History in Zimbabwe*, London, The British Institute in Eastern Africa, 2002; Lowe Börjeson, A History Under Siege: Intensive Agriculture in the Mbulu Highlands, Tanzania, 19th Century to the Present, Ph.D. Thesis, Stockholm University, 2004. For increased reliance on riverside plots see Elizabeth Colson, "Land Rights and Land Use Among the Valley Tonga, JoAnn McGregor, *Crossing the Zambezi: The politics of landscape on a Central African frontier*, London, James Currey, 2009; Elias C Mandala, *Work and Control in a Peasant Economy: A History of the Lower Tchiri Valley in Malawi, 1859-1960,* Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990. James Giblin, "Land Tenure, Traditions of Thought about Land, and Their Environmental Implications in Tanzania," in John F Richards (ed), *Land, Property and the Environment*, Oakland, California, Institute for Contemporary Studies Press, 2002, p 147.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

colonies like Zimbabwe, the historical experiences of racialized land dispossession led to the production of narratives that privileged race. When colonial government officials, settlers, missionaries, African nationalists and scholars framed the land issue, they focused on how colonial land allocation shaped race relations.[14] Some argued that the system of racialized land apportionment was an important measure taken by the colonial state to prevent the complete dispossession of African lands by white settlers. They maintained that the Land Apportionment Act (1930), which provided the legal basis for a racialized division of land in Southern Rhodesia, preserved lands assigned to Africans from being completely alienated by Settlers.[15] This argument betrayed a peculiar closeness to the colonial state's justification of racial segregation and ignored its exploitative logic.

Unsurprisingly, many other scholars pointed out that the Land Apportionment Act (1930) in fact ensured the socio-economic and political domination of Africans by European settlers rather than ensuring their continued access to land.[16] Proponents of this argument approached it from different, but, ultimately converging perspectives. Robin Palmer focused on race relations. He argued that colonial land policies ensured European settler social, economic and political domination over Africans.[17] Marxist oriented

---

[14] It was this logic that led the Southern Rhodesia settler state to appoint the Land Commission of 1924 that was led by Morris Carter. ZAH 1/1/1 Land (Morris Carter) Commission, Final Report; Arthur S. Cripps, "African Land Tenure. (A Plea for Tolerance)." In *NADA*, No 4, 1926.

[15] Louis H Gann, "The Southern Rhodesia Land Apportionment Act, 1930: An Essay in Trusteeship." National Archives of Rhodesian and Nyasaland, *Occasional Paper* 1, 1963.

[16] There is a relatively large corpus of literature that makes this argument. See especially Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, Ian Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*; Henry V Moyana, *The Political Economy of Land*; Joseph Hanlon, Jeanette Manjengwa and Teresa Smart, *Zimbabwe Takes Back its Land*.

[17] Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

analyses by Ian Phimister and Giovanni Arrighi emphasized class. Racialized dispossession of land, they argued, not only led to racial inequality but to the exploitation of African peasants by colonial agrarian and mining capital. Undermined by political intervention on behalf capital, peasants were pushed into the colonial labor market.[18] This politically induced impoverishment, nationalist histories of Zimbabwe suggest, led to peasant consciousness, inspiring many rural Africans to take up arms against the settler state.[19] In this way, historians found a connection between racialized conflicts over land and nationalism.

Understood in the context of the 1960s and 1970s environment of the Zimbabwean nationalist struggles in which grievances over land figured prominently and Marxism gained both analytical and liberating currency, these were legitimate lines of enquiry.[20] But as Pius Nyambara notes, the tendency in this scholarship was to conceptualize the rural population in terms of settlers, peasants and proletarians. In doing so, it "assign[ed] each Zimbabwean farmer to one or the other idealized, homogenous category, with the result that all farmers took on the stereotypical and unrealistic

---

[18] Phimister Ian, "Peasant Production and Underdevelopment in Southern Rhodesia, 1894-1914, with Particular Reference to the Victoria District." In Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons (eds), *Roots of Rural Poverty in central and Southern Africa*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1977; Giovanni Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: A Study of the Proletarianization of the African Peasantry." *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol.6, No. 3, 1970. For a general discussion of the impact of colonialism in Zimbabwe with a Marxian orientation see Ian Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*.

[19] Terrence Ranger, *peasant Consciousness and Guerilla Warfare;* Kenneth D Manungo, 'The Role Peasants Played in the Zimbabwean War of Liberation.'

[20] The two main liberation movements in the country, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) identified with the Marxian ideologies of socialism through their connections with the Soviet Union and China respectively.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

attributes of their category."[21] Moreover, despite these scholars' varied analytical entry points, they all focus on how colonial land and agrarian policies shaped African relations with European settlers. This focus misses the extent to which land informed political and social relations among Africans as well as how these relations shaped access to land among the Africans. This is surprising when one realizes that for the most part rural Africans encountered one another more than they encountered the settlers and the colonial and post-colonial states.[22] In this dissertation, I examine how the social and political relations among Africans affected patterns of access to land.

African Social Organization, Land Tenure and Power

Throughout colonial and postcolonial Africa, land has been contested. Social commentators—including colonial and post-colonial government officials, scholars and rural farmers—tied access to land to political and kinship relations. They asked whether Africans owned land as individuals or as members of corporate groups, especially clans and 'tribes'. Some commentators argued that, among Africans, land was the individual property of the chief who distributed it to his subjects.[23] A counter narrative suggested that chiefs held land not as their private property but as trustees of their 'tribes.'[24] A

[21] Pius Nyambara, A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe, Northwestern Zimbabwe, 1945-1997," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Northwestern University, Evanston: Illinois, 1999, p4
[22] By the 1920s, Native Commissioners who represented the local face of the colonial state were increasingly desk bound. See Jocelyn Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, p22. For similar observations in South Africa, see Peter. Delius, *A Lion among the Cattle: Reconstruction and Resistance in the Northern Transvaal*, Portsmouth, NH, Heinemann, 1996, p 18.

[23] Herskovits cited in John K Rennie, "Christianity, Colonialism and the Origins of Nationalism among the Ndau of Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1935," Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, Northwestern University, Evanston: Illinois, 1973.

[24] Charles Bullock, "Can a Native Make a Will? Concepts of Testate Succession in Native Law." *NADA,* No. 7, 1929, W H Stead, "Concepts and Control in Native Life.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

corollary to this argument was the claim that in African societies, land was owned by the community which was often assumed to be the lineage and its more advanced form, the 'tribe.'[25] This revealed the template which both colonial administrators and anthropologists brought to Africa. In their imagination, Africa consisted of a patchwork of 'tribes' under the rule of chiefs." Proponents of this argument conceived 'tribes' as 'cultural units possessing a common language, a single social system and an established common law' whose membership was hereditary.[26] The chief was the leader of the 'tribal' unit. However, such a homogenous, internally cohesive unit as was implied in the idea of a tribe did not exist in African societies.[27]

The notion that Africans belonged to 'tribes' and practiced communal land tenure was used by the colonial state to justify intervention in African agriculture. Critics of the so called communal land tenure disparaged it as a primordial and unscientific practice that was inimical to economic development and environmental management and needed to be urgently stopped in order to prevent Africans from destroying their livelihoods.[28] Colonial (and in some cases postcolonial) states followed up their criticisms by introducing individual land titling schemes.[29] These interventions produced conflicts over both land and the authority to allocate it.

---

[25] W H Stead, Concepts and Control in Native Life.
[26] W H Stead, Concepts and Control in Native Life; The quotation describing how colonial officials imagined tribes comes from John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979, p.

[27] See for example the critique in John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*; Sara Berry, *No Condition is Permanent*, especially Chapter 2.

[28]See for example Barry N Floyd, "Changing Patterns of African Land use in Southern Rhodesia," Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, Syracuse University, 1959.

[29] This was the basis upon which the Southern Rhodesian government implemented the Native Land Husbandry Act (1951). See Barry N Floyd, "Changing Patterns of African Land use. Similar policies were pursued in late colonial and post-colonial Kenya. See for example, Parker Shipton, *Mortgaging the*

للاستشارات المنارة
www.manaraa.com

When the land titling program was imposed from above in colonial Zimbabwe in the 1950s, opponents upheld concepts of communal land tenure. They cast it as a benevolent system which guaranteed every member of the community security and access to land.[30] Placed in juxtaposition with European notions of individual land tenure, this claim served as a moral critique of settler avariciousness that allowed a single white farmer to usurp land of an entire community.

However, the claim that membership in a community guaranteed access to land was wrong. Land inequality was created by gender, generation, seniority and status. The emphasis on membership within a community as a condition upon which land could be accessed excluded women, who as wives were outsiders in the lineages of their husbands.[31] Likewise the notion that Africans belonged to 'tribes' and that the so called communal land tenure was customary and primordial was wrong. As many scholars note, the 'tribe and the customary were twentieth century inventions and/or imaginations of colonial officials, anthropologists and African male elders alike.[32]

Ancestors: Ideologies of Attachment in Africa, New Heaven, Yale University Press, 2009; Jack Glazier, *Land and the Uses of Tradition among the Mbeere of Kenya*, Lanham, The University Press of America, 1985.

[30] J F Holleman, *Chief, Council and Commissioner: Some Problems of Government in Rhodesia, Assen:* Royal VanGorcum, 1969, p 62.
[31] See the discussion in Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939,* Portsmouth: NH, Heinemann, 1992.

[32] Terence Ranger, "Invention of tradition in Colonial Africa," in Eric J Hobsbawm and Terence O Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983; Terence Ranger, " The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa," in," in Terence Ranger and O Vaughan, (eds) *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth Century Africa*, Houndmills: Macmillan, 1993; Terence Ranger, "The Communal Areas of Zimbabwe." In *Land in African Agrarian Systems*, edited by Thomas J Bassett and Donald E Crummey, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1993 Angela Cheater, "The Ideology of 'Communal' Land Tenure in Zimbabwe: Mythogenesis Enacted?" in *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, vol.60. No 2 (1990).

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

The creation of customary law and land tenure affected the politics of land among Africans. Some scholars suggested that, once the laws were written down, they could not be altered, giving authority to chiefs and male elders whose opinions were recorded as custom.[33] Other scholars questioned the idea that the codification of customary law froze debates over authority in favor of 'customary' officials. Sara Berry, for example, argued that "traditions did not necessarily stop changing when versions of them were written down, nor were debates over custom and social identity resolved, either during the colonial period or afterwards."[34] Instead, the colonial period was "an era of intensified contestation over custom, power, and property."[35] In this sense, the colonial codification of customary laws did not centralize power in the hands of chiefs and male elders.

In questioning the idea that modes of colonial rule strengthened the power of 'customary' leaders, some scholars pointed out that colonial interventions rooted in science undermined everything that was customary. With particular reference to Southern Rhodesia, scholars argue that this was the case when the colonial state began to intervene in African agriculture from the 1930s onwards culminating in the infamous Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) of 1951. Under this Act, the colonial state coerced Africans to adopt 'scientific' methods of agriculture and to abandon 'traditional' systems of land

---

[33] Terence Ranger, The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa, Martin Chanock, *Law Custom and Social Order*: *The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985; Sally Falk Moore, *Social Facts and Fabrication*: *'Customary' Law on Kilimanjaro*, *1880-1980*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986; Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives;* Mahmood Mamdani*, Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Princeton: NJ, Princeton University Press, 1996.

[34] Sara Berry, *No Condition is Permanent*, p 8.

[35] Sara Berry, *No Condition is Permanent*, p 8.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

tenure.[36] In pursuing these 'scientific' measures, the colonial state also withdrew the authority to allocate land in African Areas from local chiefs and gave it to white Land Officers who were bureaucrats. The result, it seemed, was a shift from what Mahmood Mamdani called a decentralized despotism of 'customary' leaders to the despotism of the technocrats and the central state.[37]

Many of these scholars contrasted the N.L.H.A with its successor policy of 'Community Development.' They saw the latter policy as an attempt by the colonial state to restore the authority of the chiefs in order to counter the influence of African nationalists among the rural farmers.[38] However, as Jocelyn Alexander points out, those who conceptualize the making of authority over land as a series of shifts from the customary to the scientific ignore the fact that the two forms of colonial intervention existed side by side. This concurrence produced struggles over land and power between 'customary' and technical officials.[39] This, together with conflicts between the central state and the chiefs who constituted the local state, according to Alexander, is what unsettled the politics of land in Zimbabwe.[40]

---

[36] Barry N Floyd, "Changing Patterns of African Land use in Southern Rhodesia," Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, Syracuse University, 1959.

[37] See the discussion in Jocelyn Alexander, *The Unsettled Land* and Michel Drinkwater, *The State and Agrarian Change in Zimbabwe's Communal Areas*, Houndsmills, Macmillan, 1991, Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

[38] J.F.Holeman, *Chief Council And Commissioner: Some Problems of Government in Rhodesia*, Assen: Royal VanGorcum, 196; William Munro, *The Moral Economy of the State: Conservation, Community Development and State-making in* Zimbabwe, Athens:OH, Ohio University Press, 1998; A.K.H Weinrich, *Chiefs and Councils in Rhodesia: Transition from Patriarchal to Bureaucratic Power*, London, Heinemann, 1971 and Jocelyn Alexander, *Unsettled Land,* Especially Chapters 2 and 3.

[39] Jocelyn Alexander, *The Unsettled Land.*

[40] Jocelyn Alexander, *The Unsettled Land.*

www.manaraa.com

Competition for power over land and people also involved non-state actors such as religious leaders and healers.[41] Just as these elites provided alternative authority to chiefs in the precolonial period, their relations with the colonial state influenced how power was articulated in the colonial period. Above all, asymmetries of power within and among households, kinship groups and the wider community determined access to land. Thus, contestations, negotiations, and accommodations over land and other natural resources, I argue, were also about social relations. Examining how these multiple forms of authority shaped access to land from the precolonial period to the mid twentieth century is the task that I have set for myself. Transcending the pre-colonial and colonial boundary is especially important because the advent of colonial rule did not provide a sharp break in terms of how Africans related to one another. It widened the spaces in which these relations were articulated while expanding tools of negotiations in the articulation of those relations.

Northeastern Zimbabwe: Place, People and Landscape

The Place and its People

From Harare, Zimbabwe's capital, the area of northeastern Zimbabwe which I study extends eastwards to the country's border with Mozambique (See Figure 1.1). Until the British annexed Mashonaland in 1890, its people lived in various independent territories of different sizes varying from sixty kilometers across to spaces of one or two

[41] See, for example the discussions of missionaries and the politics of patronage among the Zigua on the eve of colonial rule in northeastern Tanzania in James L Giblin, *The Politics of Environmental Control in Northeastern Tanzania*, 1840-1940, Philadelphia, The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993, especially Chapter 4; Nancy J Jacobs, *Environment, Power and Injustice: A South African History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, particularly Chapter 3.

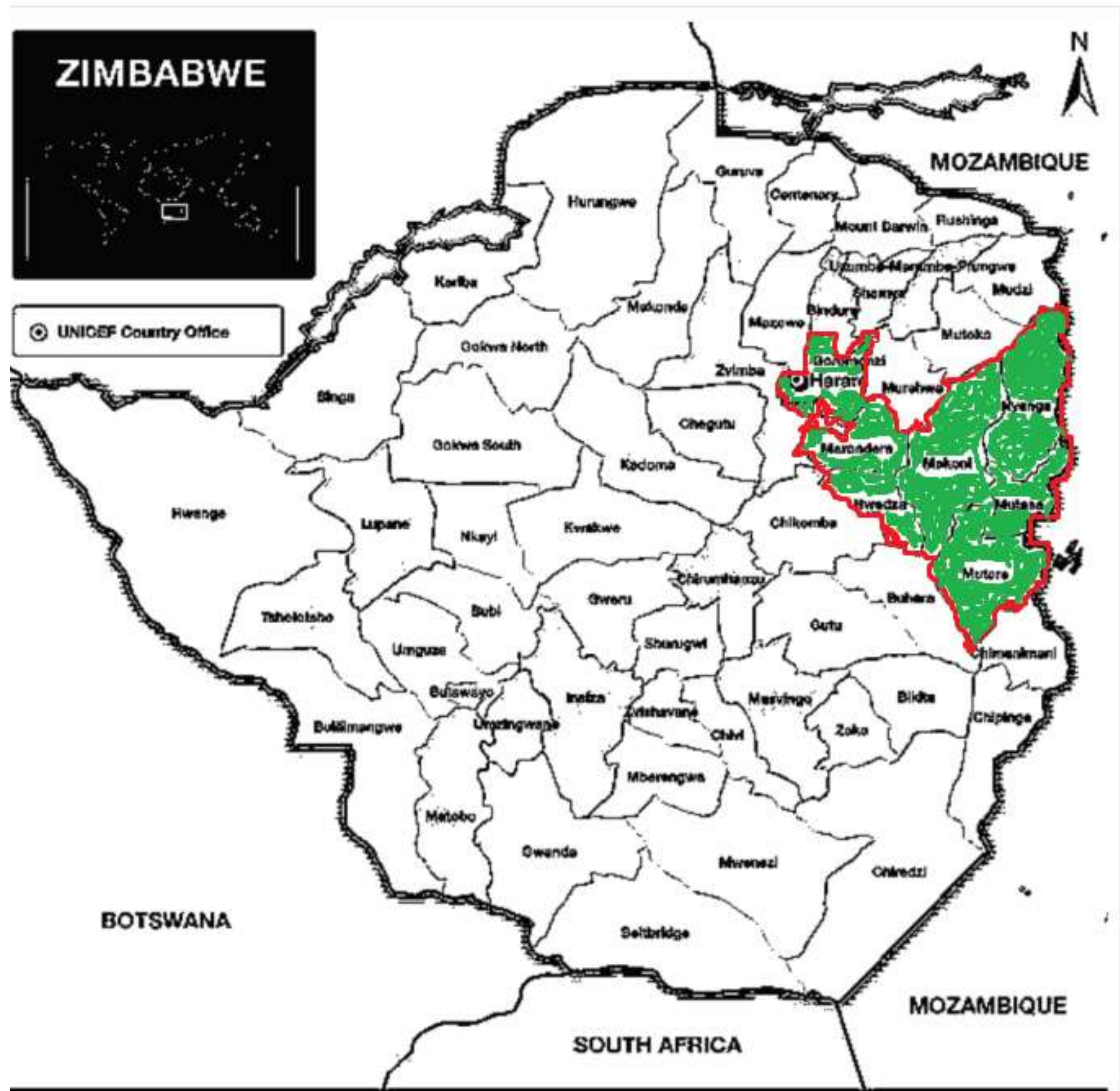
المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

hills and valleys.[42] The most prominent polities were Manyika, Jindwi, Bocha, Makoni, Mbire III, Seke, Tsunga, Chihota and Nhowe. The colonial government divided the area into five districts of Salisbury/Goromonzi, Marandellas (Marondera), Makoni, Umtali (Mutare) and Inyanga (Nyanga). In 1954, the colonial state made Wedza a full administrative district outside Marandellas. After independence in 1980, Zimbabwe's post-colonial rulers divided the old colonial Goromonzi district into Goromonzi and Seke districts.

[42] D.N Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past: Shona Dynastic Histories and Oral Traditions*, Gweru, Mambo Press, 1994, p xv.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Figure 1.1. Map of Zimbabwe showing contemporary administrative districts and the area of study. The shaded part is the area of study.



Source: Adopted and modified from http://www.unicef.org/har2010/index_zimbabwe_feature.html . 17 September, 2013.

The precolonial inhabitants of this area identified themselves with the names of the territories which they occupied. These did not always coincide with chieftainships. The people neither called themselves *vaShona* nor the language they spoke *Chishona*

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

before the late nineteenth century. However, they spoke dialects of the same language.[43] Thus, the noun *Shona* is used here as shorthand for these people (whose descendants have not only retained old identifications based on territory but have also since appropriated this identification).[44] Late sixteenth century Portuguese traders recorded the language they spoke as *Mokaranga. C*hi*karanga* is now one of the dialects of *Chishona*, spoken in southern Zimbabwe.

The Portuguese traders found that *Mokaranga* was spoken in the Mutapa and Butua kingdoms.[45] These two territories covered the whole Zimbabwean plateau. The language was also spoken beyond the present day borders of Zimbabwe in Central Mozambique and parts of Eastern Botswana.[46] Although belonging to a multiplicity of polities and identifying themselves with these territories, the precolonial inhabitants of this area shared a common historical experience and culture both of which are captured in the oral traditions of migration and settlement told up to today. These traditions share

---

[43] See the discussions in David Beach, "History and Archaeology in Nyanga." Annex in Robert C Soper, *Nyanga: Ancient Fields, Settlements and Agricultural History in Zimbabwe*, London, The British Insitute in East Africa, 2002, p227; Gerald Chikozho Mazarire, "Reflections on Precolonial Zimbabwe, *c.* 850-1880s," in Brian Raftopoulos and Alois S Mlambo (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Precolonial Period to 2008*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2009, pp 3-5; Hebert Chimhundu, "*Tiri Vanhu*: The Creation of Chishona in Zimbabwe," in Hebert Chimhundu, Wiseman Magwa and Andy Chebanne (eds), *Harmonization of Shona-Nyai Varieties*, Cape Town, Center for Advanced Studies of African Studies (Casas Book Series No. 72), 2010; Hebert Chimhundu, "Documenting the Shona-Nyai Cluster as a Cross Border Language," ," in Hebert Chimhundu, Wiseman Magwa and Andy Chebanne (eds), *Harmonization of Shona-Nyai Varieties*, Cape Town, Center for Advanced Studies of African Studies (Casas Book Series No. 72), 2010.

[44] In interviews in Bocha, for example, my informants consistently referred to their area as Bocha and not Marange which is the name that the colonial and post-colonial states gave to these communal lands. For example, at one point, Charova, one of my informants said "*Bocha rinonaka ka iri* [meaning Bocha (literally: honey) is good]" to explain why my friend who connected me to the community and was a history teacher at a local school had decided to return to the area after spending three years on study leave, at the University of Zimbabwe, in Harare. He also referred to the nearby Zimunya communal lands as Jindwi throughout the interview. Interview with Charova, 28 June 2013.

[45] Joao Dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," in G.M. Theal, *Records of South-Eastern Africa*, (Vol. VII.) Cape Town, C Stuick, 1964, p 274.

[46] Hebert Chimhundu, *Tiri Vanhu*: The Creation of Chishona in Zimbabwe; Hebert Chimhundu, Documenting the Shona-Nyai Cluster as a Cross Border Language.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

structural components that suggest similar processes of social formation (see the section on methodology and Chapter Two below).

Although the chronology of settlement and state-making in this region is uncertain, historians suggest that some of the immigrant rulers discussed in the oral traditions might have settled on the eastern highlands in the second half of the sixteenth century. Beach places the origins of the Chikanga dynasty to the 1560s.[47] Other scholars suggest that Nyamaubvambire, the dynasty's founder, arrived in Manyika in the late seventeenth century.[48]

The late seventeenth century dates are highly unlikely. Portuguese documents make it clear that northeastern Zimbabwe's ruling dynasties were already established by the middle of the seventeenth century. Two Portuguese accounts written between 1633 and 1649 mention some of the northeastern kingdoms and their rulers.[49] They also locate the geographical position of these polities in relation to the center of the Mutapa state on the Zambezi Valley and the Portuguese settlements at Sofala.[50] Judging by the available evidence, it is most likely that the various rulers of territories in northeastern Zimbabwe settled in the area from the second half of the sixteenth century onwards.

This dissertation, therefore, tells the history of struggles for land in northeastern Zimbabwe from sixteenth century to the 1950s. By the twentieth century, northeastern

---

[47] David Beach, "History and Archaeology in Nyanga."

[48]H.H.K Bhila, *Trade and Politics in a Shona Kingdom: The Manyika and their Portuguese and African Neighbours*, London, Longman, 1983.

[49] Antonio Bocarro, "Decade of the Performances of the Portuguese in the East." In, G.M Theal, Records of South East Africa (Vol. 3), Cape Town, G Struik, 1964, pp 355-356; Pedro Baretto De Rezende, "Of the State of India." In G.M. Theal, Records of South East Africa (Vol.) 2, p 414.D.P Abraham, "The Principality of Maungwe: Its History and Traditions." In *NADA* No. 28, 1951, p 56, David Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe: An Outline of Shona History*, Gweru, Mambo Press, 1980, p 166.

[50] Pedro Baretto De Rezende, "Of the State of India, p 414

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Zimbabwe had become part of the British colony of Southern Rhodesia. However, colonial rule did not end contestations over land. Instead, it intensified longstanding competition among chiefs, and between chiefs and spirit mediums, while also introducing new conflicts involving technical officers from the department of lands, and after independence interest groups such as veterans of Zimbabwe's war of independence.

The Landscape

Climatic and geological factors were crucial to the way the *VaShona* ordered their lives. The amount of seasonal rainfall, for example, shaped the choices of crops grown by the various communities. Some of the inhabitants of northeastern Zimbabwe have, in turn, inscribed these choices in cultural idioms of food taboos. This, I learned during my field work. As I interviewed one elderly man in the relatively dry Bocha area, our conversation was constantly interrupted by his attempts to chase fowls from eating the family's *mhunga* (pearl millet) harvest, a drought resistant crop that is mostly grown in the semi-arid parts of the country.[51] The following day I conducted interviews with elders in Zimunya, in the well watered highlands across the Odzi River from Bocha. There, they told me that growing and eating *mhunga* was a taboo. When I mentioned to my interviewees that my car had broken down when I got into their territory (because its clearance was too low to navigate the difficult gravel roads in this mountainous region), they laughed and said that their ancestors had punished me because I was carrying *mhunga* in my trunk! They told me stories of people who had been beaten by mysterious

[51] Interview with Sekuru Charova, Charova Homestead, St Johns Mabvengwa Secondary School, Bocha, 28 June 2013.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

people when they tried to smuggle *mhunga* into the area.[52] These stories capture the agronomic realities attuned to the high rainfall received on the highlands. It was pointless to grow *mhunga* in these areas, for the good rains that fall there over a relatively longer period lengthen its growing season and affects the harvest. Meanwhile, the continued cultivation of *mhunga* by farmers in Bocha in this age of maize, on the other hand, reflects an awareness of their vulnerabilities to droughts and a deep understanding of their environment.[53] Only drought resistant crops like *mhunga* do well in this area. Historically, such an understanding of the environment influenced people's choices of settlement locations.

The patterns of rainfall that have led to these different forms of adaptation are shaped by both the wider climatological process associated with the seasonal movements of the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) and the area's physical geography. Historical climatic data is hard to obtain in the region, but geographers have been able to explain how this climatological process contributes to broad seasonal and spatial variations in the distribution of rainfall on the Zimbabwean plateau. "In all parts of the country," noted George Kay, "the rain season lasts for no more than five months (from November to March) when the intertropical convergence zone takes up its more southerly positions and 'recurved "Congo air" from the Atlantic and the northeast monsoon from the Indian Ocean are periodically drawn into Rhodesia."[54] Kay explained that as the

[52] Interview Mbuya Gededza, Gededza Homestead, Mambwere, Zimunya Communal Lands, 29 June 2013; Interview with Sekuru Makanya, Makanya Homestead, Mambwere, Zimunya Communal Lands, 29 June 2013, Discussions with Mafukashe and Oscar Mafukashe , 29 June 2013.

[53] For the importance that maize has assumed in Africa and its implications on food security, see James McCann, *Maize and Grace: Africa's Encounter with a New World Crop, 1500-2000*, Cambridge: MA, Harvard University Press, 2005.

[54] George Kay, *Rhodesia: A Human Geography*, New York, African Publishing Corporation, 1970, p 16.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

moist air that brings rainfall approaches the plateau from the north and northeast, it is the country's southern and southwestern portions that receive the least amount of rainfall. In this case, northeastern Zimbabwe is well positioned to receive moderately high and effective amounts of rainfall to sustain an agrarian economy.[55]

The eastern highlands receive more rainfall than any other part of the Zimbabwean plateau. In addition to the rainfall that is associated with the seasonal movements of the ITCZ, the eastern highlands also receives warm moist air from the Indian Ocean. As the moisture laden air reaches the mountains' high altitudes, condensation takes place ensuring large amounts of rain in the area. However, the Bocha area, which lies in the rain shadow of the eastern highlands, receives very little rainfall. Thus in the area of study, the eastern highlands receive the highest amounts of rainfall followed by the central watershed and the Bocha area (see the discussion of topography below). The distribution of rainfall must have shaped the patterns of human settlement. By all accounts, the Bocha area was sparsely populated while the terraces found in the eastern highlands point to denser populations and intensive use of land.

The area's inhabitants did not only adapt their agronomic systems to its physical geography but also etched their political geography on the landscape. They used mountains and rivers as physical markers of the boundaries of their territories. The historic territory of the *WaBocha*, for example, is the land which lies between the Rivers Save and Odzi, south of the *Matandi* range in present day Mutare district.[56] North of

[55] George Kay, *Rhodesia: A Human Geography,* p16 and 21.

[56] NUA 2/1/1, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters General, Letter dated 22 December 1896 from Assistant Native Commissioner, Umtali, to Chief Native Commissioner.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Bocha, the Odzi River marked the boundary between the territories of Maungwe and Manyika.

The area between Harare and Makoni is part of the watershed of the Zambezi and Save Rivers basins. Some of the notable rivers originating in this area include the Nyaguwe, Hunyani and Macheke rivers. Many other big rivers cut across the eastern highlands districts of Nyanga and Mutare. Rising from the Nyanga Mountains, the Pungwe River runs in a south easterly direction to the Indian Ocean. Its tributaries include the Honde which begins in the mountains near Bingaguru, the old capital of Mutasa, chief of the Manyika. Other notable rivers in the eastern highlands include the Nyangombe, Gaerezi, Odzi, Mutare and Wengezi. Numerous other tributaries fed into these rivers. The rivers provided moist soils, sources of water and opportunities for irrigation. In comparison to other areas, the localities near some of these rivers supported relatively dense populations. This underscores the scarcity of arable land which generated competition and social exclusion. We will encounter some of the rivers in the traditions of migration as the sites of rituals that gave birth to new polities.

The topography of the area changes as one moves eastwards from Harare to Nyanga and Mutare. Goromonzi, Marondera and Western Makoni lie in an area that is relatively less broken. Captain Forbes of the BSAC described parts of this landscape as he saw it in 1890. "The country from Fort Salisbury," he wrote, "is all high and for the most part open. There is a good deal of this goosi (thickets) bush between Shugu's and Skalanke's kraals." Forbes noted that "beyond these is an open plain with small strips of bush extending for some considerable distance to the south. Beyond Chikwakwa's the plains rises (sic) to a height of 5250 ft…[before] falling into the Mafusi River to the north

www.manaraa.com

and the Nola on the south side."[57] The landscape that Captain Forbes described extends eastwards to Rusape in Makoni (See Figure 1.2 below).

Figure 1:2 Picture showing the landscape in Makoni district near Rusapi.

Source: Picture by Admire Mseba, 01July 2013

In eastern Makoni, the relatively flat lands give way to a gradual ascent into the highlands of northeastern Zimbabwe. The highlands' western fringes are "dotted with granite kopjes with broken and castellated summits."[58] These granite kopjes are also found in the Bocha area which lies to the west of the highlands and to the southeast of the watershed. Some of these mountains were the sites of rituals where communities

[57] A1/6/1, Administrator's In-Letters: Manica Reports, Letter dated 13th October 1890 from P.W. Forbes to O.C., B.S.A.C.Police.

[58] H.H.K. Bhila, *Trade and Politics in a Shona Kingdom*, p 6.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

supplicated their ancestors to request good rains and bumper harvests. The Assistant Native Commissioner for the district of Umtali described the Bocha landscape as he saw it in 1897. The area, he wrote, "is very thickly wooded, the Umssassa [*Brachystegia spiciformis*] being the prevailing sort. The soil," he continued, "is poor and shallow on granite formation. The country is very flat, excepting for a disconnected range of hills running down the center, parallel with the Odzi River."[59] The prevalence of poor soils from granite in such areas as Bocha also underscores the scarcity of fertile agricultural land. This is important, for although oral traditions suggest that these areas were sparsely populated the inhabitants still competed for fertile land, especially near streams.

Further east, the hills give way to a range of mountains interspersed, for the most part, with well watered valleys. Here, too, lies Zimbabwe's highest peak, Mount Nyangani whose summit stands at an altitude of 2592m. Other notable mountains include the Vhumba and Hamalaya ranges to the southeast and south of present day Mutare respectively. Farmers faced with the options of eking out a living on marginal lands similar to those that abound in Bocha or engaging in hillside farming, which increased labor demands to construct terraces, surely competed for these fertile valleys.

[59] NUA 2/1/1, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters General, Letter dated 22 December 1896 from Assistant Native Commissioner, Umtali, to Chief Native Commissioner.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Plate 1.3: Picture showing the landscape of the Eastern Highlands taken from Zimunya Communal lands.

Source: Picture by Admire Mseba. 29 June 2013

Northeastern Zimbabwe's physical geography has been crucial to the history of human settlement in the area. I discuss this in detail in Chapter Three. For the moment, it suffices to note that recent archaeological studies of the relationship between the environment and prehistoric settlements in the eastern highlands showed preferences for particular micro-environments.[60] Such findings call us to pay attention to the ways in which human settlement was influenced by environmental and sociological factors. Individuals and communities looked for particular localities that would sustain their way

[60] Robert Soper, *Inyanga, especially Chapter 7, pp133-138.*

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

of living. Those localities were few and people competed to control them and to restrict access by others.

Sources and Methods

Competition for land in precolonial northeastern Zimbabwe is captured in stories of migration, settlement and state-making told by members of local chiefly lineages and commoners alike. Native Affairs Department (NAD) officials, missionaries and educated Africans collected versions of these traditions from as early as 1898.[61] In 1903, the Chief Native Commissioner for Mashonaland instructed all Native Commissioners to record local histories from African elders in their districts.[62] The instruction, which followed a request for local histories by the South African Native Affairs Commission (1903), led to the collection of local traditions.[63] Beginning in 1923, many Native Commissioners, missionaries and some mission educated Africans published ethnographic data in the *Native Affairs Department Annual (NADA)*, a journal published by NAD. I also drew on the interviews collected by the National Archives of Zimbabwe as part of their Oral Archives project. Moreover, I myself heard these stories told by elders during interviews in 2013.

Apart from the material collected by colonial officials and missionaries, another important source of recorded oral traditions is Jason Takafa Machiwenyika's "History and Customs of the Manyika" which is deposited at the National Archives of

---

[61] NUA 2/1/3, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umatali, Letter dated 31st March 1898 from Native Commissioner Umtali to Chief Native Commissioner.

[62] N3/33/8, History of Native Tribes.

[63] E.W. Morris, "Marondella's District"-History of Native Tribes and Chiefs: Information Supplied to the South African Native Affairs Commission, 1903." *NADA*, Vol. XI, No. 4, 1977, p436

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Zimbabwe.[64] Machiwenyika belonged to the Mandeya section of the Manyika dynasty. He was amongst the first generation of Africans who attended mission schools. Between 1908 and his death in 1924, Machiwenyika collected oral traditions on the history of Manyika and its neighbors from his elders. It seems that his intention was to publish this history as a textbook for Manyika children attending mission schools. He arranged his chapters as *zvidzidzo* (lessons).[65] The manuscript was written in *Chishona* and was translated into English by Musewe, an assistant to B.H. Barnes, an Anglican missionary at St Augustine's mission, Penhalonga.[66] With the exception of David Beach, who used Machiwenyika's manuscript in his studies on northeastern Zimbabwe and central Mozambique, I am the only other historian to make extensive use of this work.[67] The manuscript records the traditions of Manyika migration and settlement in the eastern highlands and has sections on the political history and customs of Manyika and its neighbors. These range from agricultural practices to social processes such as marriage and healing.

---

[64] The manuscript, which was never published, is catalogued under the National Archives of Zimbabwe's Historical manuscripts. See MA 14/1/1 and MA 14/1/2.

[65] David Beach makes a similar observation. See D.N. Beach, "Oral Tradition in Eastern Zimbabwe: The work of Jason Takafa Machiwenyika, c1889-1924." Paper Presented to *Words and Voices: Critical Practices of Orality in Africa and African Studies*, Bellagio, February 24-28, 1997.

[66] See the discussion in D.N. Beach, Oral Tradition in Eastern Zimbabwe, pp4-5. I am in possession of both the Shona and English versions of the manuscript.

[67] Colleagues at the University of Zimbabwe brought to my attention the fact that David Beach initiated research on the history of eastern Zimbabwe and Central Mozambique but unfortunately passed away before completing it. Beach wrote three pieces which were never published based on this research and make use of Machiwenyika's collection. See David Beach, "The Origins of Mozambique and Zimbabwe: Paiva De Andrada, The Compnanhia de Moçambique and African Diplomacy, 1881-91," History Seminar Paper No. 89, 1992, Department of History, University of Zimbabwe, David Beach, Oral Tradition in Eastern Zimbabwe, David Beach, "History and Archaeology in Nyanga," Annex in Robert Soper, *Nyanga.* (A version of the paper was presented at Pan African Congress of Prehistory, Harare, 1995.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Machiwenyika's manuscript is the most important recorded source of oral traditions on Manyika and the surrounding territories of Maungwe, Bocha, Jindwi, Unyama and Hwesa. Unlike native commissioners and missionaries who were outsiders, Machiwenyika was a Manyika insider. He, therefore, left us a body of traditions collected by a young African from his elders long before the history taught in schools colored people's memories of the past. Moreover, at the time Machiwenyika collected the traditions the Manyika were beginning to fill the impact of colonial land policies, but the worst of it was still to come so much so that the trauma of displacement did not shape memories of the precolonial past to the same extent that it would a generation later. Combined with the traditions I collected, those recorded by colonial bureaucrats, missionaries and educated Africans like Machiwenyika give us a pool of oral sources recorded over a century. This provides us with a fairly large comparative base of material from which we can explore the history of competition for land in precolonial Zimbabwe.

I conducted the interviews during my second research trip in the summer of 2013. In the interviews, I sought two kinds of information. First, I recorded oral traditions of the various communities. Oral traditions encompass narratives of the communities' origins, migration and settlement in the area of study. They relate to the experiences of a society and, in contrast to individual narratives or oral histories, they capture developments dating back in time beyond the life of the narrator.[68] I was especially interested in knowing how particular communities came to claim land.

[68] See Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985 and Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating our Past: The Social Construction of Oral History*: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

www.manaraa.com

In the traditions, I paid particular attention to landscapes and asked about the origins of names of mountains, hills and pools.[69] These traditions explained connections between particular pieces of land and clan or family histories. Oral traditions invariably discussed various communities' relations with the autochthons or with some other powerful precolonial entities, like the Rozvi or the Gaza-Nguni. The insertion of these political elites in the dynastic traditions suggests a shift in the terms of claims making over time. As these new powers arrived on the northeastern Zimbabwean landscape, they caused struggles over land.

The historical knowledge that came out of the interviews was gendered.[70] When I asked elderly women about the traditions of the peopling of northeastern Zimbabwe, they almost always said they knew nothing about that kind of history.[71] However, most of them became animated once we started discussing cropping systems, a subject that only elicited short answers from my male informants. Meanwhile, almost all the dynastic traditions of northeastern Zimbabwe came from male informants, usually male elders.

I also collected oral histories. These are different from oral traditions in that they tell stories within the lifetime of the interviewee. They, usually, capture individual rather than societal experiences. I explored questions of African access to land by seeking

---

[69] Historians such as Jan Bender Shetler and Gerald Mazarire have innovatively used this approach in their studies of the Serengeti in Tanzania and Chishanga in Southern Zimbabwe. See Jan Bender Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti* and Gerald Chikozho Mazarire "Changing Landscapes and Oral memory in South Central Zimbabwe. Towards a Historical Geography of Chishanga, c1850-1990," in *Journal of Southern African Studies* vol 29, No 3, 2003.

[70] Jan Bender Shetler, "The Gendered Space of historical Knowledge: Women's Knowledge and Extraordinary Women in Serengeti District, Tanzania." *The International Journal of African historical Studies* Vol 36, No 2, 2003.

[71] Interview with Mbuya Mashizha and Mbuya Shava, Mashizha Homestead, Mutasa communal lands, 26 June 2013.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

individual experiences of young men who started their households and required land for homesteads and fields. In almost all cases, the men said that they required the consent of the male head of their fathers' household or other elders from that family. The elder placed the very first peg to the new site of the homestead before the first house could be built. This requirement highlighted the importance of elders in the social reproduction of the family and in junior men's ability to access land. Young men could only establish a new household and acquire land for homesteads and fields through the co-operation of their elders.

My interviews were unstructured in the sense that I did not prepare a questionnaire that I stuck to. Once I asked the first question to kick start the discussion, I would let the interview flow and only interrupted the interviewee to seek some clarification on issues that I thought were crucial. Letting the interview proceed according to the wish of the interviewee was important because it reduced the possibility of getting the short but often less useful yes and no answers. I conducted both individual and group interviews. A few more interviews were conducted on my behalf by Joseph Jakarasi, a fellow Zimbabwean graduate student in the Department of History at the University of Iowa.

Because I was almost a stranger in northeastern Zimbabwe (my rural home being in Southern Zimbabwe), my access to the people, like my subjects' access to land, depended on a combination of kinship relations and friendships. In Mutasa communal lands, my entry point to the elders was my sister- in-law's family. In other places, I contacted friends, mostly former colleagues at the University of Zimbabwe who now

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

taught in these places. In the latter cases, my friends organized the contacts in advance and introduced me to the interviewees.

This study also uses documentary sources from the National Archives of Zimbabwe and the Archives of the Jesuits Order of the Roman Catholic Church in Harare. At the National Archives, I read documents from a number of departments including, the Departments of Lands, Agriculture and Native Affairs. The documents discussed land issues, the development of agriculture and African affairs in the colonial period. Often, they allowed me to see the diverse interests of the colonial state. For example, the Land Settlement Department's mandate was to create a conducive environment for white settlement while, in principle, the Department of Native Affairs was to further the interests of the African population of the colony. The conflicting interests coming out of the contradictory mandates of these two departments informed settler and African negotiations over tenancy and 'squatting."

I also read court records, but my experience with them was, for the most part, disappointing. The court records said very little about African conflicts over land. The majority of the cases turned out to be between men fighting over *lobola* (bridewealth) or between wives and their husbands. I was left to conjecture that most of the cases that involved conflicts over land were held at local chiefs' courts which rarely kept records of their proceedings.

Missionary documents provide another archival source. Located in rural mission outposts, missionaries were often better positioned to observe African practices than the colonial bureaucrats who generated the colonial archives in various departments. Most missionaries were also landlords who considered Africans on mission farms as their

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

tenants. Missionaries, sometimes, criticized the policies of colonial government.[72] With this in mind, I consulted the holdings of the Jesuits Fathers in Harare. The documents allowed me to explore the relationship between the missionaries and their African tenants. Through the University of Iowa Libraries' interlibrary loan system, I consulted documents of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionaries from The Yale Divinity School Library. These documents include diaries, minutes of circuit meetings and letters.

Dissertation Outline

The chapters that constitute the body of this dissertation discuss the terms of claims-making to land and the multilayered social struggles over land in precolonial and colonial northeastern Zimbabwe. Chapters Two and Three focus on control over land in the precolonial period. Drawing mostly on oral traditions about the peopling of the area, Chapter Two focuses on the terms of claims-making to territory by chiefly lineages and other political actors. By exploring these claims, this chapter examines the nexus between politics and authority over land. It shows that when the lineages which later assumed political authority over land settled in their territories, these were not empty lands or frontiers. Instead, they were inhabited by people who claimed to be first-comers. The migrants first accessed land by integrating into existing systems of kinship through marriage. The political elites legitimated their control of land and people by fashioning ideas of power and civilization. Oral traditions of ruling lineages depict their founders as people who conquered hostile environments by killing dreaded animals. They also claim to have civilized the first-comers by introducing fire and teaching them to cook their

[72] In his diary Reverend Grantham of the Methodist Church records a confrontation he had with the Native Commissioner for Marandellas over the colonial official's practice of charging taxes to African widows against the colony's laws. Wesleyan Methodist Papers, Private Diary of Reverend W.T. Grantham, 4 November 1903 to 2 May 1906.

www.manaraa.com

food. However, although migrants wrestled political power and control over territory from the first comers, their authority was never complete. First comer families retained ritual authority over-land. This power rivalled the political power of the immigrants because it crucially guaranteed the fertility of the land, a key factor in farming men and women's continued support of their rulers. In other cases, ruling elites legitimated their control over territory by claiming connections with the powerful rulers of precolonial Zimbabwe's well known states such as the Mutapa and Rozvi kingdoms.

While chapter two discusses the macro-politics of claims making to land, chapter three turns to the micro-politics of these claims, interrogating the ways in which access to productive land was ordered within kinship groups and households before the advent of colonial rule. Using archaeological evidence and oral sources, the chapter looks very closely at the differences in soil quality within particular landscapes, micro-environments and even individual tracts. Productive land, it shows, was scarce because of climatic, geomorphological and environmental factors. Thus even in the most scarcely populated areas, it was always difficult to find large swathes of land with all the ingredients to sustain an agrarian economy. The differences in soil quality and the resulting scarcity of the most productive lands provoked competition for arable land, leading to the flourishing of ideas of social identity and differentiation meant to control access to land to the exclusion of others. These included belonging or membership within networks of kinship groups, gender, generation and status. By locating struggles for land within environmental, social and cultural contexts, the chapter demonstrates that access to land was not merely determined by demography. Bringing in these factors also enables us to move beyond the romanticism that colors the few scholarly discussions about land in pre-

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

colonial Zimbabwe and to reveal that just as in many other societies, social and power relations were key in shaping access to land.[73]

Chapters Four, Five and Six discuss the politics of land in northeastern Zimbabwe after the imposition of British colonial rule in 1890. Chapter Four examines the impact of colonial rule on Africans who controlled the institutions of political and ritual authority over land. Even as the land question became increasingly racialized, older forms of competition for land and people continued between chiefs and *mhondoro*. In addition, ordinary farming men and women conceived conflicts over land not just in terms of their relations with the colonizers, but also in terms of local rivalries. Competition for land was influenced by how the colonial state related to chiefs and *mhondoro*. While the colonial state propped up chiefs, whom it imagined to be the custodians of African lands, it suppressed *mhondoro* whom it accused of leading the 1896-97 *Chimurenga* uprisings. However, this did not centralize power in the hands of chiefs. Colonial legal innovations created ambiguities which allowed subjects to challenge chiefs' powers. In addition, other powerful players emerged in the colonial period, including technical officers, who, alongside chiefs, assumed the authority to allocate land to rural Africans.

Chapter Five examines how colonial socio-economic changes affected patterns of landholding and the discourse of African land tenure. The development of wage labor and commercial enterprise affected the social dynamics of landholding in a number of ways. Those who had access to off-farm income were able to purchase farming implements and expand their acreages. This stimulated new demands for labor. While part of this demand

[73] For the romanticism, see Kenneth D Manungu, "The Role Peasants Played in the Zimbabwe War of Liberation, chapter 2. Manungo calls the precolonial period "Pasi Chigare: The Golden Era."

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

was met through paid labor, some of it was obtained through relatives and friends, cementing new forms of social relations. However, some individuals and households improved their conditions more than others. Conditions for participation in the market economy stimulated by colonial developments hardly existed in some parts of the area, especially in Inyanga and parts of Umtali. Similarly, the colonial state's interventions in African agriculture produced mixed results. Some farming men and women adopted interventions introduced by colonial agricultural extension officers. However, a significant number of farmers resisted these interventions that were imposed with little consultation. The interventions also played a part in local conflicts over land. Some individuals exploited new land use requirements to cause the removal of their opponents from their communities with the aim of taking over their land. They, reported the neighbours to colonial officials, accusing them of resisting these measures.

Chapter Six discusses the experiences of those Africans whose land was alienated by settlers and missionaries. These men and women became tenants and 'squatters' on the land which they had occupied for generations. Because the land they occupied was their ancestral lands, I resist the urge to call them squatters, hence the use of the term with quotation marks. These men and women occupied crevices within the colonial space. Their interactions with their settler landlords influenced relations between white settlers and the colonial state. While colonial administrators' allegiances lay first with their settler constituency, they could not afford to completely ignore Africans' demands. Native Commissioners shouldered the burden of finding land for the displaced Africans. As colonial administrators performed the balancing act of satisfying their settler constituency and maintaining law and order, they made and broke alliances that breached

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

the racial divide. African tenants and 'squatters' on alienated land were able to retain access to their ancestral lands because they skillfully exploited contradictions within the colonial establishment.

In short, the dissertation examines land scarcity and the forms of difference that it engendered. It highlighted the multiple asymmetries of power that led to inequality. They include those based not only on race, but also on notions of belonging, kinship, gender, generation, seniority, status and class. The dissertation reconsidered the narrative of land and power in Zimbabwe. This narrative emphasized racialized colonial dispossession and post-colonial repossession.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

CHAPTER 2

MIGRATION, KINSHIP, TRIBUTE AND TERRITORY: LAND AND POLITICAL IMAGINATIONS IN PRE-COLONIAL NORTHEASTERN ZIMBABWE, *c.*1560-1890

Muponda:	*imi vanhu vemuguta*	Members of this household
	Nemi vese vafambi tarisai	And all the passersby. Look,
	Uyu ari kufamba pano	The one walking around
	Ndiye Mubvakure wakare	Is the stranger from the past
	Ndiye wakapa muteuro	who gave the prayer
	Akaponesa Vasekuru Vedu	that saved our grandfathers
	Takamuona achisvika	We saw him when he arrived
	Kubva mhiri kwaZambezi	From across the Zambezi
	Tikamuziva kuti akange	And We recognized that
	Ari murume ane simba	He was a powerful man
	Ane rudo kune vanhu vese	who loved all the people[74]

Introduction

In the two stanzas of his seventeen page poem, *Soko Risina Musoro* (A Tale without a Sense), the Zimbabwean nationalist, Hebert W Chitepo, captured an autochthon's memory of how a stranger arrived and settled on his land in what became the territory of Manyika, in the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe. The immigrant, identified in local traditions as *Nyamubvambire* (one who came from Mbire) became the chief of Manyika territory. He replaced Muponda, the autochthon who, in the poem, is telling the story of the immigrant's arrival from across the Zambezi River. The autochthon in Chitepo's poem remembered the immigrant's power and love as two qualities that enabled members of his society to accept the newcomer into their community. As this chapter will suggest, however, the arrival of newcomers in precolonial Zimbabwe brought not only power and love, but also conflict and competition for control over land and followers.

[74] Hebert W Chitepo, "Soko Risina Musoro" in H Chitepo, S Mutsvairo, J Kumbirai and A Hodza, *Nduri DzeZimbabwe,* Harare, Longman Zimbabwe, 1983, p 9. The translation into English is mine.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

The purpose of this chapter is to explore this history of competition for control over land that followed the immigrants' settlement among the autochthons in precolonial northeastern Zimbabwe. The chapter begins by discussing the basis upon which the immigrants initially obtained land that was already occupied by the autochthons. It then explores the process by which the immigrants sought control over that land. It argues that although colonial Zimbabwe's nationalist intellectuals like Hebert Chitepo projected precolonial rulers of northeastern Zimbabwe as embodiments of power and love, control over land was always contested. Telling this history of contestations over land and power in precolonial northeastern Zimbabwe is rewarding in many ways. It allows us to understand the familial, kinship and political tensions that shaped society before the advent of colonial rule. Many of these tensions persist to this day.[75]

Tracing this history has other benefits. By exploring how familial, kinship and political tensions shaped access to land and power, the chapter inserts the localized social processes into the study of pre-colonial polities in Zimbabwe. Previously, studies of these polities have mostly related the development of political institutions to participation in the Indian Ocean trade.[76] By telling the story of localized struggles for land and power, I am also able to respond to David Beach who criticized the focus on the great states of Great Zimbabwe, Mutapa and Rozvi-Changamire in studies of pre-colonial Zimbabwe. According to Beach, the problem with these early studies lies in their failure to realize

---

[75] See for example the discussion of rural conflicts of land in late colonial and post-colonial northwestern Zimbabwe by Pius S Nyamabara. Pius S. Nyambara, A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe.

[76] Innocent Pikirayi, *the Zimbabwe Culture: The Origins and Decline in Southern Zambezian States*, Walnut Creek, AltaMira Press, 2001; S.I.G Mudenge, *A Political History of Munhumutapa, c1400-1902*, Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988 and H.H.K Bhila,*Trade and Politics in a Shona Kingdom*.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

that “for most of their history, most of the Shona had lived in relatively small and usually independent units.”[77]

Migration, Kinship and Territorial Claims: Claims Making to Land and Power in Zimbabwe’s Eastern Highlands from *c*1560-1890

The familial, kinship and political relations that shaped access to land and power in precolonial northeastern Zimbabwe are captured in stories of migration, settlement and state formation told by elders. At the end of June 2013, SaMuponda, an elderly man in his 80s, told me one such story. I asked SaMuponda about the origins of the people who inhabited the precolonial territories of Manyika, Maungwe, Bocha and Jindwi. The octogenarian informed me that his ancestors were the first to settle in the area that later became the political domain of precolonial Manyika.[78] The Manyika and their neighbors, SaMuponda pointed out, were later arrivals and came from the northwest.[79]

SaMuponda remembered the tradition of Manyika settlement in his ancestral lands as follows: The Manyika leader, one Nyamubvambire, was a great hunter. Many years ago, Nyamubvambire arrived on the western bank of the Honde River in Chief Muponda’s territory on a hunting trip. He liked the area and thought of settling there. He then married one of Muponda’s daughters. Because Nyamubvambire was now his son-in-law, Chief Muponda gave him a portion of land on which to settle on the western side of the Honde River. But Muponda retained political authority over the whole territory including the land where he had settled Nyamubvambire.

[77] David Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past*, p xvi. See also David Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe.*

[78] Interviews with SaMuponda, 24/06/2013 and 01/07/2013.

[79] Interviews with SaMuponda, 24/06/2013 and 01/07/2013.

www.manaraa.com

One day, Nyamubvambire shot a large animal which fell across the bed of the Honde River. The animal's front half was on the eastern bank of the river, the side where chief Muponda's homestead was located. The animal's hind half was on the western bank of the river. Nyamubvambire went to tell his father-in-law that he had shot a huge animal and that the two should share the meat. On their way, the son-in-law asked his father-in-law, chief Muponda, to choose the portion of the animal he would want to take. At that point, Muponda thought of his family which was short of food. He chose to take the hind half because it had more meat. He left the front half to Nyamubvambire. They parted ways and each went home carrying their meat.

From the day they shared the meat, Nyamubvambire began to plot how he could take over Muponda's territory. One day Nyamubvambire asked Muponda to meet him at the Honde River. In the ensuing conversation, Nyamubvambire asked his father-in-law as to whom the territory belonged. Surprised by the question, Muponda responded by restating that he was the owner and chief of the land. Nyamubvambire further asked Muponda as to the part he chose when the two shared the animal the hunter had shot. Muponda affirmed that he had taken the hind half. At that point Nyamubvambire told Muponda that he had chosen the meat that is given to women and had left the part that men should take to him. Nyamubvambire claimed that, from that day on, he was the man of the territory and Muponda and his people were now his 'wives.' Nyamubvambire claimed political authority over Muponda's lands.[80]

[80] Interviews with SaMuponda, 24/06/2013 and 01/07/2013. For another (and published) version of this tradition see Ignasiyo M Zvarevashe, *Dzinza RaVagovera VaChirumhanzu NaMutasa*, Gweru, Mambo Press, 1998, pp 1-4. Zvarevashe's account draws heavily on Jason Takafa Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

It was tempting to reject SaMuponda's version of Manyika settlement in northeastern Zimbabwe as a story meant to portray his ancestors, the Muponda, as the victims. However, the suspicion was tempered by the realization that the tradition of Nyamubvambire's migration and settlement in Manyika has been told for over a century with minor variations by people who would be more sympathetic to the Manyika than the Muponda cause. It was consistent despite the varied vantages of those who were telling the story. In 1903 and 1906, Manyika male elders narrated the same tradition to T.B. Hulley the Native Commissioner for Umtali.[81] The Manyika oral historian, Jason Machiwenyika provides a version of the same tradition based on information he collected from his elders between 1908 and his death in 1924.[82] It was highly unlikely that SaMuponda had laid his hands on either of these sources for all of them entailed a great investment of time and resources at the National Archives of Zimbabwe. His was an account that had been passed to him orally. From a historian's perspective it was interesting that in each version, the core components of the tradition remained the same despite the fact that they were told by different narrators to different audiences over the course of a century. I shall turn to these core components and their significance shortly. For the moment, it is important that we take note of what the traditions say about Manyika's neighbors in Maungwe, Bocha and Jindwi.

[81] N3/33/8, History of the Mashona Tribes; NUA 2/1/6, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali, Report dated 3 May 1906, from Native Commissioner Umtali to the Chief Native Commissioner.

[82] Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lesson 68.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

The form and content of the Manyika oral traditions are similar to those of the dynastic traditions of her neighbors in Maungwe, Jindwi and Bocha.[83] For example, Chipunza dynastic traditions collected by John Thokozane in the 1960s maintain that the first chief Chipunza was a *mubvakure* (literally one who came from a faraway place) who came from a place called Chiriri or *Tanganyika.*[84] It is interesting to note that in his poem quoted in the epigraph, Hebert Chitepo used the term *mubvakure* to refer to the immigrant Manyika rulers. Like Nyamubvambire, Chipunza was one of a party of hunters. According to this tradition, Chipunza first settled among Mutoko's Budya, to the north of Maungwe. Finding the Budya area unsuitable for agriculture, he decided to seek new pastures. He passed through Mangwende's Nhowe before settling in Maungwe. Thokozane's informant suggests that the land occupied by the first Chipunza was unsettled but then adds that:

> Chipunza and his people were well settled [after getting to their new site in Maungwe], but he was a wanderer with an urge to explore. He set off one day towards the southeast and went into the country of Chief Madziwa. This man became very friendly with Chipunza.
>
> Madziwa and his people lived under very primitive conditions, knowing little of fire making or hunting methods. Chipunza taught Madziwa's people all he could because they knew nothing of cooking, living on a diet of raw meat and uncooked vegetables. Madziwa held a feast in honour of Chipunza and gave him a girl as his reward…. Chipunza returned to his home and slaughtered a beast in honour of Madziwa who had returned with him. He called to Madziwa saying, 'choose the meat you like best.' So he chose meat from the back (tender loin) and ate it. Then Chipunza said, 'My friend, I am greater than you.' 'Why?' asked Madziwa. "Because I taught you many things for the good of your people. I also told you to choose the meat you liked best. You chose the wrong meat. That meat is for women at home, not for men who can hunt and fight.' From that day Chipunza ruled all the country of Maungwe which for a long time has been called Makoni district.[85]

---

[83] Jan Vansina, *Oral Traditions as History,* Steven Feierman, *The Shambaa Kingdom: A History*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1974.

[84] John Thokozane, "A Short History of Chipunza." In *NADA*, ix, 2, 1965; D.P. Abraham, The Principalities of Maungwe.

[85] John Thokozane, "A Short History of Chipunza." In *NADA*, ix, 2, 1965, p59.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

One could easily replace a few details—the name of the founder, the autochthonous chief and the locality and take the Chipunza traditions across the Odzi river to Manyika. Makoni and Zimunya dynastic traditions are replete with similar elements as those that relate to Manyika and Chipunza.[86] The similarities in the form and content of these traditions of migration and settlement are more than a result of the dynasties' proximity to one another. They reflect similar processes that informed the politics of claims to land and power in precolonial northeastern Zimbabwe.

What were these social processes? Answering this question entails grappling with the age old discussion of how historians disentangle historically stable data from the mythical components of oral traditions. From Jan Vansina's writings in the 1960s to the latest discussions of landscape and memory in Africa, scholars have reminded us that oral traditions are social texts and the art of storytelling is a performance.[87] As Jan Bender Shetler notes, in performing this art narrators, "reconstruct (rather than reproduce) oral traditions through the use of mnemonic systems, the central elements of which scholars of oral tradition call core images or clichés."[88] These core images are retained even as the narrators bring in new information to reconstruct their stories. Scholars of oral traditions concur that "it is these core images that hold the key to the historical interpretation."[89] In the remainder of this section, I analyze the core images of the dynastic traditions of

[86]T.E., "The Origin of the Name 'Makoni.'" In *NADA* No. 14, 1937; L.V .Jowett, "The Hungwe People of the Makoni District." *NADA* Vol 11, No.5, 1968; D.P. Abraham, The Principalities of Maungwe, N3/33/8, History of the Mashona Tribes; NUA 2/1/6, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali, Report dated 3 May 1906, from Native Commissioner Umtali to the Chief Native Commissioner.

[87] Jan Vansina, Oral Traditions as History; Joseph Miller, "Introduction: Listening for the African Past." In Joseph Miller (ed), *The African Past Speaks: Essays on Oral Tradtion and History*, Kent, W.M. Dawson and Sons, 1980; Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts* and Jan Bender Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti*.

[88] Jan Bender Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti*, p 18.

[89] Jan Bender Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti*, p19.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

migration and settlement in the eastern highlands and the adjacent territories of Maungwe and Bocha to highlight the terms of claims to land and power in precolonial northeastern Zimbabwe.

Traditions of land settlement in northeastern Zimbabwe contain the following core components: the heroic founders of the various dynasties were hunters; when they arrived, their territories were already inhabited by some other groups who did not have the technology of fire making; the immigrants taught the autochthons to make fire and cook their food; the immigrants married the autochthons' daughters and on the basis of these marriages settled in the areas that became their territories; finally, on the bases of the autochthons' choices of the parts of the animals that were offered to them by the immigrants, political authority over their territories passed from the former to the latter.[90] The autochthonous groups identified in the traditions are as follows. In Manyika, the immigrants led by Nyamubvambire found Muponda and Muchena already occupying the land.[91]In Maungwe, the immigrants led by Mubvakure found the area already occupied by Mutwira or Madziwa.[92]In Bocha, Mutsago and Marange occupied land that was inhabited by Nechipindirwe.[93]

---

[90] This is based on my collective reading of the traditions as told to me during oral interviews and as captured in the recorded versions left by Hulley, Machiwenyika and others. Interviews with SaMuponda, 24/06/2013 and 01/07/2013; N3/33/8, History of the Mashona Tribes; NUA 2/1/6, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali, Report dated 3 May 1906, from Native Commissioner Umtali to the Chief Native Commissioner.

[91] Robert H Baker, "The Mutasa and Makoni Dynasties." *NADA* No. 2, 1924; Robert H Baker, "The Mutupo among the Wamanyika." *NADA*, No.3, 1925, p51; Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lesson 68 and Interviwew with Samuponda, 24 June 2013.

[92] D.P Abrahama The Principalities of Maungwe.

[93] Interview with Songore, 28 June 2013

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Paying attention to these core components allows us to identify the unfolding social and political processes which shaped the terms of access to land and the making of authority among immigrants and autochthonous groups in precolonial northeastern Zimbabwe. The accounts reveal connections among personal attributes and the social basis of power over land and people. They tell the story of the development of patrilineal societies in which political power rested with men. The traditions from Manyika, Jindwi, Bocha and Maungwe emphasize the point that the founders of the respective polities were hunters and wanderers. In the precolonial division of labor among the Shona societies, hunting was a man's job.[94] Indeed, when Chief Madziwa picked the tender loins Chipunza told him that he had chosen the meat eaten by women at home and not by men who could hunt and fight.[95]

However, at the time of their entry into these new territories, the brave and heroic hunters were outsiders and did not have ready access to land that was already occupied by the autochthonous communities. One way to gain access to these lands was through integration into the existing communities' networks of kinship. In the two cases cited above, both *Nyamubvambire* and *Sabarawara* established kinship ties with the autochthons by marrying the chiefs' daughters. These marriages enabled the immigrants to be accommodated into the territories ruled by their new fathers-in-law. Other groups emerging about this same time replicated this process of integration into existing kinship groups through marriage. To the south of both Manyika and Maungwe, traditions about Mutsago's settlement in Bocha maintain that the autochthonous Nechipindirwe gave him

---

[94] David Beach, "The Shona Economy." In Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons (eds), *Roots of Rural Poverty in Southern and Central Africa*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1977.

[95] John Thokozane, "A Short History of Chipunza," p 59.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

a wife and a piece of land after he had successfully killed elephants that were a menace in the area.[96] Like his neighbors to the north, Mutsago was also a hunter. The same traditions insisted that Marange followed his elder brother, Mutsago and settled in the area.[97] He, likewise, received a wife, Marangeni, from Nechipindirwe and was thus integrated into the existing networks of kinship.[98]

Shona cultural etiquette ritualizes power in terms of the choices of meat that people eat and the order in which food is served. Those up in the social hierarchy are expected to eat meat from certain parts of the animal and are usually the first to be served. In the traditions of settlement in the eastern highlands, Nyamubvambire and Mubvakure claimed power after the autochthonous chiefs refused to take the meat that could only be eaten by the chiefs.[99] The same tradition is told in Zimunya, Mutasa's neighbor to the south.[100] By allowing the immigrants to take the chest, the autochthons thus ritually allowed political authority over their territories to pass from their hands to those of the newcomers.

The traditions of migration, settlement and state formation tied competition for control over land with ideas about civilization. They suggest that immigrants civilized the autochthons by teaching them how to make fire and to cook their food which they

---

[96] Interview with Mutsago, 28 June 2013.

[97] Interview with Mutsago, 28 June 2013; Record of a possessed Mutsago *Svikiro* (Spirit Medium), 29 June 2013. I am grateful to George Bishi for giving me his interviews with members of the Mutsago clan including the recordings of the possessed Mutsago Spirit medium's conversation with members of this clan. Group Interview between George Bishi and Elders of the Mutsago clan.

[98] Interview with Mutsago, 28 June 2013.

[99] Jason Machiwenyika, History and customs of the Manyika, Lesson 68.

[100] N3/33/38, History of Mashona Tribes.

www.manaraa.com

previously ate raw. Ideas about civilization suggested that the first comer communities lacked any recognizable social structures. It was the new comers who introduced them.[101] This is a common trope in the traditions of migration, settlement and social formation in eastern and southern Africa.[102] For example, traditions of frontier settlement in the Serengeti area of Tanzania tell stories of how the first man introduced fire into the house of the first women who only possessed the power to make rain.[103] As Jan Bender Shetler explains, the first man's emergence from the wilderness domesticates the house and makes it civilized, as he brings fire.[104] Shetler adds that the women who possessed the power to make rain retained ritual authority and the society that emerged out of the first man's interaction with the first women was marked by "interdependent mutuality between genders."[105]

Shetler's analysis has resonance with the northeastern Zimbabwean case under study. In the Serengeti, the interaction between the first man and the first woman produced a social order in which women retained ritual authority by virtue of the first woman's power to make rain. However, in northeastern Zimbabwe, Shetler's "interdependent mutuality between genders" is transformed into mutual interdependence between the immigrants and the autochthons. This interdependence meant that the immigrants' control over land was never complete. The autochthons retained ritual power

---

[101] David L Schoenbrun, *A Green Place, A Good Place: Agrarian Change, Gender and Social Identity in the Great Lakes Region to the 15th Century*, Heinemann: NH, Portsmouth, 1998, p133.

[102] See the discussion in Steven Feierman, *The Shambaa Kingdom*, pp 52-53 and Jan Bender Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti*, pp 56-58.

[103] Jan Bender Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti*, p 57.

[104] Jan Bender Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti*, p57.

[105] Jan Bender Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti*, pp 57-58.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

over land because their ancestors were the first to settle in the area. As H.H.K Bhila, explains,

> as owners of the land they exercised direct spiritual control over the land and its products, despite the fact that they had been conquered….In spite of its political superiority, the Nyamubvambire dynasty had to rely upon its subjects to communicate with their ancestral spirits to ensure the prosperity of the land. [106]

Unlike the first woman who retained ritual authority because she possessed the power to make rain, the autochthons retained ritual power by virtue of being the first to settle on the land. The difference in the emphasis on who retained ritual authority over land is accounted for by the fact that, whereas the traditions of settlement in the Serengeti area describe encounters in a frontier region, those of northeastern Zimbabwe concur that the immigrants found an area that was already inhabited.

The idea that the immigrants introduced fire among the autochthons is also a pointer to a practice of ensuring political allegiance that was already under way when most of the dynastic rulers established their polities. An early sixteenth century Portuguese account of the Mutapa kings' relations with their vassals—in which Manyika and Makoni are cited as such—explains this symbolic meaning of fire on precolonial political relations:

> this King of Benametapa [Mwenemutapa] sends each year honourable men throughout his kingdom to all the seigniories and places that are in it to give them new fire, to ascertain if they are obedient, that is to say, each man of them having reached a place causes all the fires that are in to be extinguished in such a way that in all place no fire is left, and when all have been put out, all go to him to take it from his hand as a token of amity and obedience so that the place or town that does not choose to do this is immediately accused of rebellion… [107]

---

[106] H.H.K. Bhila, *Trade and Politics in a Shona Kingdom*, pp10-12.

[107] Duarte Barbosa, "Extracts from a book written by Duarte Barbosa, 1516." In G.M. Theal, *Records of South East Africa,* Vol. 1, p. 96; See also the discussion in H.H.K. Bhila, Trade and Politics in a Shona Kingdom, p.12.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

By introducing fire to the autochthons, the immigrants were symbolically reinforcing their political authority in the same manner that the Mutapa rulers had been doing.

The actual transfer of authority from the autochthons to the immigrants was more contested than the imagery that this symbolic choice of meat and the introduction of fire suggest. The process was filled with the conflicts over land that scholars of colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe suggest were uncommon in the precolonial period.[108] The oral traditions collected by Machiwenyika suggest that in Manyika, violence cemented the outsiders' claims to power and the autochthons' submission. The traditions tell the story of Nyamandoto, Nyamubvambire's successor. Nyamandoto was Nyamubvambire's son with the women he married from Muponda. Manyika oral traditions record that Nyamandoto grew up among his maternal relatives. According to these traditions, as a young boy living among his maternal kinsmen Nyamandoto was cruel:

> during his boyhood he took some of Muponda's children, his nephews and went with them on a high mountain. While there he pushed them down and they all died. His uncle Muponda was very angry and said that he was going to kill him. But the boy said, 'eh, uncle, do not kill me now, let me go and tell my father first.' No one knew whether or not the boy had been commanded by his father to do so. Then the uncles feared to kill him because his father, Nyamubvambire was a brave man. He gave us fire, he kills fearful animals and so if we kill his son we will all perish; furthermore, he is miraculous and he will get everything from us.[109]

Though the above incident might not be based on actual historical events, it nonetheless sheds light on the idea that authority over land rested on both symbolic and material power. In the history of Manyika, it also foreshadowed the heavy handedness with which, according to the oral traditions, Nyamandoto later consolidated his position on power. When Nyamandoto claimed the chieftainship of the whole area, Muponda's people

[108] Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla War*, p28; Kenneth D Manungo, The Role Peasants Played in the Zimbabwean War of Liberation. Manungo romantically titled his precolonial chapter "Pasichigare,: The Golden Age."

[109] Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lesson 68.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

threatened to fight him. They withdrew this threat after Nyamandoto asked them whether they had forgotten what he was capable of doing and threatened to kill them all.[110]

The story does not only demonstrate the extent to which the immigrants used violence to achieve political authority. It also provides insights into the autochthons' perceptions of the immigrants' power, and of the choices that they had to make. Muponda's people, like many of the autochthons, recognized the immigrants' unmatched powers. As they were pondering what to do with the loss of political authority to the immigrants, Muponda and his people remembered that Nyamubvambire was a brave man who gave them fire. They also remembered that Nyamubvambire was a powerful person who killed fearful animals and if they killed his son they would perish.[111] Consequently, the autochthons did not only avoid a confrontation with Nyamubvambire but allowed him to take control over their territory.

The fact that Nyamandoto grew up among his maternal kinsmen reveals that one could take residence with either the matrilineage or the patrilineage. What mattered was one's membership in the networks of kin. However, the violent episode in which Nyamandoto killed his *madzisekuru* (uncles) captures the trajectory which the politics of succession to a chieftainship—which were simultaneously struggles to control land—took in all the polities in precolonial Zimbabwe. The conflict in the Nyamandoto story pitted uncles against nephews. It does not seem that the uncles were jealousy that their father's position would be inherited by their nephew. Instead, they saw the nephew and the immigrant communities that he represented as usurpers to their father's throne.

110 Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lesson 69.

111 Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lesson 68.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Nyamandoto himself was aware of this and the idea that he killed his maternal uncles serves to demonstrate that the immigrants took steps to ensure that the autochthons would never recover from the immigrant-induced loss of control over land. By killing his maternal *madzisekuru*, Nyamandoto eliminated the possibility that Muponda's male descendants would recapture the power their father had surrendered to Nyamubvambire. Moreover, Nyamandoto claimed power over Manyika not as Muponda's nephew but as Nyamubvambire's eldest son. For this reason, it is most likely that the contest for power between Nyamandoto represented something other than an effort to structure power along matrilineal lines. It was a conflict between immigrants and autochthons.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the immigrant rulers of northeastern Zimbabwean territories must have been well entrenched in their new territories. At this time, any signs of instability would not have escaped the attention of the Portuguese who always kept a sharp eye on the Zimbabwean plateau's political developments and the implications of any instability on commerce. From the late sixteenth century, the Portuguese maintained a special interest in Manyika with its famed riches in gold. They reached Manyika in the mid-1570s and kept a keen presence in the area from then until their expulsion by the Rozvi-Changamire in 1695.[112] That the Portuguese are silent about any conflicts in Manyika is, perhaps, instructive of the situation obtaining at the time for they consistently reported conflicts within the Mutapa state to the north.[113] Whatever might have been the case, once the immigrants were settled, competition for power over land and people led to low intensity intra-dynastic conflicts, further migrations, and more

[112] H.H.K. Bhila, *Trade and Politics in a Shona Kingdom*, p70; Joao Dos Santos, Ethiopia Oriental, pp217-220.

[113] Antonio Bocarro, Decade of the Performances of the Portuguese in the East.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

conflicts pitting immigrants against autochthons. In fact, intra-dynastic competition for power led to the conquest of land by people related to the territory's ruling elites and fresh conflicts over land that pitted immigrants and autochthons. In parts of northeastern Zimbabwe, this cycle of conflict, migration and territorial settlement was still underway in the first decade of colonial rule.[114]

Manyika traditions link this intra-dynastic competition for power with the polity's territorial expansion to the north and northwest. Igor Kopytoff called this process the production of an internal African frontier, one which was characterized by migrations of individuals from established polities to conquer new lands and establish new polities.[115] The Manyika traditions capture this process by telling the story of Nyamandoto's conflict with his younger brother Nyarumwe. According to the traditions collected by Machiwenyika, when Nyamandoto was old, he asked Nyarumwe to take over the chieftainship. He nonetheless expected his younger brother to show him respect. However, once Nyarumwe ascended to the throne, he became arrogant and no longer respected his elder brother. This did not go well with Nyamandoto, who sent men to kill Nyarumwe. Govera, another of Nyamandoto's brothers, then became the king of Manyika with Nyamandoto's blessings. Fearing that Nyarumwe's sons would revenge their father's death Nyamandoto persuaded four of them—Saruchera, Zindi, Mandeya and Sakarombe—to go and settle at Mushonga hill, to the north of the chief's capital,

[114] See the discussion on Chimbadzwa below.

[115] Igor Kopytoff, "Introduction: The Internal African Frontier: The Making of African Political Culture," in Igor Kopytoff (ed.), *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African societies*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1987, pp 3-84.

www.manaraa.com

Bingaguru, ostensibly to watch the enemies who would attack the polity from that direction. The four brothers later settled at Mount Mupwapwa.[116]

The traditions suggest that when the four brothers learned of the chief's death, they returned to the Manyika capital, to see him buried and presumably cast their lots in the succession battle. However, Manyika councilors told them that "those from Mushonga who climbed the Mapwepwe Mountain should not meet the chief."[117] According to the traditions, the four brothers remained on the other side of the Nyamutsani River and were told that they were no longer eligible to be Manyika Chiefs.[118] Govera, the Manyika chief who succeeded Nyarumwe, officially recognized Zindi and Saruchera as headmen.[119] Mandeya went on to establish his own *dunhu* (ward) in Nyamhuka, while Sakarombe became the headmen of Karombe.

The Manyika elders' injunction that those who had climbed the Mapwapwa Mountains should remain on the other side of the Nyamutsani River effectively confined the four brothers to the territory's northern and northwestern limits. Consequently, the Manyika patriclans settled the good agricultural lands to the north and northwest of the capital, Bingaguru. This was crucial in checking the easterly and southerly expansion of Manyika's western and northern neighbors, Makoni and Saunyama, respectively. Indeed, Mandeya settled on the polity's northwestern border with Makoni.

---

[116] Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lessons 103 and 104.

[117] Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lesson 89.

[118] Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lesson 89.

[119] Jason machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lesson 89

للاستشارات المنارة
www.manaraa.com

In some cases, conflicts between new rivals for the chieftainship led to a complete division of the dynasties and of the emergence of new polities. This also led to the settlement of neighboring lands by related people. For example, in Maungwe, competition for power between *Sabarawara's* (also referred to as *Mubvakure*) two sons, Chipunza and Muswere, led to the emergence of the Makoni polity. Although Makoni dynastic traditions are largely silent about the conflicts, Chipunza dynastic traditions suggest that this was the case.[120] According to the Chipunza traditions about the separation, Muswere, who had gone hunting, secretly returned and poisoned the water supply at his father's kraal. After poisoning the water, Muswere again slipped out of the village without being noticed and joined his party of hunters near the Odzi River. Chipunza traditions claim that Muswere poisoned the water in an attempt to kill Chipunza, his elder brother, and inherit the chieftainship. According to these traditions, many people died after drinking the poisoned water but the targeted Chipunza survived. The traditions maintain that when the resultant epidemic was under control, Chipunza called his brother, Muswere. However, Muswere refused to enter the village saying that he was no longer Chipunza's brother.[121] At that point, Chipunza, offered Muswere his sister as a wife. Muswere took the offer, bringing to an end their relationship as brothers.

The Chipunza traditions about the separation of the two dynasties demonstrate a repetition of similar processes of intra-dynastic competition for power and the resultant settlement of adjacent lands by related patriclans with the additional detail that Makoni

[120] Makoni dynastic traditions claim that it was the outbreak of the dysentery epidemic that prevented Muswere from returning to his father's village and informed his decision to start his own household and later polity. In contrast to the claim made in the Chipunza traditions, they do not suggest that he was behind the epidemic. See D.P. Abraham, The Principality of Maungwe, pp61-63.

[121] John Thokozane, A Short History of Chipunza.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

changed his clan identity from *WaMhina to WaShonga.* These conflicts have to be understood within the context of the politics of succession among the Shona. Because Muswere was the younger brother in a system in which the eldest surviving son was to inherit his father's position, he did not stand a chance of ascending to the throne as long as Chipunza was alive. It made sense for him to establish his own territorial claims and polity outside Chipunza. As a result, Muswere left and established his own Makoni polity. As a hunter, he also had the qualities of the dynastic patriarchs.

Muswere's decision to move was not unusual. In the chiefs' polygynous households, it was not uncommon for brothers (and half-brothers) to quarrel over the right to succeed their fathers and for the aggrieved parties to move en masse and settle elsewhere. Six years after the British annexation of Manyika, the Native Commissioner for Umtali district, T.B Hulley, reported that the chief's son and preferred heir, Chimbadzwa, together with his sister Chikanga and their followers, had left the district and settled in Makombe's territory, across the border in Portuguese East Africa. Hulley gathered that they left Manyika because they were afraid that one of Mutasa's junior wives would bewitch them.[122]

Witchcraft accusations were common expressions of the competition and jealousies that accompanied life in polygynous households.[123] In the Manyika case, they reflected serious conflicts between Chimbadzwa and his half-brother Chiobvu over the

[122] NUA 2/1/1, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali, Letter dated 21 December 1896 from Native Commissioner, Umtali, to Chief Native Commissioner.

[123] This is especially captured in literary expressions of life in precolonial Zimbabwe. See for example, I. M. Zvarevashe, *Kurauone*, Salisbury, College Press, 1976.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

right to succeed their father, Tendai Mutasa, the chief of Manyika.[124] Hulley reported that although Tendai Mutasa claimed that Chimbadzwa was his chief son and heir apparent, a large proportion of the Mutasa people favored Chiobvu.[125] It was probably for this reason, more than the threat of witchcraft, that Chimbadzwa left Manyika for Barwe. According to A.S. Nyamatore, Chimbabdzwa only returned to his father's territory when Makombe, the Barwe chief, made it clear that he would not allow him to establish an independent dynasty in his territory.[126]

Political competition led to the colonization of more territory by related patriclans and to new conflicts with existing communities. For example, in the Nyamhuka area of northwestern Manyika, Mandeya conquered Dumbwi, one of the rulers who preceded Nyamubvambire in the eastern highlands.[127] However, the immigrants did not necessarily displace existing communities. They only took control over land. That is, they assumed political power in the area. In practice, the new political rulers of the land continued to live side by side with the conquered autochthons who, of course, did not belong to their patrilineages. For this reason, it is, perhaps, not realistic to conceptualize precolonial Shona societies in terms of totemic groups.[128] For what passed as a *Shava* or *Shumba* area was in fact inhabited both by ruling lineages who belonged to the *Shava* and

---

[124] NUA 2/1/1, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali, Letter dated 21 December 1896 from Native Commissioner, Umtali, to Chief Native Commissioner.

[125] NUA 2/1/1, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali, Letter dated 21 December 1896 from Native Commissioner, Umtali, to Chief Native Commissioner.

[126] A.S. Nyamatore, "Mutasa, The British South Africa Company and the African Portuguese Syndicate: The Fight for Manyika in the 1890s," Henderson Seminar Paper No.41, Department of History, University of Zimbabwe, 1978, pp26-27.

[127] David N Beach, Oral Tradition in Eastern Zimbabwe, p15.

[128] David Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past.*

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Shumba totems as well as the autochthons who belonged to other totemic groups. More importantly, such a conception will, if inadvertently, lead us to write the history of those who controlled the land. These were the ruling elites. It is, perhaps, more rewarding to think of the history of land settlement in northeastern Zimbabwe in terms of how intra-dynastic competition led to more interaction between immigrant ruling patrilineages and autochthonous communities.

Kinship, Tribute, and Territory: The Politics of Claims Making to Land and Power on the Central Watershed, *c.*1700-1890

As in the eastern highlands, in the central watershed, integration into the networks of kinship was crucial to the immigrant dynasties' initial access to land that was already occupied by other people. Nhira Nvere Chinhoyi remembered the traditions of settlement of the Chihota dynasty as follows: "we arrived in this area and found cowpeas but we did not know who had sown them…Cowpeas, melons, pumpkins—all these were in abundant supply. Girls and boys began eating them."[129] Chinhoyi's ancestors found a place that was already inhabited by agriculturalists belonging to a number of clans. Before long, they learned who had grown the crops. Chinhoyi explained that

> …one day, Chivazhe and his father Nyautsenga and Nyaukota went out to hunt. They went out and got to Rwizi's area (Chitungwiza) and from there they went to Mashayamombe's area and then on to Nyandoro. While in Nyandoro's area, they killed game and gave it to him. Nyandoro in return gave his daughter, Nhondo to him. [They came across] Nyandoro in Tsunga, that is, Beatrice area…Baya took Nhondo as his wife. This is how we settled in this part. Nyandoro is our maternal ancestor.[130]

The founders of the Chihota dynasty also gained access to land by marrying into the houses of existing dynasties. Traditions of settlement from other polities on the central

[129] AOH 39, Nhira Nzvere Chinhoyi.

[130] AOH 39, Nhira Nvere Chinhoyi.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

watershed point to a repetition of similar processes of social integration into kinships through marriage as the first step in accessing territory. In the late 1970s, the reigning Chief Chikwaka explained that when Benhura, the founder of his chiefdom, arrived in the land that became their territory, he saw the Gora people. The Gora people, according to Chief Chikwaka, gave Benhura a wife and he remained there as a son-in-law.[131]

Traditions of political development on the central watershed add another layer to the terms of claims making to power over land and people. These traditions insist that the *VaRozvi* installed all chiefs on the Zimbabwean plateau. They, therefore, suggest that the Rozvi appointed those who controlled land in northeastern Zimbabwe. The VaRozvi were the rulers of the Rozvi state whose capital was at Danamombe on Southwestern Zimbabwe. Scholars locate the origins of the state in the instability that followed Portuguese attempts to conquer the Mutapa state in the middle of the seventeenth century.[132] They point out that in the midst of the violence that rocked the Mutapa state emerged the founder of the Rozvi kingdom, adding that although his identity is difficult to establish, he undoubtedly possessed significant organizational skills.[133] He raised an army that did not only depose the rulers of the Torwa state based at Khami, in southwestern Zimbabwe, but drove the Portuguese out of the Zimbabwean plateau in the

[131] AOH 34, Chikwaka Chief Marufu; See also AOH 31, Kapiro Chisvo.

[132] David Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe*, p228; Innocent Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture*, p 209.

[133] David Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe*, p 228.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

1690s.[134] From the remnants of the Torwa state, the Changamire rulers established the Rozvi state.

From the last decade of the seventeenth century to the 1830s, when the kingdom fell to the Nguni migrants escaping from the *Mfecane* upheavals in *Zululand*, the Rozvi state was perhaps the most powerful polity on the Zimbabwean plateau. Historians note that although the core of the state remained in southwestern Zimbabwe, the Rozvi kingdom was able to exert its authority throughout most of the Zimbabwean plateau, through a system of tributary relations with most Shona chiefs.[135] When Shona dynastic traditions say that the Rozvi installed chiefs on the Zimbabwean plateau, they may be recording this network of tributary relations that the Rozvi rulers established with Shona rulers.

On the Zimbabwean plateau's central watershed, such claims were numerous. Chief Marufu Chikwaka insisted that the Rozvi allotted land to all the chieftainships in the central watershed. "Even this Mangwende was given the name Mangwende [by the Rozvi]. That land did not belong to him," added Chief Chikwaka.[136] Chikwaka also claimed that the Rozvi installed his ancestor Benhura as chief of his territory in a process that saw a son-in-law deposing his father-in-law, Gora, from power and displacing him from his land.[137] Oral traditions about other chieftaincies in the central watershed tell

[134] David Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe*, pp 227-235, Innocent Pikrayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture*, pp 209-212 and Gerald Chikozho Mazarire, "A Social and Political History of Chishanga: South-Central Zimbabwe, *c*.1750-2000," Unpublished DPhil Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 2009, pp 41-42.

[135] David Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe*, pp235-236; Gerald Chikozho Mazarire, A Social and Political History of Chishanga, pp44-46.

[136] AOH 34, Chikwaka, Chief Marufu.

[137] AOH 34, Chikwaka, Chief Marufu.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

similar stories. Aaron Jacha explained that in Rusike, Chakwaka's neighbor to the east, the Rozvi gave Mutonga, the dynasty's founder and his younger brother Mutota the land and chieftainship.[138] Jacha maintained that the "Rozvi themselves used to confer the chieftainship," adding that they decided to give Mutomga the Rusike chieftainship after he impressed them with his magical powers. The Rozvi, according to Jacha, gave Mutonga and his descendants all the land that covered the Marondera district extending to Goromonzi.[139] Many others have made similar claims about the Rozvi's role as land allocators and installers of chiefs.[140]

Scholars of precolonial Zimbabwe have debated the extent of Rozvi power on the Zimbabwean plateau. David Beach has noted that from the antiquarians of the 1920s to the nationalist historians of the 1960s and 1970s, the image of 'power and glory' characterized writings about the Rozvi state.[141] A consensus emerged that the Rozvi were militarily powerful and ruled almost all the Shona speaking people by recognizing local dynasties. Eventually, however, other scholars demonstrated that the Rozvi state was not an empire. Instead, the Rozvi established a network of tributary relations with the various chiefs on the Zimbabwean plateau.[142] It was on the basis of these tributary relations that the Rozvi came to claim control over territory that lay outside the state's core in southwestern Zimbabwe. The view that the Rozvi was a confederacy rather than an

---

[138] AOH 14, Aaron Jacha.

[139] AOH 14, Aaron Jacha.

[140] AOH 38, Mamire Randazha; AOH 31, Chisvo Kapiro; F.W.T.Posselt, "Marondera." *NADA*, No.5, 1927 and Elaine M Lloyd, "Mbava." In *NADA*, No. 3, 1925.

[141] David Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe*, p 224.

[142] David Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe.*

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

empire helps to “cut down to size”—to use David Beach’s phrase—the picture of Rozvi power created by scholars in the 1960s.[143]

Despite the skepticism expressed by Beach and other scholars, the idea that the Rozvi state allocated land and appointed chiefs on the Zimbabwean plateau persists. Sidestepping Beach’s criticism of the earlier scholarship, Gerald Mazarire recently drew on Charles Bullock and S.I.G. Mudenge’s works to argue for Rozvi hegemony in Chishanga in south-central Zimbabwe. He claims that the Rozvi had the final say in the appointment of the tributary chiefs and that the chiefly candidate had to travel to the Rozvi headquarters at Danamombe in southwestern Zimbabwe for the official appointment.[144] Mazarire’s reading of the Rozvi power is influenced by his concern with the relations between center and periphery. For him, the Rozvi rulers did not only rule their peripheral dependencies from their center at Danamombe. They also provided a model political institution which their dependencies like the Hera and other rulers of the imagined Chishanga territory adopted.[145]

To a great extent, this reading of Rozvi power fails to realize that Shona chiefs claimed that the VaRozvi appointed them as a way of claiming superior status in conflicts over authority and territory. As Anthropologist Joost Fontein pointed out in his recent study of contestation over the ‘ownership’ of Great Zimbabwe and the surrounding landscape "…the ‘Rozvi myth’ is a resource that can be utilised and manipulated or denied and rejected, in discursive constructions of the past that are always politically

---

[143] David Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe,* p 224.

[144] Gerald Chikozho Mazarire, A Social and Political History of Chishanga, p 45.

[145] Gerald Chiikozho, Mazarire, A Social and Political History of Chishanga p 46.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

situated in some way."[146] Fontein added that, "…particular individuals made very specific use of the Rozvi myth to support their clans' claims, whilst members of competing clans either made different use of the Rozvi idea or rejected it completely."[147]

Claims to a Rozvi connection for ends similar to those identified by Fontein were not new. For many years, local chieftainships in northeastern Zimbabwe claimed connections with the Rozvi past to legitimate their claims to land even in places where they were evidently late-comers. For example, chief Chiduku and his subjects arrived in Maungwe in the mid-nineteenth century as part of the diaspora that scattered from southwestern Zimbabwe in the aftermath of the Nguni attacks and conquest of the Rozvi state in the 1830s.[148] At least two centuries had passed since chiefs Makoni and Chipunza had settled in the area.[149] Yet in their struggles for territory with Makoni, Chiduku chiefs have been invoking this Rozvi connection to claim more land. For example, in 1989, Chiduku leaders claimed that their ancestor, Dyembeu, the founder of the Rozvi state, gave Makoni the land that he occupied.[150]

These were not isolated claims. In 1925, Mbava, a Rozvi chief in the southern limits of the Wedza reserve made similar claims.[151] Mbava told the reverend Samuel

[146] Joost Fontein, *The silence of Great Zimbabwe: Contested Landscapes and the Power of Heritage*, New York, UCL Press, 2006, p 36.

[147] Joost Fontein, *The silence of Great Zimbabwe*, p 36.

[148] David Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past*, p130 and Samuel Mulhanga and Elaine M Lloyd, "Mbava and Others," *NADA,* 4, 1926, p 92.

[149] See the above discussion on land settlement in Maungwe.

[150] Makoni District Council Files, PER/Chiduku, Speech, Chief Chiduku's installation, Makoni District, 13 June 1989; PER/Chiduku, Provincial Commissioner Manicaland to District Commissioner, Rusape, 1 December 1976.
[151] Ellaine M Lloyd, Mbava, pp62-64.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Mulhanga that "King Chiduku of the Warozvi ruled over the country of the Mawungwe, the Manyika, the Mabocha, the Wanyashanu, the Makombe and the Mazezuru. After this time, the Warozvi were the overlords of the whole country, and chose all the new chiefs."[152] Yet, it appears that the Rozvi leader was embellishing the extent and influence of his ancestors. As we have seen, the Makoni, Chipunza, Marange, Mutsago, Zimunya and Mutasa rulers of the eastern highlands claimed land through their relations with the autochthons.

There is, therefore, a paradox between how elders remembered the ways in which the various rulers acquired their territories and the role of the VaRozvi as the ultimate authorities who installed chiefs in northeastern Zimbabwe. Even those like Chikwaka and Rusike who claim that the Rozvi gave them the chieftainships also maintain that their dynastic patriarchs gained initial access to land by marrying into the autochthons' houses. Most of the dynasties on the central watershed claim that their neighbors gave them the territory on which they settled. For example, the Mudzimurema dynasty claims that it was Svosve who gave them the land.[153] Mudzimurema's neighbors made similar claims. In 1977, Mutambirwa, the reigning chief Nenguwo, pointed out that Svosve gave his ancestors the land that became their territory, adding "our rightful territory is in Mutoko."[154]

Other dynasties claimed that they acquired their territories through conquest. Local traditions in the central watershed chieftaincy of Chihota claim that their land

---

[152] Elaine M Lloyd, Mbava; Makoni District Administrator's Files, PER/ Chiduku, Speech: chief Chiduku's installation, Makoni district, 13 June 1987.

[153] AOH 38, Mamire Randazha, AOH 79, Kamusoro.
[154] AOH 42, Neguwo, Chief Mutambirwa.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

previously belonged to Gunguwo. The Chihota people took the land after driving out Gunguwo for raping their leader's daughter, Nyemba.[155] The Chinamhora rulers of Shawasha also claimed to have dispossessed Gunguwo of his land following a conflict sparked by Gunguwo's arrogance.[156] Svosve, similarly, extended the southern limits of his territory to Mount Wedza after defeating the Njanja under Mutekedza.[157]

Most of the Shona dynastic traditions suggest that although the Rozvi rulers are said to have appointed chiefs, they did not allocate land. This raises questions about the Rozvi's standing in appointing the chiefs. Available evidence suggests that the Rozvi had insufficient military power to enforce their tributary relations with most of the chiefs on the central watershed. When their appointees were ousted from office by competitors, they never intervened to reinstate these preferred candidates. For example, Chihota oral traditions record a succession dispute between two cousins, Shiputire and Zhanji. The Rozvi intervened in the dispute. They appointed Zhanji. In 1903, Chihota male elders told Ernest Morris, the Native Commissioner for Marandellas, that Shiputire's brother Mtenda objected to Zhanji's ascendancy. He mobilized his men and killed Zhanji. But Mtenda died shortly afterwards and Zhanji's brother Chikudza became Chief Chihota.[158] These claims and counterclaims are instructive. Despite Rozvi interference into succession disputes, the ascendancy to the Chihota chieftainship, like any others in northeastern Zimbabwe, practically depended on intra-dynastic intrigues.

---

[155] AOH 39, Nhira Nvere Chinhoyi, F.W.T. Posselt, "The Banyemba Legend and Ceremony." *NADA* No.2, 1924, pp11-13.

[156] AOH 73, Chief Chinhamora, Muchenje.

[157] N3.33.8, History of Native Tribes, Native Commissioner Marandellas to Chief Native Commissioner. See also E.W. Morris, "Marondella's District," pp 440-442.

[158] N3/33/8, History of Native Tribes, Native Commissioner Marandellas to Chief Native Commissioner; E.W. Morris, "Marondella's District," and D. N. Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past,* p 91.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Claims that the Rozvi allocated land to chiefs usually rose in situations where the social context suggests a usurpation of power by somebody who did not have a legitimate claim to the chieftaincy. A good example is that of Benhure who displaced Gora in Chikwaka. Chikwaka, we should remember, did not have a legitimate claim to the territory that belonged to his father-in-law. One could not inherit power from the group in which he had married. This fact barred Benhura from laying claim to the territory that became Chikwaka and the dynasty had to find ways of legitimating their claims. Chikwaka dynastic traditions' claims that the VaRozvi gave them the chieftainship were, meant to explain why Benhura succeeded to power from the family where he had married and, therefore, to regularize an irregular scenario.

Similarly, other traditions bring in the Rozvi rulers to legitimize claims of usurpers who took power from rightful heirs. This seems to be the case in Nhowe in the 1860s.[159] *VaNhowe* informants told David Chanaiwa that when Mhotani, the reigning chief of Nhowe died, Zinyemba, the oldest son of a former ruler was the rightful successor. However, Hundugu, a younger brother succeeded to the throne after he presented himself to the Rozvi as the chosen successor to Mhotani.[160] It should be pointed out that the claim that Hundugu succeeded to the throne after a confirmation from the *VaRozvi* had very little do with Rozvi hegemony. By the 1860s, Rozvi power had collapsed after the Nguni invasions in the 1830s. The surviving members of the Rozvi ruling houses were themselves in exile in southeastern Zimbabwe.[161] It suffices that

[159] David Chanaiwa, "A History of Nhowe Before 1900," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California Los Angeles, 1971, p 141.
[160] David Chanaiwa, A History of the Nhowe, p 141.

[161] See David Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe*, especially chapter 7.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Hundugu used the claim that the Rozvi appointed him chief to legitimate his usurpation of power from his brother, an act that left Nhowe in a bloody civil war among the two claimants' supporters.[162]

A quest for Rozvi recognition was also a way of eliminating competitors from political office. Rozvi recognition required a significant investment in human and material resources. A Native department official who witnessed the installment of Chief Marange in 1956 later reported that Makarara (the newly crowned Chief Marange) brought Chief Mazwi from Buhera to install him. He added that in return for the service of crowning other chiefs the Rozvi rulers were granted twelve head of cattle and two daughters belonging to the new chief.[163] Only those who had abundant resources to bring in the Rozvi representatives could claim to be legitimate chiefs.

Chiefly struggles for legitimacy were closely tied to competition for clients. Combined with the legitimacy that came with Rozvi recognition, the support of clients could cement claims to both chieftainship and land. In northeastern Zimbabwe, as in other parts of Africa, when chiefs assumed power, they also claimed to be the owners of the land and those who settled on their territory became their subjects.[164] Vansina put it nicely in another context. Chiefs claimed lordship over others not only because they possessed wealth but also "because of their claims of ownership of a landed domain."[165] In northeastern Zimbabwe, elders insisted that although the chief did not allocate the

---

[162] David Chanaiwa, A History of Nhowe, pp 142-143.

[163] J.N. Jenkinson, "Installation of Chief Maranke." *NADA*, No.36, 1959, p 26.
[164] For similar claims from elsewhere in Africa, see the discussion in Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals*, especially chapter 2.

[165]Jan Vansina, *How Societies are Born: Governance in West Central Africa Before 1600*, Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2004, p 142.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

specific area where one could establish his homestead, chiefly permission was required before one could establish a new village.[166] This, in turn, put chiefs in a stronger position because access to land became tied to one's recognition of the legitimacy of the chief as the owner of the land. Those who could legitimately distribute land were in a better position to retain more clients. Yet it became a cycle that ensured that power over land and people was always contested.

Marangeni: Gender, Kinship and Territory

The intra-and inter-community relations that underlined contests over land and power in precolonial northeastern Zimbabwe were highly gendered. In the eastern highlands, elders maintained that despite men's apparent domination of the public space, women were crucial to the politics of claims to land and power.[167] In the Mabvengwa area of Bocha, elders insisted that this was the case by telling the story of Marangeni. According to the elders, Marangeni was the women the autochthonous Nechipindirwe gave to Marange as a wife at the time that he entered Bocha. In other words, it was on the basis of Marange's marriage to this woman that he was able to settle in the area. Traditions have it that Marangeni's death cost Marange a portion of his territory which he ceded to the Mabvengwa clan. While all the versions of the story concur that Marangeni was beheaded by an invading army, they do not agree on the actual identity of the killers. In one version, Marangeni was captured and killed by an unidentified army when she wandered across the Odzi River into Jindwi looking for food because of a severe drought

[166] Interview with Charova, 28 June 2013; Interview with Makanya, 29 June 2013.

[167] Group discussion with Songore Brothers, 28 June 2012; Interview with Sekuru Mutsago, 28 June 2013, Interview with SaMuponda, 01 July 2013.

للاستشارات المنارة
www.manaraa.com

that had struck Bocha.[168] In another version, the attackers were Gaza-Nguni raiders. This version maintains that Marangeni was a huge woman and could not fit in the cave where the rest of Chief Marange's household took refuge from the attackers. As a result she was captured. When Marangeni's captors crossed the Odzi River on their homeward journey, they beheaded her.[169]

The versions of this tradition concur that Marangeni's captors beheaded her in Jindwi, Marange's neighbor to the east. According to the traditions, days passed before anybody knew of her fate. Marangeni's body was never found but her severed head rolled back across the Odzi River from Jindwi into Bocha. Mabvengwa came across the rolling head and took it to Chief Marange's court where the chief identified it as his late wife's. But before the head could be buried it rolled back to Mount Denda where it is said to be buried in a cave. At that point Marangeni's spirit possessed Mabvengwa's sister and instructed chief Marange to cut a portion of his land and give it to the Mabvengwa clan as a reward for seeing his wife's head. Part of this land included Mount Denda and its boundaries are said to have followed the path that the rolling head followed. Since then, Mabvengwa has been autonomous from Marange.[170]

A comment on the two versions of the story is in order. Although it is improbable that as the chief's wife, Marangeni would have wandered around looking for food, it is possible that ordinary women would have done that. The story would then be about how the tragedy of an ordinary woman changed the territorial trajectory of Marange. Bocha,

[168] Interview with Songore, 28 June 2013.

[169] Interview with Mutsago, 28 June 2013.
[170] Interview with Songore, 28 June 2013, Interview with Mutsago, 28 June 2013.

www.manaraa.com

of which Marange is part, falls on the eastern highlands' rain shadow and suffers from periodic droughts. It is not surprising that, according to the first version of the tradition, Marangeni was captured looking for food in the neighboring territory of Jindwi in the well watered eastern highlands. The Gaza-Nguni element in the second version is a later accretion. The fact that the tradition acknowledges that Marangeni was the women Nechipindirwe gave to Marange make it highly unlikely that she was captured by the Gaza-Nguni who moved to the eastern highlands in the late 1820s. This was a century after the 1720s dates suggested by historians to be the decade Marange settled in Bocha.[171]The insertion of the Gaza-Nguni raid in this version of the tradition most likely reflects the trauma inflicted on communities in Bocha and the surrounding areas by Gaza-Nguni raiders in the nineteenth century.

The story offers insights on how precolonial societies ordered relations within communities. Although the mythical aspect and the confusion surrounding the identities of the attackers make it difficult to discern historical temporalities in the story, its core components provide what Steven Feierman called symbolic data.[172] The symbolic data in Marangeni's story allows us to understand both the expectations that society placed on chiefs and the costs of failing to meet their obligations. A late sixteenth century Portuguese account of chiefs' relations with their subjects on the Zimbabwean plateau put these expectations and the consequences of a failure to meet them into perspective. In his discussion of the political structure of the Zimbabwean plateau, Father Monclaro, pointed out that the greater part of the area was governed by "fumos and headmen," adding that

[171] David Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past*, p 32.
[172] Steven Feierman, *The Shambaa Kingdom*, p 64.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

"… when one has cows [and] millet… which he can give them [ordinary people] and spend, they elect him fumo, and his dignity lasts as long as he has anything to spend."[173] Rulers were patrons of the ruled. Their power and legitimacy depended on their ability to provide security for their subjects.

It is doubtful that Marange still had his dignity when, as the traditions suggest, Marangeni left the chief's court to go and look for food. Marange failed to provide food, exposing his wife to danger when she went out to look for food. In semi-arid Bocha, the chief's ability to ensure sufficient rains was crucial for the polity's survival. His inability to meet the social and political obligations that came with male chiefly authority cost Marange a portion of his territory.

Marangeni's story not only points to the weaknesses of male chiefly power, but reminds us of the ritual power vested in women. Marangeni's spirit possessed a woman from the Mabvengwa clan and dictated the cession of territory to Mabvengwa. When I asked my informants as to whom the Mabvengwa territory belonged, they emphatically stated that it effectively belonged to *mbuya* (grandmother) Marangeni, adding that in case of any problems in the area, the Mabvengwa leadership would consult Maranegni's spirit medium.[174] But even in this case, women's ritual and political power was closely tied to kinship relations. The old men in Bocha maintained that the Mabvengwa who picked up

[173] Father Monclaro, "Account of the Journey made by Fathers of the Company of Jesus with Francisco Barreto in the Conquest of Monomotapa in the Year 1569," in George M. Theal, *Records of South Eastern Africa* (Vol. III), Cape Town, C. Struik, 1964, p 227.
[174] Interview with Mutsago, 28 June 2013; Interview with Songore, 28 June 2013.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Marangeni's head was her *muzukuru* (nephew) adding that Marangeni's Spirit Medium gave the clan's males the power to rule on her behalf.[175]

Marangeni was not the only woman crucial to the politics of claims to land and power in northeastern Zimbabwe. Another woman, Nyemba, was at the center of the conflict that enabled Chihota to dispossess Gunguwo of his land. According to Chihota dynastic traditions, Nyemba was their leader's daughter who kept the clan's hunting medicine. Traditions record that while the Chihota people were settled on the land given them by Nyandoro, they continued to hunt for elephants and other big game. When her father and other male members of the clan went hunting, Nyemba remained at home guarding the hunting medicine. One day, while the male members of the clan were out hunting, Gunguwo, who ruled the territory that became Chihota, seduced Nyemba, rendering the hunting medicine impotent. When the male members of the clan came back from their hunting trip empty-handed, Nyemba told them that Gunguwo had defiled her and broken the taboo that she should not have sex in order for the hunting medicine to remain potent. Angered, Chihota's people attacked Gunguwo, driving him out of his territory which they took over.[176] The tradition reminds us that what passed as a war to avenge the defilement of a female clan member who was also the ritual keeper of the group's hunting medicine was in fact part of the struggles over land and power.

Marangeni and Nyemba's stories help us to understand the centrality of women in the politics of claims making to land. Marangeni, in particular, provides a name to the

[175] Interview with Mutsago, 28 June 2013.
[176] F.W.T. Posselt, "The Banyemba Legend and Ceremony, pp11-13; AOH 39, Nhira Nzvere Chinhoyi; N3/33/8 History of Native Tribes, Native Commissioner Marandellas; Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants,Traders and Wives.*

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

otherwise nameless women that autochthons gave to the incoming immigrants in marriages that gave outsiders access to land. This was only one among many ways in which women were central to the politics of land and authority in northeastern Zimbabwe. In fact, the political history of precolonial northeastern Zimbabwe also reveals that women held territory which they ruled. Svosve dynastic traditions say that when the founder of the dynasty, Dandanyoro, arrived in the central watershed, he settled on the east side of the Wenimbi River near the present day town of Marondera, while his sister VaChikombo settled in the hills west of the river. They then named the range *Masikana*, literally, "the girls." When Dandenyoro died, his son Mukanganise moved into the Masikana hills and upon the death of his aunt, appointed his daughter in her place, giving her the land between the Ruzawi and Karimbiga rivers.[177]

In the eastern highlands, women known as *Washe* and *Madzihashe* in Manyika and Bocha respectively, held important positions as rulers of *matunhu* (wards) that constituted the polities. *Washe/Madzihashe* were either daughters or sisters of a reigning chief. The reigning chief appointed his sisters or daughters to preside over a *dunhu* (singular for *matunhu*). In 1940, W.S. Bazely, the Native Commissioner for Umtali, reported that the district's early settlers often talked about the Manyika 'queens' and their remarkable influence.[178] These were the *Washe* or *Madzihashe*. Bazely counted seven of these headwomen in Manyika and an additional two in neighboring Jindwi. He also pointed out that female heads of wards were also found in Bocha.

---

[177] N3/33/8, History of Native Tribes, Native Commissioner Marandellas to Chief Native Commissioner; E.W. Morris, "Marondella's District," pp 440-441.
[178] W.S. Bazely, "Manyika Headwomen." *NADA*, No 17, 1940, p 3.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

It seems that the need to minimize chances of rebellion provided the political logic of the appointment of one's sisters or daughters as ward rulers. Bazely's Manyika informants told him that,

> upon the death of a *muchinda* (male ward ruler/headman) bones were thrown to determine the cause of death. The diviner reported that the deceased's area was responsible. The chief then consulted the great spirit of the tribe (*Nyamandoto*) through a medium. The spirit replied that the country of the dead *muchinda* needed a *muzari* (headwoman) and not a *muchinda. 'Let a Washe,'* said the spirit, "light her fire there and rule the people." "If you put a *muchinda* in charge again, he will rise in rebellion.[179]

The spirit medium's choice of a *washe* rather than a muchinda was meant to curb rebellion. The female ward heads were powerful. In Manyika, the *washe* ruled over sensitive matters such as witchcraft, theft and murder.

Among the ruling elites on the Zimbabwean plateau as a whole, the practice of apportioning power over land and people to women was both widespread and had a long history. Mid-seventeenth century Portuguese sources reported that

> the monomotapa has many chief wives, who are like queens. Most of them are his relations or sisters, and others are the daughters of the kings and lords who are his vassals. The principal one is called Mazarira, who is always one of the king's sisters. She is the mother of the Portuguese, speaks for them, and treats of their concerns with the king, therefore the Portuguese send her presents….The second wife is called Inhahanda and speaks for the Moors. The third is called Nabuiza; she is his real wife, for she is the only one who lives in the palace with the king. The fourth is called Nauemba; the fifth Nemangore; the sixth Nizingoapangi; the seventh, Nemangoro; the eighth, Nessanhi; and finally the ninth is called Necharunda. All these are the king's chief wives, and have houses and estates of their own, as have all the king's officers, and many lands and vassals, and some of these women have kingdoms pertaining to their houses…they all have jurisdiction over their vassals, to punish, to put them to death for their offences.[180]

Despite the Portuguese traders' views that the women in question were the Mwenemutapa's wives, it is clear that most of them were his relatives. It is also clear that these were powerful women. Some, like the first two wives, according to the Portuguese chroniclers, were responsible for the Mutapa's trade relations with the Portuguese and the

---

[179] W.S. Bazely, Manyika Headwoman, p3.
[180] Antonio Bocarro, Decade of the Performances of the Portuguese in the East, p 358.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Arabs. This was an integral position in the Mutapa economic system. All of them had power of the subjects who fell under their authority.

Contesting Chiefly Hegemony over Land in Northeastern Zimbabwe

In precolonial northeastern Zimbabwe, chiefly authority over land and people was never complete. Alternative authority existed in the form of spirit mediums and other officers. In Manyika, for example, the institution of the *Sahumani* curbed Manyika rulers' power over portions of their territory, particularly in the Honde valley where this ritual officer resided. The *Sahumani* performed two related rituals. He venerated the survival spirits whose purpose was to extend the longevity of the king's life and rule. The *Sahumani* also presided over the crocodile ceremony that was meant to honor a king whose rule had been long.[181] The crocodile ceremony could be regarded as the ritual that announced the official retirement of a long serving elderly chief. For instance, Manyika oral traditions explain that Nyamandoto passed the reign to his younger brother Nyarumwe "because he had sat on a crocodile; he was very old (*nekuti akanga agara ngwena akurisa kwazvo*)."[182]

The cultural etiquette that accompanied the *Sahumani's* performance of the survival spirits and crocodile ceremonies reveals that the ritual leader was not subordinated to the chief. In the 1930s, Dannys Shropshire, a missionary with significant interests in anthropology, noted that during both the survival spirits and the crocodile ceremonies the *Sahumani* did not perform the ceremonial clapping of hands (*kuwombera*)

---

[181] H.H.K Bhila, *Trade and Politics in a Shona Kingdom*, p 24.
[182] Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lesson 104.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

to show his respects to the king.[183] On the basis of what his informant, the *Sahumani* at the time, told him, Shropshire pointed out that "except on these ceremonial occasions SaHumani may not see the face of Mutasa, nor does Mutasa in any way interfere with SaHumani with regard to his sovereignty over his piece of territory."[184] He added that "if Mutasa's cattle were to stray into the territory of Sahumani the latter could appropriate them."[185] In addition, the Sahumani did not pay tribute to the Chief.[186] From the foregoing, it is quite clear that the Sahumani was, by and large, autonomous despite the fact that he lived within the confines of the Manyika territory. This is all the more important when one considers that the ritual practices associated with the Sahumani were also found among Manyika's neighbors. According to H.H.K. Bhila, the crocodile rituals were also performed in the neighboring territories of Maungwe and Bocha.[187]

Authority which rivaled that of the chief also existed in form of (*Mhondoro)* spirit mediums of the autochthons and those who provided wives to the chiefdoms' founders. In Shona cosmology, those who provided wives possessed the power to perpetuate the fertility of the land.[188] The fertility of the land, therefore, rested on the power of these mediums. Alternatively, it depended on the rituals performed for women, like Marangeni, whose fate was linked to the emergence of territories ruled by their maternal relations.

---

[183] Dennys Shropshire,"The Crocodile Ceremony of the Mutasa Dynasty." In *Man* Vol. 30, 1930, p 6; Dannys Shropshire, "The Mifananidzo of the Mutasa Dynasty." In *Man* Vol. 30, 1930, p 45.

[184] Dennys Shropshire,"The Crocodile Ceremony of the Mutasa Dynasty, p 6.

[185] Dennys Shropshire,"The Crocodile Ceremony of the Mutasa Dynasty, p 6.

[186] H.H.K Bhila, *Trade and Politics in a Shona Kingdom,* pp 24-25.

[187] H.H.K. Bhila, *Trade and Politics in a Shona Kingdom*, p 25.
[188] David Lan, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe*, London James Curray, 1985, p 76.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

This was certainly the case in Mabvengwa, where elders insisted that, in cases of problems, the ruling clan propitiated the spirit of *mbuya* Marangeni.[189]

Mangwende traditions point to a similar scenario. They point out that before the clan settled in Nhowe, it had settled in Chidima in the Zambezi valley. The clan's patriarch, Mushawatu, married Nehanda, the sister of the reigning Mwene Mutapa Gatsi Rusere, who turned out to be barren. Worried by her barrenness, Nehanda jumped into a pool and drowned. The Nhowe people later adopted her as the territorial spirit. In case of troubles, they propitiated her spirits at a sacred pool known as *Dziva raNyamhita* (Nyamhita's pool).[190] What this meant was that the fertility of the land rested on the propitiation of women who were outsiders. As grandmothers and wives, the women whose spirits were propitiated to ensure the fertility of the land did not belong to the ruling patrilineages.

For the ruling elites, the propitiation of these spirits was a double edged sword. On the one hand, this meant that the non-rainmaker kings were not blamed for natural disasters like droughts and would perhaps retain their power in the aftermath of such phenomena.[191] On the other hand, the existence of independent rainmakers was capable of producing what Feierman calls *nguvu kwa nguvu* or power against power among the Shambaai of northeastern Tanzania.[192] Effectively, what this meant was that ritual officials were capable of providing alternative sources of authority in the land.

---

[189] Interview with Mutsago.

[190] David Chanaiwa, A History of Nhowe, pp110-112.

[191] H.H.K. Bhila, *Trade and Politics in a Shona Kingdom*, p 24.
[192] Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals*, especially chapter 3.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

The extent to which the possession of ritual power by those who were responsible for the fertility of the land—the autochthons and the providers of wives—checked the ruling lineage's political power must have been uneven across northeastern Zimbabwe. It is most likely that Manyika and Zimunya rulers of the eastern highlands were to a lesser extent dependent on the ritual power of the autochthons because the area's mountainous relief ensured that it received lots of rain. It is, perhaps, for this reason that the Manyika retained Nyamandoto as the most important territorial spirit while assigning the autochthonous Muponda the less important role of *churu* (undertaker) to the dynasty.[193]

However, as one moves to the rain-poor west from the eastern highlands, the need for ritual officers who ensured social health and in the process provided alternative centers of power increased.[194] Thus, in the central watershed, we encounter powerful spirit mediums like *Pasipamire*, the medium of Chaminuka.[195] It is also in this context that we have to understand the significance of stories of Nehanda and *Dziva RaNyamhita* in Mangwende oral traditions. Chiefly reliance on those who perpetuated the fertility of the land must have been more pronounced in semi-arid Bocha to the west of the eastern highlands. This, in fact, may help to account for the prominence of Marangeni in the traditions of land settlement in Bocha.

---

[193] Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lesson 70.

[194] For a discussion of Social health and how this shaped political discourse see, for example, Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals*, especially chapters 3 and 4 and , David Schoenbrun, *A Green Place, A Good Place*.

[195] F.W.T. Posselt, "Chaminuka the Wizzard." *NADA* No.4, 1936; Michael Gelfand, "The Mhondoro—Chiminuku." *NADA*, No36, 1959; Michael Gelfand, "The Mhondoro Cult Among the Manyika Peoples of the Eastern Region of Mashonaland." *NADA*, Vol. XI, No.1, 1974; R.C. Woollacott, "Pasipamire—Spirit Medium of Chaminuka, the "Wizard" of Chitungwiza." *NADA* Vol. XI, NO. 2, 1975; M.F.C. Bourdillon, "Spirit Mediums and in Shona Belief and Practice." *NADA*, Vol.XI, No.1, 1974. Michael Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples: An Ethnography of the Contemporary Shona, with Special Reference to their Religion*, Gweru, Mambo Press, 1987.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Conclusion

This chapter used oral traditions to reconstruct the history of claims to land and political power in northeastern Zimbabwe. Most of the oral traditions of land settlement in the area contain core images that allow us to recover the terms of claims to land and the social and material bases of political power. The oral traditions pointed to integration into the networks of kinship through marriage as integral for access to land. Women were central to the social transactions that enabled outsiders to gain access to land. They were at the center of conflicts that led to the acquisition of territory by some of the dynasties that occupy northeastern Zimbabwe. Above all, women were also rulers who occupied powerful political positions.

In the central watershed the traditions added that the VaRozvi appointed rulers to political office. Paradoxically, the same traditions reveal that access to land depended on local dynasties' relations with one another and not the VaRozvi. Such paradoxical claims serve to demonstrate that contestants for power over land and people incorporated new terms of claims making as the broader political landscape of the Zimbabwean plateau changed with the rise of the Rozvi state in the mid seventeenth century. The chapter also demonstrated that chiefly power over land was never complete. More importantly, Alternative authority lied with individuals who held ritual authority in the land. The *Sahumani* gives testimony to that. So was the chiefs' dependency on ancestral spirits outside the royal houses for the fertility of the land.

Kinship provided the storytellers with their template: they conveyed an understanding of chiefly authority and politics by situating them within the context of family tensions which everyone knew. Consequently, the stories could be read as

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

providing a picture of tensions that were found throughout society. Those that were found within kinships and households are further explored in the next chapter.

المنارة للاستشارات

www.manaraa.com

CHAPTER3

LIVELIHOODS, SOCIAL RELATIONS AND LAND: THE MICRO-POLITICS OF LAND AND POWER IN PRE-COLONIAL NORTHEASTERN ZIMBABWE.

Introduction

The competition for control over land and people which the traditions recorded in the context of chiefship were also found within the wider northeastern Zimbabwean society. It occurred among and within kinships and households. As this competition widened beyond territorial claims to encompass claims over productive land, the language of inclusion and exclusion expanded to incorporate not only kinship, but status, gender and generation as well. The purpose of this chapter is to explore contestations over productive land and power that pitted against each other outsiders and insiders, rich and poor, young and old as well as men and women. It asks the following questions: how did social relations shape access to productive land among the inhabitants of precolonial northeastern Zimbabwe and how did men and women retain their claims to this land?

For a long time, scholars suggested that in precolonial Zimbabwe, one's membership in a social group, usually the clan, guaranteed access to land.[196] However, this did not translate into equal access to land. Precolonial farmers in northeastern Zimbabwe not only understood that land had different qualities but were also aware that arable land was limited. Consequently, they competed for access to productive land. They articulated this competition in terms of ideas of social identity, including belonging,

[196] J.F. Holleman, *Chief Council and Commissioner*, Kenneth D Manungo, "The Role Peasants Played in the Zimbabwean War of Liberation, especially chapter 2.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

kinship, seniority, status and gender. All of these concepts helped to regulate access to good farming land in households and communities. Appropriating these ideas of exclusion and inclusion, precolonial northeastern Zimbabwean societies turned membership into a social group to be only one among many factors that shaped access to productive land in a society that was patently hierarchical. The portrayal of a relatively egalitarian precolonial society in the earlier literature is therefore misleading.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section set out the parameters for the competition for land and the articulation of ideas of social identity by demonstrating that precolonial farmers in northeastern Zimbabwe preferred certain localities that could sustain their agricultural pursuits. The section demonstrates that in contrast to the conventional idea that labor and not land was the scarce resource in precolonial Africa, productive land that would support an agricultural economy was, in fact, scarce. Geology, climate and agronomic practices limited the extent of land that farmers could inhabit. The inhabitants of northeastern Zimbabwe understood this point and sought land that could sustain an agrarian economy.

The second and third parts of the chapter discuss how social relations shaped access to land. The second section explores the relationship among belonging (to polities, kinship and households), status, seniority and access to land. It demonstrates that those who claimed control over land invoked ideas of kinship to exclude others from accessing productive land. It also shows that like other tools of exclusion, kinship simultaneously functioned as a tool of inclusion. Consequently, 'outsiders' accessed productive land by establishing kinship ties with those who controlled the resource. This section of the chapter also explores the connection between status and access to good farming land by

www.manaraa.com

exploring the relationship between relative poverty and the occupation of marginal lands. The third section discusses the relationship between cropping systems and gendered struggles for productive land. Finally, the chapter explores the ideologies and practices that precolonial farmers used to retain claims to their lands. The chapter draws on archaeological and oral evidence.

The Historical Basis for Competition and Control over Productive Land in Precolonial Northeastern Zimbabwe

In the poisoned environment that followed colonial land alienation along racial lines in Zimbabwe, historians looked to the precolonial period as a golden age when there was little competition for productive land.[197] This view hinged on the idea that because precolonial Africa was under-populated, what mattered then was control over people than land.[198] Scholars argue that in Zimbabwe, land shortages induced by colonial land alienation transformed this articulation of power as the powerful began to emphasize control over land rather than over people.[199]

But, was productive land really abundant? In northeastern Zimbabwe, archaeological evidence of settlements and fields, together with oral histories of migration and cropping patterns reveal relationships among settlement locations, ancient

---

[197] Kenneth D Manungo, The Role Peasants Played in the Zimbabwean War of Liberation, Chapter 2 Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla Warfare.*

[198] This is an argument that has its center in the history of slavery and other social relations in Africa. It emerges from scholars' efforts to understand why Africans enslaved other Africans before the rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. It was picked by anthropologists and other scholars from related disciplines that sought to understand the productive logic of polygamy in precolonial Africa. See, for example Paul E Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000*;* Igor Kopytoff and Suzzaine Miers "Introduction: African Slavery as an Institution of Marginality," in Suzzaine Miers and Igor Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1977.

[199] David M Hughes, *From Enslavement to Environmentalism.*

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

fields, and particular microenvironments that cast doubts on the idea of abundant productive land in the precolonial period. The people who lived in the settlements and cultivated the ancient fields discovered by archaeologists in the Eastern Highlands—some of which were terraced and survive to this day—preferred certain localities.[200] This preference for particular localities led to competition which stimulated the construction of ideologies of social identity that led to differential access to land among and within households.

The preference for particular locales, evidenced by the location of settlements and fields, forces us to reconsider earlier ideas about the abundance of land, the terms of access to that land and the methods of agriculture in pre-colonial northeastern Zimbabwe. Some of the lasting images of society and economy in precolonial Africa are those of people constantly on the move, clearing new lands which they only cultivated for a number of years before they moved and reproduced the process elsewhere. Colonial officials and, later, scholars called this shifting cultivation or, worse still, slash and burn.[201] This, of course, assumes that land was an infinite resource so that people would afford to leave their fields and settlements after a very short period. But, then, if this was the case, how do we account for the investment in time and labor that the inhabitants of the Nyanga plateau and adjacent lowlands devoted to construct terraces and ridges that

[200] Robert Soper, *Nyanga,* Stephen Chirawu "The Archaeology of the Ancient Agricultural and Settlement Systems in Nyanga Lowland." Unpublished M.Phil. Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1999; Seke Katsamudanga, "Environment and Culture: A Study of Prehistoric Settlement Patterns in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe," Unpublished D.Phil Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 2007.

[201] Barry N Floyd, Changing Patterns of Land Tenure.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

cover an area of more than seven thousand square kilometers over a period of six centuries to the nineteenth century?[202]

Historians offer various interpretations. David Beach suggested that the Nyanga terrace complex was "a culture of losers."[203] Beach maintained that, surrounded by hostile neighbors in Maungwe to the West, Manyika to the south, Barwe to the East and Budya to the north, the inhabitants of the Nyanga plateau had little option but to build their settlements on hilltops and cultivate the slopes. More recently, Heike Schmidt similarly argued that the settlement structures in the Honde Valley were shaped by the need to find places of refuge against hostile neighbors, especially the Gaza Nguni who raided the area from the 1830s.[204] She faulted Robert Soper's observation that settlements in the lowlands could not serve as places of refuge since they were located in indefensible positions. She suggests that Soper failed to realize the impotence of sentinels and the spiritual protection given even in such locations.[205]

Indeed, the Nyanga highlands and the Honde Valley provide an example of "a history under siege."[206] As Lowe Börjeson puts it in his review of similar literature on the Iraqw of the Mbulu highlands, Tanzania, "it is relevant to talk of a *siege hypothesis* when referring to this type of historical explanation for the manner in which intensive farming evolved in cases where expansion was made impossible by coercive and constraining

---

[202] The figure and dating comes from Robert Soper, *Nyanga*, p 2.

[203] David Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe,* p 186.

[204] Heike Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe : A History of Suffering,* Suffolk, Boydell & Brewer, 2013, p 45.

[205] Heike Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe* , p 45.

[206] Lowe Börjeson, "A History Under Siege.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

factors."[207] Recent scholarship casts doubts on the explanatory power of the siege hypothesis. For example, Mats Widgren argues that "while a siege situation may well be one factor among others stimulating the settling of these areas, it certainly cannot explain the persistence of the farming."[208]

The argument that the inhabitants of the Honde Valley located their settlements in defensible points because of the continued threat of violence explains developments in the nineteenth century only. However, in the eastern highlands and the surrounding lowlands, agricultural intensification evidenced by ancient terraced fields, pit structures and enclosure settlements began at least five centuries before the outbreak of the nineteenth century conflicts associated with the Gaza Nguni raids and succession politics in Manyika and Maungwe.[209] Neither local oral traditions nor Portuguese documents of the sixteenth century suggest the existence of widespread violence that would have forced these communities to locate their settlements on strategic points before the nineteenth century. Additionally, archaeological evidence shows that the earliest settlements were built on the hilltops and with time spread along the gradient towards the lowlands. This forces us to rethink the ideas of refugee and settlement in the agricultural history of northeastern Zimbabwe.[210] If indeed, violence determined patterns of settlement, one

---

[207] Lowe Börjeson, "A History Under Siege, p 56.

[208] Mats Widgren, "Towards a Historical Geography of Intensive Farming in Eastern Africa." In Mats Widgren and John E. G. Sutton (eds), *Islands of Intensive Agriculture in Eastern Africa: Past and Present*, Oxford, James Currey, 2004, p 15.

[209] Robert Soper, *Nyanga;* Stephen Chirawu, "The Archaeology of the Ancient Agricultural and Settlement in Nyanga Lowlands.

[210] Robert Soper, *Nyanga*, especially Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

would expect the earliest settlements to have been on the plains spreading to the hilltops as the violence escalated in the nineteenth century.

In addition, the argument that the inhabitants of the Nyanga highlands turned to agricultural intensification because they were surrounded by hostile neighbors ignores the fact that the evidence of intensification is also found in the land occupied by the supposed hostile neighbors. Although the Unyama country constituted the most heavily terraced area, the Nyanga archaeological complex—with its terraces, pit structures and enclosures—extended to Maungwe and Manyika, territories ruled by two of Saunyama's supposed nemeses. Ellaine M Lloyd, an Anglican missionary with significant anthropological interests, reported seeing numerous ancient terraced fields, *mihomba* (cultivation ridges) and pit enclosures from Headlands to Weya in Maungwe in 1922.[211] From the early twentieth century on, stories by Manyika elders were recorded that described ancient pit structures located at the center of the homestead used as cattle pens.[212] These pit structures were part of the complex that in places also included terraced fields.

Archaeological research confirmed these oral accounts. For example, Robert Soper pointed out that the pit structures he found in the Nyanga archaeological complex were used to house dwarf cattle. He also corroborated Lloyd's descriptions, explaining

[211] Ellaine M Lloyd, "In the Early Days," *NADA*, No.4, 1926, pp 107-110. Lloyd was based at the Anglican Church's St Faith Mission in Makoni.

[212] Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lesson 57; Ellaine M Lloyd, "In the Early Days," p 108. In the article, Lloyd also reproduced a story related to Reverend Samuel Mulhanga by a Manyika elder. Mulhanga believed this elder to be well over 100 years in 1924.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

that pit structures of the Nyanga culture were found as far west as headlands in Rusape.[213] Earlier in the 1940s, archaeologists found pit structures associated with the Nyanga archaeological complex as far south as Penhalonga in Manyika.[214] Further archaeological research confirmed the existence of pit structures of the Nyanga culture beyond Nyanga and Manyika in the highlands. For example, Seke Katsamudanga located pit structures of the Nyanga culture in the Vumba area, south east of Mutare.[215] The presence of settlements and ancient fields associated with the Nyanga culture beyond the borders of Unyama in Manyika, Maungwe and Jindwi punctures the argument that this was a "culture of losers." The latter territories' rulers were the supposed invaders who must have forced people in Unyama to adopt agricultural intensification. In short the idea of 'a history under siege' does not explain why the inhabitants of precolonial northeastern Zimbabwe chose certain localities for settlements and fields.

How then do we account for these choices? Choices about where to settle should be considered in terms of the resources and opportunities that various local environments were understood to offer. Archaeology suggests that from the earliest settlements so far recovered, communities settled in locales that offered optimum chances of livelihoods rather than maximum security. For example, in Zimunya in the eastern highlands, archaeologists found Middle Stone Age settlements near small streams.[216] The river valleys allowed them to exploit aquatic resources. While Middle Stone Age hunter-

---

[213] Robert Soper, *Nyanga*, p98. See also the discussion in Chapter 5 and 6.

[214] E.M Finch, "Pit People of the Inyanga Downs." In *Proceedings of the Rhodesia Scientific Association* Vol. XLII,1949, p 39; Robert C Soper, *Nyanga.*

[215] Seke Katsamudanga, "Environment and Culture," pp 118, 133-134 and 142-143.

[216] Seke Katsamudanga, "Environment and Culture, p 219.

www.manaraa.com

gatherer communities preferred proximity to water sources, those of the Late Stone Age located settlements in Savannah woodlands, near habitats for wildlife. In addition, the distribution of Late Stone Age settlements corresponds to that of granite kopjes, quartz and sometime dolerite outcrops.[217] These formations provided raw materials for the stone tools found in the Later Stone Age sites.[218]

The farmers who succeeded the hunter-gatherer communities from the third century AD, likewise, chose those localities that could sustain their agricultural pursuits which were based on the use of iron hoes to grow grain crops.[219] The main grains grown by these farmers were finger and bulrush millet.[220] By the nineteenth century, the Shona also grew maize and rice although this was done in small quantities. Maize, elders explained, was sown in between ridges of finger millet and was consumed when still green. [221] In addition, in the eastern highlands, women grew root crops like *tsenza* (taro root) (*Plectran thus esculentus*) and *madhumbe* (yams) (*Colocosia esculenta*). The crops were supplemented by a variety of vegetables and legumes. The production of cereals such as finger millet especially shaped how the inhabitants of northeastern Zimbabweans perceived different localities. Vansina put it nicely in the context of west-central Africa in the middle of the first millennium AD. "[O]nce in place," he noted, "cereal agriculture

---

[217] Seke Katsamudanga, Environment and Culture, p 234.

[218] Seke Katsamudanga, "Environment and Culture," Chapter 5 especially pp 147-178.

[219] David Phillipson, *African Archaeology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005; Seke Katsamudanga, "Environment and Culture," and Gilbert Pwiti, *Continuity and Change: An Archaeological Study of Farming Communities in Northern Zimbabwe AD 500-1700*, Studies in African Archaeology 13, Uppsala, Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University, 1996.

[220] In interviews, all the informants insisted that *njera* (finger millet) was the main crop grown in the precolonial period.

[221] AOH 80, Makutu Taonezvi. AOH 26, Makuvire Chigonero.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

reshaped the perception of the landscape locally, not only by distinguishing between good and bad farmland, but also by creating more sedentary villages—that is more fixed points in space with dependent territories around them."[222] Throughout the first millennium A.D. the Early farming Communities (also known as the Early Iron Age) preferred to locate their settlements along river valleys.[223]

Although the Late Farming Communities (also known as the Late Iron Age) that emerged in the second millennium A.D. do not seem to have restricted their settlements to water sources, archaeological evidence suggests that these people clearly understood the difference between good and bad farming land and made efforts to settle in the former. [224] Rainfall and soil fertility were two factors that determined whether a particular piece of land could sustain agriculture. Except for Bocha which is located on the rain shadow of the eastern highlands, most of northeastern Zimbabwe receives relatively good rains. Although soil quality varies within localities most of northeastern Zimbabwe lies within the area of the Zimbabwean plateau where "light, sandy soils developed on granitic rocks are widespread."[225] As George Kay put it, these soils are "of mediocre natural fertility but can be improved with good management."[226] Pockets of dolerite derived clay soils are found in some places, especially in the eastern highlands. These

---

[222] Jan Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, p 80.

[223] Seke Katsamudanga, "Environment and Culture," p 60.

[224] Stephen Chirawu,"The Archaeology of the Ancient Agricultural and Settlement Systems in the Nyanga Lowlands; Robert Soper, *Nyanga*. It should be pointed out that within the eastern highlands, the term 'lowlands' is relative to the surrounding topography. Most of the lowlands still occupy a higher ground in comparison to other parts of the country.

[225] George Kay, *Rhodesia: A Human Geography*, p 21.

[226] George Kay, *Rhodesia: A Human Geography,* p 21.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

have better inherent fertility than the granite derived sand soils.[227] In making choices about where to settle, the precolonial farmers who inhabited northeastern Zimbabwe had to take these factors into consideration.

Indeed, recent archaeological research in the Nyanga lowlands reveals close relationships among topography, geology, settlements and terraced fields. In the area around Ziwa national ruins, Stephen Chirawu observed a preference for clay soils that overlay the dolerite formations, adding that, "the settlements are mainly confined to the crests of the [dolerite] hills and their southern lower slopes and phase out towards the lower sandier granite immediately to the south."[228] As Robert Soper noted, "the soils deriving from dolerites are of greater inherent fertility than those from the granites, except where they are deeply leached under the higher rainfall of the highlands. The terrace distribution shows clearly that the terrace builders were aware of this."[229]

The preference for land on dolerite formations is more discernible in areas where such land lies adjacent to granite formations with their sand soils. A survey of a block covering 4.5 square kilometers in one locality to the northwest of Ziwa National monument produced 57 stone enclosures. Thirty six (63%) of the 57 enclosures were recorded in the dolerite areas and the remainder in the granite areas. In this locality, granite "covers 86% of the block, giving a density for granite of 5.4 enclosures per square

---

[227] See the discussion of the physical geography of the eastern highlands in Robert Soper, *Nyanga*, pp 13-21 and Seke Katsamusanga, Environment and Culture, especially pp 36-39.

[228] Stephen Chirawu, "The Archaeology of the Ancient Agricultural and Settlement Systems in the Nyanga Lowlands," p 55.

[229] Robert Soper, *Nyanga,* p 35.

للاستشارات المنارة
www.manaraa.com

kilometer and for dolerite 57.1, indicating a higher preference for settlement in the dolerite areas."[230]

The preference for fertile lands revealed by the Ziwa survey is evident throughout the eastern highlands. In his study of the wider Nyanga archaeological complex—which include the Ziwa ruins—Robert Soper observed that although there were terraces in places in which the underlying parent rock was granite, the precolonial farmers who inhabited the Nyanga highlands and adjacent territories preferred the dolerite formations. Soper noted that

> of the area below 1675 [which is the altitudinal limit for the archaeological terracing], dolerites make up only 12.7%, with granite accounting for most of the rest….Of the 18468 ha of terracing, dolerite comprises 40.3%, granites 59.3% and other 0.4%. However, comparing this with the extent of the rocks we find that 25.8% of the dolerite below 1675m is terraced against only 5.5% of the granites.[231]

Precolonial farmers in the highlands appreciated the importance of utilizing fertile clay soils deriving from dolerite rocks.

The preference for clay soils overlying dolerite formations in the Nyanga highlands raises key question about historical interpretations of the relationship between soil types and settlement patterns in precolonial Zimbabwe. A number of scholars argued that the precolonial inhabitants of the Zimbabwean plateau preferred sand soils and avoided red clay soils.[232] Their argument rested on a claim, often made by the colonial state, that these farmers found it easy to work the lighter sand soils than the heavier red clay soils with the hoe, the most important tool used by cultivators until the introduction

---

230 Stephen Chirawu, "The Archaeology of the Ancient Agricultural and Settlement Systems in the Nyanga Lowlands," p 64.

231 Robert Soper, *Nyanga*, p 35.

232 Robin Palmer, "Red Soils in Rhodesia." *African Social Research*, Vol. 10, 1970, Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*, p 8; David Beach The Shona Economy, p 41.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

of the ox-drawn plough in the twentieth century.[233] Beach qualified this argument, arguing that the need for defense and water among other factors meant that precolonial farmers were not selective, but, given the choice, they preferred sand soils because *rukweza/njera* (finger millet) did well there than on red soils.[234] Factors such as defense and the availability of water, he argued, resulted in the concentration of Shona speaking communities in an area of the Zimbabwean plateau that formed a great crescent from northwestern Zimbabwe through the central parts of the plateau to the east to southwestern Zimbabwe.[235]

Although the hoe was the tool of the day, these scholars erred in thinking that its use prevented precolonial farmers' use of clay and loom soils and thus limited their settlements to sand soils. In fact, both oral and archaeological evidence from northeastern Zimbabwe suggests that precolonial farmers were not bound to any particular soil types.[236] Instead, they sought the best soils from the available options. As shown above, the farming communities in the Nyanga highlands and adjacent lowlands preferred clay soils overlying dolerite formations because of their inherent fertility. Their love for clay soils was not blind. All the terraced fields on dolerite derived clay soils on the Nyanga plateau are below the 1675m altitude, suggesting a pattern in which the farmers avoided

---

[233] This colonial argument meant to justify settler alienation of fertile African lands is repeated in Barry Floyd, "Land Apportionment in Southern Rhodesia." *Geographical Review*, Vol. 52, 1962, p 569.

[234] Beach, "The Shona Economy: Branches of Production.

[235] David Beach, *The Shona and their Neighbours*, Cambridge, Blackwell, 1994. Many scholars criticized Beach's 'Great Crescent Theory,' arguing that it served to justify settler expropriation of fertile lands from Africans.

[236] Wolf Roder, "The Division of Land Resources in Southern Rhodesia." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 54, 1964, p 44. Roder cites interviews with *VaShona* elders; John M Mackenzie, "Red Soils in Mashonaland: A Reassessment." In *Rhodesian History*, Vol. 5, 1974; Richard M.G. Mtetwa, "'Red Soils in Mashonaland: A Reassessment': Contrary Evidence." In *Rhodesian History*, Vol.6, 1975.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

higher altitude areas that received huge amounts of rainfall. The areas below the 1675m altitude received good but not excessive rains that could contribute to soil fertility loss through leaching.[237]

The farming communities in Zimunya in the central parts of the eastern highlands, in contrast, avoided clay soils in preference for sand soils because, unlike in Nyanga, the dolerite formations here lay within higher altitudes on the Vumba Mountains. These received huge amounts of rainfall. Fertility loss through leaching was higher in these areas because of the large amounts of rainfall. Precolonial farmers in the central eastern highlands understood that although the granite derived sand soils in Zimunya are not as inherently fertile as the clay soils that derive from the dolerite formations in the Vumba highlands, they lie in an area that receives less rainfall than the highlands. Here, fertility loss through leaching is less pronounced than the Vumba highlands and the sand soils here could retain more nutrients than the clay soils exposed to leaching in heavy rainfall areas. Consequently, 80 percent of the Early Farming Community settlements in the Zimunya area were on granite derived soils (that is sand soils) and were mostly below the 1000mm isohyet.[238] These farmers clearly understood the extent to which the interplay between rainfall and geology shaped soil quality.

These communities also understood the rainfall requirements for the kinds of crops they grew which included small grains like finger and bulrush millet. These do not do well in the Vumba highlands whose average rainfall of about 2000mm and subdued

---

[237] Robert Soper, *Inyanga.*

[238] Seke Katsamudanga, “Environment and Culture,” p 246 and 278.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

temperatures lengthen the growing times for cereals.[239] Where possible, precolonial farmers made an effort to strike a balance between areas with good agricultural soils and abundant rainfall that supported the grains they grew as their staples. In Zimunya, they chose sand soils with relatively good fertility in an area that receives sufficient amounts of rainfall for the small grains these farmers cultivated. In the Nyanga highlands, they invested their labor in terracing the clay soils whose underlying parent rock was dolerite. But because these areas were limited, they created competition and the articulation of ideas of social differentiation meant to control access to productive land.

It is tempting to see the preference for particular localities shown in the eastern highlands as an exclusive feature of this area because of its topography and rugged terrain. However, the relative scarcity of productive lands and the resultant social milieu that accompanied efforts to control access to a scarce resource were not limited to the eastern highlands. Everywhere in northeastern Zimbabwe, as in other parts of the Zimbabwean plateau, precolonial farmers understood that not every available piece of land was good for agriculture. Although the central watershed and the semi-arid Bocha lack the comparable archaeological evidence of settlements and fields similar to that found in the eastern highlands (because of the absence of research there) oral traditions of precolonial migration and settlement make it clear that people selected those locales which provided good farming land for their households. Makuvire Chigonero, a *sabhuku* (kraalhead) and local elder explained the procedure followed when his ancestors migrated from the semi-arid Uhera to the better watered Chihota:

> in the old days there was no one who controlled them and as such they chose whatever place they wanted. The procedure was: first, they went and surveyed the prospective settlement area and they

[239] Seke Katsamudanga, "Environment and Culture."

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

> were particularly looking for good agricultural land that would yield plenty of food. After such a surveillance and all the time putting in temporary shelters, they made up their minds. If they were satisfied they said, 'look, this is the land that is good for us and can provide good produce if we till it. They used hoes that they made themselves, taking the iron from Wedza.[240]

Chigonero explained that "the choice of settlement was determined by the amount of hard ground (sic) available. If they found a dry spot they then decided to build there…. If they found out that the area was marshy, they moved off and looked for harder ground."[241]

This pattern of surveying for suitable agricultural lands went hand in hand with the social reproduction of the household. When a married son established his own household, he would first locate a suitable place for his field. The young man would then inform his father of his choice. The father, in turn, accompanied him to the chief, or his local representative, usually a *muchinda*/ *sadunhu* (headman) where they sought the permission to build a new homestead, and clear the land for the new fields.[242] The participation of the father and the *sadunhu* in the establishment of new households and fields challenges Chigonero's claim that nobody regulated migration and settlement—a claim that became popular in the colonial period. Chigonero's view has to be understood in the context of the colonial state's concerted efforts to regulate African mobility, policies that led most Africans to be nostalgic about life in the precolonial period. In practice, however, precolonial authorities—chiefs, *masadunhu* (pl. for *sadunhu*) and heads of households—regulated their subjects' mobility and re-settlement. Charova explained that before he could allow anyone to settle within his community, a *sadunhu* confirmed with the immigrant's former *sadunhu* that the individual was leaving in good standing. He added that the practice was meant to ensure that the new community would

---

[240] AOH 26, Makuvire Chigonero.

[241] AOH, 26 Makuvire Chigonero.

[242] Interview with Makanya, 29 June 2013, Interview with Charova, 28 June 2013.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

not settle witches, murderers and thieves or other undesirables fleeing from their communities.[243] Here, one's relations in the wider community shaped access to land.

Precolonial households' decisions about where to settle were not only shaped by the availability of good agricultural land and how people related with others in the community. They were also influenced by social ideas about the health of the land. Precolonial inhabitants of the Zimbabwean plateau constructed images of marginal lands as threatening and uninhabitable. Those who inhabited the core of the Ndebele state in the southwestern plateau in the nineteenth century imagined the area to the north as an *igusu*. This was a dark forest that was inhospitable and uninhabitable.[244] The Tonga who inhabited the Zambezi valley avoided the surrounding plateau which they called *lusaka,* a tsetse infested and inhospitable wilderness.[245] John Ford called the marginal, tsetse infested, environments avoided by farmers *grenzwildness*.[246] These were lands that could not be cultivated or settled.

Similar constructions colored imaginings of the marginal environments that surrounded communities in northeastern Zimbabwe. In Bocha, informants explained that the Mabvengwa area was, for a long time, sparsely inhabited because most of the

---

[243] Interview with Charova, 28 June 2013.

[244] Jocelyn Alexander, JoAnn McGregor and Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the Dark Forests of Matebeleland*, Portsmouth: NH, Heinemann, 2000, especially chapter 1, pp 19-44.

[245] Terence Motida Mashingaidze, "'Living and Struggling on the Margins.' A Post-Relocation History of the Zimbabwean Tonga's Livelihoods in Binga District, 1950s-2009," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2012. For the valley Tonga's constructions of the upland environment as inhospitable, see also, JoAnn McGregor, *Crossing the Zambezi* and Godfrey T. Ncube, *A History of Northwestern Zimbabwe, 1850-1960*, Kadoma, Mond Books, 2004.

[245] Interview with Svongore, 28 June 2013.

[246] John Ford, *The Role of Trypanosomiases in African Ecology: A Study of the Tsetse Fly Problem,* Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

previous inhabitants of the area were killed by an unknown epidemic. According to the elders, the epidemic that depopulated the area was so devastating that the survivors remembered it by naming the highest and most ritually important mountain in the area *Denda* or "epidemic."[247] Svongore, one of my informants in Mabvengwa, even claimed that, save for the locality inhabited by the Mabvengwa clan, the rest of the area was an uninhabited dark forest, known as *Chakanda* (it has thrown something) because once you were thrown into the thickets, you would disappear forever.[248] Nobody, according to Svongore, wanted to live in the *Chakanda* landscape until colonially induced land shortages elsewhere forced people to return to the area.[249]

Svongere's claims notwithstanding, the area was not a pristine, if threatening, environment that had never been settled before when people moved there in the twentieth century. In fact, interviewees in the area (including Svongore himself) explained that Mount Denda had rock paintings, suggesting that Stone Age hunter-gatherer communities had inhabited the locality thousands of years before the farmers.[250] Some of the informants reconciled the idea of a threatening landscape and people's attempts to conquer it by recounting a common legend in the area. This legend maintained that the few people who attempted to settle in Mabvegwa fled after they woke up one morning and found blood on their grinding stones. The blood, the legend says, was smeared by

---

[247] Interview with Svongere 28 June 2013; Discussion with Svongere brothers, 28 June 2013, Interview with Charova, 28 June 2013.

[248] Interview with Svongore, 28 June 2013.

[249] Interview with Svongore, 28 June 2013.

[250] Interview with Charova, 28 June 2013; Interview with Svongore, 28 June 2013 and Interview with Mutsago, 28 June 2013. Seke Katsamudanga discusses the distribution of rock art shelters inhabited by hunter-gatherer coummunities in neighboring Zimunya, less than thirty kilometers from Mabvengwa. Seke Katsamudanga, Environment and Culture.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

unknown forces during the night because the community inappropriately performed its rituals.[251]

Could this legend tell us something about the settlement history of the area in relation to ideas about good agricultural land and environmental challenges? It is possible that the legend captures the abandoning of the locality by hunter-gatherer communities who, like precolonial farmers, might have used the grinding stones to prepare some of their food. However, this is a remote possibility. A more probable scenario is that the locality was abandoned by farmers possibly because of a severe famine induced by a drought. Shona idioms describe severe famines in terms of turning the grinding stones up-side-down (*kukwidibira makuyo*), a language that resonates with the smearing of blood on grinding stones. Droughts rendered grinding stones useless, for there was nothing to grind, just as it was not desirable to clean them of blood for re-use. Areas like Bocha are prone to periodic droughts and it is not improbable that some of them were devastating. Survivors would connect such depopulating droughts to the inappropriate performance of rain making ceremonies. At the same time, survivors and their descendants dreaded localities that were prone to such droughts. They imagined those places as hounded by mystical forces that moved over night and were dangerous to the health and wellbeing of farming communities.

These images of threatening landscapes reflect perceptions of marginal environments avoided by precolonial farmers because they lacked the key ingredients, especially rainfall, to sustain agriculture. When I asked Charova why the Mabvengwa

[251] Interview with Charova, 28 June 2013. Mathew Ruguva, a friend and history teacher at a local school who connected me with the interviewees in the area later told me that he had heard, on numerous occasions versions of the same legend from local elders. Discussion with Mathew Ruguva, 28 June 2013.

www.manaraa.com

area was sparsely populated before the mid-twentieth century, he categorically stated that this was on account of the lack of sufficient rainfall and/or water.[252] Although *mvura*, the *Chishona* word used by Charova, means both rain and water, it was unmistakable that the elder referred to the former. The perennial Odzi River is within a walking distance from the locality and at the time this interview was conducted, I had to wait for the interviewee who was fishing in the river for close to an hour. Similarly, when I interviewed Mutsago, I had to wait for him at his homestead for about thirty minutes because I arrived some few minutes after he had gone to the river to water his cattle. The Odzi River originates in the Nyanga highlands and is fed by many tributaries from the well watered eastern highlands. Water, therefore should not have been a problem.

Experiences with devastating natural phenomena, whose impacts remained etched in people's memories, helped people to distinguish between areas that were and were not suitable for agriculture. In addition, precolonial farmers' abilities to distinguish between good and bad farming land accumulated from both a process of trial and error and a long history of interaction with the local environments. Archaeological evidence from Murahwa's hill near the present city of Mutare indicates the co-existence of hunter-gatherer and farming communities in the area.[253] Bearing in mind recent scholarly reservations on the possibility of a wave of migration by farmers who displaced the hunter gather-communities, it is not improbable that the hunter-gatherers adopted the knowledge of agriculture and experimented with it in an environment they had inhabited

[252] Interview with Charova, 28 June 2013.

[253] Seke Katsamudanga, Environment Culture.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

for generations if not centuries.[254] The turn towards agriculture surely accelerated as additional groups of farmers occupied the northeastern Zimbabwean landscape. Oral accounts of communities leaving swamps in search of drier locales, like legends of people fleeing blood-stained grinding stones intimate a process of trial and error that enabled precolonial farmers to accumulate knowledge about bad and good farming land.[255]Similar processes of trial and error may also explain the movement along the gradient by the farmers who initially inhabited the hilltops of the Nyanga highlands.[256] The hilltop soils were shallow and the farmers most certainly recognized this fact after a few generations, prompting them to leave the mountain tops for the freshly weathered slopes with relatively deeper soils.[257] These communities adapted to the problem of erosion along the slopes by terracing their fields.

To sum up, it is useful to note that although large swathes of land seemingly went unoccupied, the inhabitants of precolonial northeastern Zimbabwe knew that not every piece of land was cultivable. Geology, climate and perceptions of the environment and of particular locales influenced choices of where to settle. Farmers sought lands that could sustain their agricultural pursuits. They struck a balance between, on the one hand, fertile soils workable with available technology and, on the other, areas receiving rainfall

---

[254] For findings that question the classic Bantu migration arguments in Southern Africa, see, for example, Nicholas J Walker, *Late Pleistocene and Holocene Hunter-gatherers of the Matopos: An Archaeological Study of Change and Continuity in Zimbabwe*, Uppsala, Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Societas Archaeologica Uppsaliensis, 1995 and Martin Hall, *The Changing Past: Farmers, Kings and Traders in Southern Africa, 200-1860,* Cape Town, David Philip, 1987. These studies reveal the existence of cattle centuries before the arrival of the Bantu, challenging the argument that the Bantu migration was a package consisting of iron working tools, cattle and pottery that was unwrapped in Southern Africa by a group of people who migrated from the Cameroon/Nigeria borderlands.

[255] AOH 26, Makuvire Chigonero.

[256] Robert Soper, *Nyanga.*

[257] Robert Soper, *Nyanga and Seke Katsamudanga*, Environment and Culture .

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

sufficient for the grain crops they cultivated as their staples. Above all, they avoided lands that were threatening to their health. However, because preferred land was not abundant, competition inspired the development of forms of social control which regulated access to such land.

Belonging, Social Relations and Access to Land

In northeastern Zimbabwe, as in other parts of Africa, competition for the limited fertile agricultural land encouraged the flourishing of ideas of social identity and differentiation meant to control access to land.[258] Inhabitants of precolonial northeastern Zimbabwe articulated the social relations that undergirded power over productive land in terms of a discourse of belonging. As scholars have noted, access to land in precolonial Zimbabwe depended, above all, on one's membership in kin groups.[259]

Oral accounts of migration and settlement in northeastern Zimbabwe confirm this point. Charova remembered the movement of his ancestors from chief Mutema's area in Chimanimani to Jindwi and finally to Bocha. He explained that his ancestors left chief Mutema's area with his siblings to escape squabbles that rocked their father's polygamous household. Like the dynastic patriarchs discussed in Chapter 2, Charova's ancestors were hunters. They used their hunting skills to gain acceptance among the Jindwi who gave them wives and pieces of land to settle near the Wengezi River.[260] They thus gained access to land through marriage. The stories of Charova's ancestors describe

[258] For elsewhere in Africa, see the discussion in Jan Vansina, *Paths in the Rain Forest: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa*, Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990; Jan Vansina; *How Societies are Born* and David Schoenbrun, *A Green Place a, Good Place.*

[259] J F Holleman, *Chief, Councilor and Commissioner.*

[260] Interview with Sekuru James Charova, 28 June 2013.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

both social conflicts that led people to abandon their kin and the process of integration into new networks of kinship which were crucial in the micro-politics of land in precolonial northeastern Zimbabwe.

Integration into families through marriage was only one among many ways in which the precolonial inhabitants of northeastern Zimbabwe used networks of kinship to gain access to productive land. In some cases, immigrants exploited existing kinship ties by moving to areas where they already had relatives. Makuvire Chigonero explained that his ancestors moved from Wedza to Chihota, adding

> we were following our *muzukuru* [nephew] who was about to be given chieftainship by the Zumba people. The Zumba had invited him saying 'Furamera should come here because we now want to appoint a chief.' He [Furamera] had fled sometime back refusing to come up because he wanted to live in Uhera….Yes, he wanted to live with his *vasekuru* [maternal uncles] so he went to Wedza and it was there that he was taken by the Manyatas.[261]

Chigonero's stories are important not only because of what he says about his ancestors' relationship with Furamera and their ability to get land in Chihota. They in fact suggest a reciprocal relationship in which Chigonero's ancestors initially gave Furamera land when he left his patriclan, most likely because of succession conflicts. Thus, just as Nyamandoto, the second generation Manyika chief, grew among his maternal relatives, one could also look to his mother's brothers, to access land in case of conflicts within the patrilineage.[262] In this regard, Furamera's experiences were not unique. We may also remember that in 1896, Chimbadzwa, the Manyika chief's preferred heir, left his father's territory together with his sister, Chikanga, for Barwe in Portuguese East Africa, where

[261] AOH 26 Makuvire Chigonero.

[262] For Nyamandoto, see the discussion in Chapter 2.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

the chief was their maternal uncle.[263] Surely, this maternal connection made Barwe the preferred destination for the disgruntled Chimbadzwa.

Evidence that precolonial farmers exploited both patrilineal and matrilineal connections to access land suggests that belonging did not necessarily denote patrilineal descent. Instead, ideologies of belonging also involved competition for loyalties, and these hinged on various reciprocal duties, obligations and responsibilities. It was, for example, in the interests of political elites and commoners alike to settle their *vazukuru* ("sisters' sons") within their territories for these occupied important spaces in the selection of a new chief and in the distribution of a deceased patriarch's estate. Rwambiwa Chari explained that "it is he [*muzukuru*] who declares 'so and so' you are now to be inherited by this person here," adding, "that is why it is said 'a muzukuru [sister's son/nephew] is far more important than your own son…."[264] That the *muzukuru* performed this function was critical; it meant that he was crucial in the distribution of a patriarch's wealth in people (wife inheritance was part of this ceremony to distribute a deceased man's estate) and cattle, resources that were very important in the ever-going struggles for clients and followers.

The ritual position occupied by the *muzukuru* enabled Chari's father to access land amongst his *madzisekuru.* Chari remembered the story of his parents' migration from Goromonzi to Chihota in the late nineteenth century in this context:

> we were in Goromonzi then. Now someone came to Goromonzi and said "Muzukuru [nephew], come here and lets live together [with the Chihota people] because we are having problems when it comes to making our ritual offerings. That is how we left that area and came here to make a preliminary survey of the area…we then transferred to this area. At the time the chieftainship was

---

[263] See the discussion in Chapter 2.

[264] AOH 37, Rwambiwa Chari.

www.manaraa.com

> held by Savanhu. He told us [meaning his parents] 'this whole area extending there is yours, muzukuru. You will live here together with your family.[265]

The strategic significance of this matrilineal connection for access to both power and land for the *madzisekuru* (maternal uncles) and the *vazukuru* (nephews), respectively, need no emphasis. The incumbent chief Chihota understood this well and it was within the realm of possibility for the *vazukuru* to exploit the social and ritual space that they occupied to obtain land controlled by their maternal uncles.

While membership in a kinship group undoubtedly created a sense of entitlement to land controlled by their kin, it should be pointed out that this was insufficient a guarantee to one's ability to access good agricultural land. Other factors played in. Oral traditions suggest that the spatial distribution of settlements and access to good farming land on the central watershed were informed by ideas about both belonging and power. Chief Muchenje Chinhamora remembered that when his ancestors defeated Gunguwo, they found in the area a group who, like them, claimed to be of the *Soko* totem. This group occupied the marginal wetlands of what became Chishawasha. "They were asked why they stayed in the wet vlei [*mudeve*] and they said they had been put there by those who claimed to be chiefs," Muchenje recounted, adding that "these people were called the *Chirimudewe* (those who occupy the wet vlei)." Chinhamora added that it was Gunguwo who kept them in the vlei.[266] Chief Chinhamora suggested that the *Chirimudewe's* fortunes and identity changed with the Shawasha conquest of the area. He explained that after conquering Gunguwo's land, his ancestors resettled the *Chirimudewe*

---

[265] AOH 37, Rwambiwa Chari.

[266] AOH 73, Chief Muchenje Chinamhora.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

on higher ground and rechristened them *Chakaoma* (that which is dry.)[267] Chinamhora's account reflects the relationship between ideas of belonging and access to good agricultural land.

Traditions of Mandeya expansion northwestwards from the core of the Manyika territory tell similar stories of competition for fertile land and of chiefly houses that displaced commoners from such localities.[268] According to the traditions, when Mandeya settled at Howeta (in what became Nyamhuka), he instructed his wives to go and cultivate groundnuts in the *Webengo* area. The autochtonous Dumbwi chief objected to this, because the women cultivated the area without informing him. The subsequent skirmish over groundnuts fields led to the displacement of the *Dumbwi* and the appropriation of the land by the Nyamhuka.[269]

Oral and archaeological evidence also indicates a relationship between relative poverty and differential access to land in the eastern highlands. From Nyanga in the north to Chipinge in the south, the inhabitants of the highlands remember those who lived in the lowlands as poverty stricken, arguing that they did not have livestock to use in important social transactions such as *roora* (bride wealth).[270] Because of this relative poverty, those who inhabited the lowlands that abutted the highlands practiced *ugariri* (a

---

[267] AOH 73, Chief Muchenje Chinamhora.

[268] Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lesson 89. For a discussion of a somewhat similar expropriation of commoners' land by new elites, see James Giblin's discussion of the Spiritans's acquisition of land with the help of local chiefs in northeastern Tanzania. James Giblin, Land Tenure, Traditions of Thought about Land and their Environmental Impilications in Tanzania, pp 145-152.

[269] Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lesson 89; David Beach, Oral Tradition in Eastern Zimbabwe, p 18.

[270] Francis Dube, "Colonialism, Cross-Border Movements and Epidemiology: A History of Public Health in the Manyika Region of Central Mozambique and Eastern Zimbabwe and the African Response, 1890-1980," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Iowa, 2009, p 24 and John K. Rennie, Christianity, Colonialism and the Origins of Nationalism, p 54.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

practice where the prospective husband worked for his prospective in-laws for many years in lieu of the *roora* in cattle before he could get his wife.)[271]

Marriage practices adopted by the inhabitants of the Zimbabwean plateau in the precolonial period reflect these people's understanding of the practical reality of social inequality marked by the uneven distribution of livestock among households within their societies. Early twentieth century accounts of precolonial Manyika marriage capture this point.[272] One practice allowed a man without cattle to be able to marry by borrowing cattle from a friend on the understanding that the provider of cattle would later receive the beneficiary's daughter in marriage.[273] The second practice, known among the WaManyika as *kuroora kwematenganiswa* (marriage by exchange), allowed people to marry without exchanging bridewealth in the form of cattle. Here, both parties would marry from each other's family.[274]

There is no reason to suppose that the realities of social inequality that inspired northeastern Zimbabwe's precolonial societies to fashion practices of marriage and social reproduction without the physical exchange of wealth in cattle did not influence access to land. In fact, archaeological surveys in the valleys of the eastern highlands have discovered evidence of relatively poorer communities who occupied the marginal lowlands and the existence of social inequality marked by fewer cattle along the gradient. The surveys revealed two kinds of evidence suggesting that the inhabitants of the

[271] Francis Dube, Colonialism, Cross Border Movements and Epidemiology, p24 and John K. Rennie, Christianity, Colonialism and the Origins of Nationalism, p 54.

[272] Jason Machiwenyika, History and customs of the Manyika, Lessons, 28, 29, 30 and 35.

[273] Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lesson 28; W.S. Bazely, "A Manyika Marriage Custom." *NADA*, No. 4, 1926, pp 48-50.

[274] Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lesson 30.

للاستشارات المنارة
www.manaraa.com

lowlands were relatively poorer in cattle than those of the highlands. Bearing in mind the possibility that the inhabitants of the lowlands might have kept some of their cattle elsewhere, Robert Soper noted that the pit structures in the lowlands were considerably smaller than those in the highlands.[275] Soper further noted that apart from being deeper and larger than the pit enclosures in the lowlands, the pit structures in the highlands show variations in the sizes of the pit structures that reveal the differences in the sizes of cattle herds among particular households.[276] Archaeology also shows that lowland communities, such as those who inhabited the Honde valley built simple stone enclosures without the pit structures which functioned as cattle pens in the highlands. Heike Schmidt suggested that here, the pit enclosures meant to keep cattle were "a precaution that was unnecessary for valley inhabitants who usually lived in the lower areas infested by the tsetse fly."[277] It is also possible that the people who resided in the lowlands settled in these marginal environments precisely because of their poverty.[278]

Relative wealth made the difference between one's ability to cultivate large or small acreages and to bequeath to descendants claims to large pieces of land. Shona male elders in the central watershed explained that one's ability to cultivate large fields rested on one's ability to mobilize labor.[279] One way in which precolonial farmers mobilized labor was through *nhimbe [*also known as *hoka* or *humwe]* (a communal work party).

---

[275] Robert Soper, *Nyanga*, p 125.

[276] Robert Soper, *Nyanga*, p 125.

[277] Heike I Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe*, p 45.

[278] See, for example, the discussion in Nancy J. Jacobs, *Environment, Power and Injustice*, especially chapter 2.

[279] AOH 81, Madzivanyika Bvudzijena, Taonezvi Mazivei and Simon Zhuwarara; AOH 37, Chari Rwambiwa, AOH 80, Taonezvi Makutu.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Taonezvi Makutu described the *nhimbe* thus: "we would organize beer parties and invite people to help with the tilling of the land. Being the owner you would need to organize several of these until the whole field was tilled."[280] This continued well into the twentieth century.[281] However, not everybody was able to mobilize labor in this way, for this taxed one's ability to feed the participants. In Taonezvi Mazivei's words, "if one did not have the beer [given to the participants in the *nhimbe*], then one had to do the planting on his own."[282] The point here is that relative wealth in grain and livestock influenced the acreage that individual households could till and harvest. This was crucial in the politics of claims making to land for generations. Male oral informants insisted that even in situations where people moved their fields, their descendants were later able to claim 'ownership' of the *gura* (abandoned fields) on the basis that they or their parents had previously cleared and tilled that land.[283] What this meant was that those households who could till large portions of land could bequeath to their descendants large pieces of land.

Besides belonging and status, ideas of generation and seniority influenced social reproduction and access to land. Older patriarchs were able to control the process of social reproduction through their monopoly over resources that were essential for marriage. Manyika oral historian Jason Machiwenyika recounted how a father helped his son to marry:

---

[280] AOH 81, Makutu Taonezvi Madzivanyika Bvudzijena, Taonezvi Mazivei and Simon Zhuwarara.

[281] I participated in many of these communal work parties as a young boy growing up in rural Mberengwa, in Southern Zimbabwe in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The only difference between the work parties described above and those that I attended is that, in the twentieth century work parties, households pulled together spans of ox-drawn ploughs while participants in precolonial and early colonial work parties used hoes to cultivate the fields.

[282] AOH 81, Makutu Taonezvi Madzivanyika Bvudzijena, Taonezvi Mazivei and Simon Zhuwarara .

[283] Interview with Charova, 28 June 2013; Interview with Makanya, 29 June 2013.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

> it was the custom in the ancient days that if a father had a son and had a girl betrothed to him by a friend whom he helped with cattle to pay his *roora*, he would sit down with his son and talk to him saying, this girl who is in my household will be your wife, but for the time being she is under my guidance. If the boy was still young, the girl would wait. If the girl was still young, the boy would wait until such a day when the father would call his son, the betrothed girl and his close relatives and say to them 'I have called you all today because I want to give my son his wife.' He joins the two's hands and says to his son, 'here is your wife, I deliver her to you today.' He talks to the girl and tells her 'my daughter-in-law, here is your husband.'[284]

In this way, the male head of the household exercised power over its junior male members.

The father's power stemmed not only from the fact that he controlled the essential resources required by young male members of the family in order to establish their own households and assert their own independence. A host of ritual practices associated with the establishment of new households also ensured that the household patriarch could influence his male juniors' ability to access land. Informants insisted that the household patriarch ceremonially dug the first hole before the junior male member could construct his new homestead, a practice known as *kutema rupango* (to cut the pole).[285] This meant that the younger male members of the household would not be able to establish a new household without the blessings of the family patriarch. We may also remember that after the junior male member of the household had surveyed the land for his fields, he had to visit the place with his father and seek the permission of the *sadunhu* or chief before he could clear it. Such rituals and protocols created a hierarchy of power in which the junior members of society required the cooperation of their seniors in order to marry, establish new homes and clear new fields.

---

[284] Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lesson 29.

[285] Interview with Makanya, 29 June 2013, Interview with SaMuponda, 24 June 2013 and 01 July 2013, Interview with Mutsago, 28 June 2013. See also the discussion on Marangeni in chapter 2.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

The participation of fathers in the social reproduction of households not only ensured the perpetuation of male gerontocracy, but the whole dynamic of social reproduction outlined above served to cement the patriarchal structure of precolonial society. It was the son, with the blessing of his father who sought new fields and established a new homestead. This raises the question of gender and women's access to land. Although at first sight, it seems women's ability to access land depended on their relationship with their male kinsmen, the reality, in practice, was complicated. While most women accessed land through marriage, we should not also lose sight of the fact that outsider men often gained access to land through their marriages to local women. Here the gendered dynamic might have been altered in the wife's favor. Oral informants in the eastern highlands insisted that in scenarios where outsiders obtained land through marriage to local women, that land effectively belonged to the wife.[286]

Although kinship was crucial for access to land, and theoretically one's membership in kinship groups made men and women eligible to obtain land owned by that group, in practice, ideologies of belonging, generation and seniority created different degrees of access to land. The effect of these ideas of inclusion/exclusion has to be understood in the context of the limited availability of productive land outlined in the previous section.

Cropping Systems, Gender and Differential Access to Land

Ideologies of gender and generation did not completely exclude women from control of land. Gendered cultivation of particular crops in different microenvironments ensured that men and women controlled different portions of productive lands. This

[286] Interview with SaMuponda, 01 July 2013; Interview with Mutsago, 28 June 2013.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

practice was part of a general division of labor in the precolonial economy. Historians of precolonial eastern and central Africa have encountered similar constructions of a gendered division of labor, suggesting that this was widespread among precolonial African societies. For example, the Shambaai myth of Mbega casts him as a hunter and a masculine figure. It feminizes the Shambaai who appear in the myth as the providers of cereals to Mbegha, to complete the community's balanced diet.[287] Similarly, the first man in the Serengeti narratives of origin is a hunter, while the first women occupies the domestic space and has powers to make rain, a crucial factor for agriculturalists.[288] In their study of gender and agrarian change in Zambia's Northern Province, Henrietta Moore and Meghan Vaughan have shown that the gendered space occupied by women incorporated both the household's kitchen and fields, especially the vegetable gardens.[289]

In northeastern Zimbabwe, as in the northeastern Zambian case discussed by Moore and Vaughan, the construction of a gendered division of labor went hand in hand with the masculinization and feminization of particular crops and of the lands on which these crops were cultivated. Oral accounts of precolonial cropping patterns in the region revealed this key dynamic about gendered control of land within households. In the eastern highlands, gendered access to land was associated with the cultivation of *tsenza* and *madhumbe*, two root crops exclusively grown by women. Herbert Chitepo imaginatively gave us a glimpse into the hard work performed by the women who grew these crops in his poem, *Soko Risina Musoro:*

---

[287] Steven Feierman, *The Shambaa Kingdom.*

[288] Jan Bender Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti.*

[289] Henrietta L Moore and Meghan Vaughan, *Cutting Down Trees: Gender, Nutrition and Agricultural Change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890-1990*, Portsmouth: NH, Heinemann, 1994.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Ndakaona mudzimai akamira mudoro	I saw a woman standing in the *vlei*
Akakwinya maroko achizvara tsenza	She had raised her dress cultivating *tsenza*
Maoko ake akange azere mataka	Her hands were filled with mud
Asi aiziva kuti muiro ivhu aibata	But knew that in the soil she was working
Aikumbana naNyadange Mubasa	She was in sync with God in her job
Rekukudza mbesa dzinopa upenyu	Of growing crops that give life[290]

Elderly Manyika women described in similar terms the labor that they and their mothers and grandmothers invested in the preparation of *madhumbe* and *tsenza* fields.[291]

Manyika women explained that, apart from the backbreaking job of cultivating *tsenza* described by Chitepo, women cleared the land on which these crops were cultivated. According to these women, who themselves grew *tsenza* as young girls and were relating to me wisdom passed from generations of mothers and grandmothers, husbands would only help to clear the land out of goodwill. The women who cleared and worked these *tsenza* and *madhumbe* fields effectively controlled these pieces of land. It was, according to the women, the act of clearing the land that formed the basis of their claims to these important fields. The fields lay outside those that the household patriarch allocated to his dependents. When, later in the colonial period, the colonial state demarcated farming from grazing lands under a centralization scheme which recognized husbands and fathers as owners of a household's fields, women cleared their *tsenza* and *madhumbe* gardens in areas demarcated as pastures.[292] These pastures were communal lands and were therefore outside the control of household patriarchs.

[290] Hebert W Chitepo, *"Soko Risina Musoro*," p 2. The translation into English is mine. A *vlei* is a wet land.

[291] Interview with Mbuya Shava, Mutasa Communal Lands, 26 June 2013; Interview with Mbuya Mashizha, Mutasa Communal Lands, 26 June 2013.

[292] Donald S Moore, *Suffering For Territory: Race Place and Power in Zimbabwe*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2006*,* pp 114-118.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

However, there was a limit to the extent to which these women would retain access to land by merely investing their labor to clear the gardens. Land suitable for the cultivation of these root crops, like any arable land, was also not abundant. At some point, access to the *madhumbe* and *tsenza* plots became tied to the social reproduction of the household and to the relations among a household's women folk. Scholarship on women and gender has shown that seniority further articulated differential power relations among Shona women.[293] Just as junior men required the cooperation of older men in order to access land, junior women would access land through their relations with senior women as well as male kinsmen. Daughters-in- law, in particular, could access independent plots for the cultivation of *madhumbe, tsenza* and *nyimo* (groundnuts), through their relations with their mothers in law.

Manyika women's association with the *madhumbe* and *tsenza* as growers, preparers and consumers of these two root crops gave them an intimate understanding of their requirements. Unlike Chitepo who described the women's cultivation of the *tsenza* gardens through observation, these women grew *tsenza* themselves. They explained that *tsenza* was not grown in the *vleis* or wetlands because they would easily rot before maturity. Instead, they grew *madhumbe* on the *vleis* and fertile wetlands near streams that ran below hills because the crop required considerable moisture. The women grew *tsenza* on hilltops.[294]

[293] Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives.*
[294] Interview with Mbuya Shava, 26 June 2013, Interview with Mbuya Mashizha, 23 June 2013, Interview with Mbuya Gededza, 29 June 2013.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Manyika memories of gendered distribution of crops along the hill gradients are consistent with archaeologists' interpretations of the cropping patterns on ancient fields and ridges in Nyanga and adjacent lowlands. For instance, Robert Soper postulated that

> it is probable that the outlying terraced fields were devoted to the main grain staples, especially sorghum. This is supported by the lack of any traces of subsidiary ridging or mounding which is associated with most other crops in recent cultivation practice. The outlying large cultivation ridges would be more suitable for root crops, *Colocasia* (Madhumbe) and *Zantedeschia*, along the wetter ditches with grains and other crops on the drier crests….Tsenza would also have been grown here as a monocrop.[295]

Similarly, elderly Manyika women explained that women grew *madhumbe* on *mihomba* (ridges) in the valleys beneath the main *njera* fields.[296] They left the middle zones of the low undulating hills for *njera* or *rukweza* (rapoko) which was the family's staple crop. Although men, women and children grew *njera* together as a household, the patriarch controlled the fields on which *njera* and other cereals were grown. Manyika women grew *tsenza* anywhere they could find outside the wetter valleys and the household fields.

By describing the exploitation of terraced fields and cultivation ridges in terms of a household's gendered access to land in different microenvironments, Manyika women offer alternative interpretations to those postulated by archaeologists. For example, although Soper, the lead archaeologist in the area, made an observation similar to the description of cropping patterns along the gradient given by elderly Manyika women, he suggested that a simultaneous use of both ridges and terraces by a single community was unlikely because both required heavy labor. "Terracing and ridging," suggests Soper, "probably represent parallel exploitation by related communities, each incorporating

[295] Robert Soper, *Nyanga*, p 129.

[296] Interview with Mbuya Shava, 26 June 2013; Interview with Mbuya Mashizha, 26 June 2013.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

occurrences of minor resources where it fell within its ambit."[297] The oral evidence does not support this interpretation. Instead, it suggests that the cultivation ridges represented fields cleared, worked, and owned by women to grow root crops at the same time that the household exploited the *njera* fields controlled by the patriarch. This was important not only because such a spatial distribution of fields along different microenvironments ensured security against crop failure in one locale. It also ensured differential gendered access to land along the gradient. According to the elderly Manyika women, men had control over land in which the household grew *njera* but did not have control over their wives' *tsenza* and *madhumbe* gardens.[298] What this meant was that women controlled the patchwork of fields located on the upper slopes and the river valleys where they grew *tsenza* and *madhumbe*, while male heads of households controlled the middle slopes where the household cereals were grown.

If oral accounts that women controlled the ridged valley gardens where root crops were grown are correct,—and there is no reason to doubt this if current practice is anything to go by—then, women surely controlled substantial plots. In one locality near Maristvale mission in Nyanga, Soper closely examined a *vlei* in a shallow valley with a total area of about 275 by 200 meters. He observed that the whole *vlei* had a series of ridges.[299] Richard Whitlow describes a system of old ridges and furrows covering an area

[297] Robert Soper, *Nyanga*, p 130.

[298] Interview with Mbuya Mashizha, Interview with Mbuya Shava.

[299] Robert Soper, *Nyanga*, p 56.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

of about 450 hectares on Rusape Source Farm in Makoni district. Whitlow noted that this was only one example of many ridged *vleis* between Rusape and Nyanga.[300]

Although gendered control of cropping land along the gradient was widespread,—extending from the eastern highlands to Headlands in Maungwe—it was adapted to particular micro-environments. The practice was widespread as one moved further west from the highlands. In the Nyamukwarara valley to the east, one elderly woman explained, *madhumbe* were grown everywhere. She explained that the Nyamukwarara valley area received more rainfall when compared to the western portions of the precolonial Manyika kingdom.[301]

As one moves from east to west, *tsenza* and *madhumbe*, two root crops that together with finger millet undergirded the gendered construction of cropping patterns and access to land in the highlands, disappear. Informants in the central watershed do not mention these crops. Similarly, early reports by native commissioners for the districts of Marandellas and Salisbury list grains and legumes, as the crops grown by Africans in their districts, but do not mention the root crops like *tsenza* and *madhumbe.*[302] Instead, the inhabitants of the central watershed cultivated rice in the valley plots that functioned as *madhumbe* gardens in the eastern highlands.[303] And unlike in the highlands where the

---

[300] R Whitlow, Cited in Robert Soper, *Nyanga*, p 55.

[301] Interview with Mbuya Shava.

[302] To reach this conclusion I read Native Commissioner's reports for the five districts from 1898 to 1903. See, N9/1/1/4, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners,1898; N9/1/5, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, 1899; N9/1/6, Annual Reports, Native commissioners, 1900; N9/1/7, Native Commissioners' Annual Reports, 1901; N9/1/8, Annual reports, Native Commissioners, 1902-1903.

[303] AOH 80, Taonezvi Makutu.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

valley plots were controlled by women, the rice plots in the central watershed were part of the household fields controlled by patriarchs.

Nevertheless, masculine and feminine constructions of particular crops and of the land on which these crops were grown prevailed across the region from the eastern highlands to the central watershed and the semi-arid Bocha to the west. Legumes like *nyimo* replaced *madhumbe* and *tsenza* as women's crops west of the highlands. However, legumes, unlike *madhumbe*, did not require different microenvironments from those where cereals were grown. Another difference was that women grew legumes on a *tseu* (a plot of land reserved for a wife's legumes), which, although exclusively worked by women, was part of the household field controlled by men. It is perhaps for this reason that as one moved west from the eastern highlands, the emphasis given to the gendered access to land utilized for different crops along the gradient gives way to constructions of certain fields where the same grain crops were grown. Here, households distinguished between fields controlled exclusively by senior men and others that belonged to the household. Male elders in Chihota in the central watershed talked of the *Zunde rababa* controlled by the household's patriarch.[304] The inhabitants of Bocha and the eastern highlands called the same plot *chishanu chababa*—the father's plot.[305]

Why would this field be called *chishanu chababa?* Informants in Bocha explained that the father's plot was called so because *chishanu*—literally, the fifth day (although this is in fact a Friday, the sixth day of the week), was a *chisi or mushumo*, the

---

[304] AOH 81, Madzivanyika,Bvudzijena, Taonezvi Mazivei and Simon Zhuwarara.

[305] Interview with Svongore, 28 June 2013; Interview with Charova, 28 June 2013. Interview with Mbuya Shava, 26 June 2013; Interview with Mbuya Mashizha, 26 June 2013.

www.manaraa.com

sacred day on which work of any kind was prohibited.[306] To labor on this day was sacrilegious. To the other members of the household, the father's plot and the millet that was harvested from it was as sacred as the Friday *chisi* was to Shona society. In the household politics of power over land and people, constructing the patriarch's field in the language of *chisi* or *mushumo* served at least two purposes. First, it reminded every member of the household of the powers vested in the family patriarch. It was unmistaken to every member of the household that the plot that constituted the *chishanu chababa* occupied a different space than the rest of the household's field, just as *Chiahanu*, the day of *Chisi*, was different from all other days of the week. So too was the produce from this field.

Yet, *chishanu chababa* would be worked by every member of the family. Because every member of the household contributed to the cultivation of *chishanu chababa*, they all had a claim to a share of its harvest in times of famine, the only time when the harvest from this field would be distributed to the household. In this sense, *chishanu chababa* belonged to every member of the household. This contrasts to the rest of the fields which, in polygamous households were 'owned' and worked by the different wives. Here, the fields, and the crops that came from them belonged to each individual wife and were used to feed each wife's children.

The significance of *chishanu chababa* in the gendered power dynamics over land within households can be discerned from the importance that precolonial Shona societies placed on the actual day of *Mushumo*. The experience of a Portuguese trader who failed to observe this day in Chiteve, Manyika's neighbor to the southeast is instructive. In his

[306] Interview with Charova, 28 June 2013.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

mid-seventeenth century account, João Dos Santos, a Portuguese official told his superiors that

> A Portuguese resident of Sofala went with his merchandise to zimbaoe [Zimbabwe], where Quiteve dwells, in order to proceed thence to Manyika where there are many gold mines; and being in the city of Quiteve he ordered a cow to be killed in his house, in order to feed his slaves and the other men whom he had with him to help him in the sale of the merchandise. On the day this cow was killed one of these said *musimos* feasts was being held, and the intelligence was immediately carried out to Quiteve by his spies, of whom he has an infinite number to report to him all that goes on in the city and the whole kingdom. Quiteve immediately sent word to the Portuguese that they had done very ill in breaking his saint's day by killing a cow, but since it was done they must not lay hands upon it, but must cover it with branches and the *musimo* of the day would eat it. The dead cow remained in the house of the Portuguese, and the king would not allow it to be touched, and it grew putrid and smelt so badly that the Portuguese wished to leave that house and take another. But Quiteve would not consent, insisting that as a penalty for killing the cow on the day of his *musimo*, he should endure the evil smell, or pay the *empofia* which he demanded. The Portuguese, moved by the inconvenience which he was forced to endure, came to an agreement with the king and paid him fifty pieces of cloth for the *empofia* laid upon him, and did not eat the cow, but endured the smell of it for many days.[307]

Just as the Portuguese learned, the inhabitants of precolonial northeastern Zimbabwe knew that tempering with the *chisi* or *mushumo* had serious consequences. Similarly everybody within a household knew that *chishanu chababa* represented the father's authority over land and people.

Retaining Claims to the Land

Up to this point, our discussion of the micro-politics of land and power in precolonial northeastern Zimbabwe focused on competition for land and on the social dynamics that shaped access to the resource. However, accessing the land was one thing; retaining claims to it another. Therefore, an even more important part of the micro-politics of land and power was the question of how men and women retained claims to the resource. From the beginning of the twentieth century onwards, much administrative

[307] João Dos Santos, Eastern Ethiopia, p 200.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

and scholarly energy was expended in answering this question.[308] A central point made by colonial administrators and scholars alike was that among the Shona, land holding was tied to social organization and to their belief system. "In Shona society," wrote W.H Stead,

> the minor family is found to have only an insignificant place in the arrangements for carrying out the conscious and the unconscious purposes of tribal life. The individual's and the minor family's identities are considerably eclipsed by the identity of the extended family and, within the extended family, the sib, i.e. the agnatic group within which relationship is traceable reasonably close stands out distinctly from the rest. The sib is the stressed unit in tribal life. Its members have common descent, reciprocal duties and behaviour patterns, obligations to support and protect each other, and a strong sense of solidarity binds them together. An injury or insult to one is an injury or insult to all. They are a single entity who share rights or privileges and have joint responsibility to other similar entities in the body politic. Property is owned by the sib and held in trust by its senior member.[309]

Why the Sib and why only in trusteeship? Charles Bullock, a contemporary of Stead explained that

> the *paterfamilias* is the representative of the family, but he is also the link between his predecessor and his successor. He is *of* the group, not a separate individual with individual rights of property, etc. he cannot then alienate the control of the *familia*, with all the rights and duties involved. He is the representative and custodian for his lifetime only.[310]

Two points are worth noting in this formulation. Patrilineal descent was crucial to retaining access to land since agnatic and not affinal relations were paramount in power dynamics within a household. Second, land was inalienable because no mortal owned it.

In much of the earlier anthropological literature, the structure of the household or the extended family—the smallest unit of the African society—was reproduced in the village and the 'tribe,' the latter, in the eyes of the colonial administrators and early ethnographers, representing both the highest form of African social organization and the

---

[308] W H Stead, Concepts and Control in Native Life; Charles Bullock, "Can a Native Make a Will?: Concepts of Testate Succession in Native Law." *NADA,* No. 7, 1929; J F Holleman, *Chief, Councilor and Commissioner.*

[309] W.H. Stead, Concepts and Controls in Native Life, p 8.

[310] Charles Bullock, Can a Native Make a Will?, p 106.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

African body politic. W.H Stead summed up this thinking: "it is reasonably certain that a system of control based exclusively on kinship was antecedent to the tribal system and that the latter—in those instances which are no longer kinship units—were patterned on the former."[311] Thus even in the wider society that this literature called the 'tribe,' the chief was not the owner of the land (territory) but was a mere custodian.

These conceptualizations allowed ethnographers like Bullock (and later nationalist historians) to explain why land was inalienable. Bullock explained that

> certain property among the Mashona, is entailed; it is sacred to the family, in the sense that the ancestral spirits are thought jealously to guard and to control its disposal. It consisted (before it was affected by our laws abolishing slavery and emancipating women) of the personnel of the *familia*, including women and slaves, and all such property as comes to a man in his family capacity. That is to say, the family inheritance, *lobolo* cattle from a sister or daughter and (previously) the children of bondmen. The bow and spear are of this class, and so also may be set down the right to the hut and to the tenure of land (not ownership).[312]

Bullock pointed out that nobody owned the land, adding, "only the chief says '*pasi pangu*'—my land. The head of a kinship group within a clan will not use such phraseology, much less an individual; and the chief himself, while in practice recognised as the landlord, was believed to be the earthly vicar only of the real owner."[313] However, what Bullock and others after him have not since explained is that men and women in precolonial (and colonial and postcolonial) Zimbabwe may not have used the phrase *pasi pangu* but, certainly used the phrase *munda wangu* (my fields) and fought vigorously to exclude others from possessing those fields.[314] How did these men and women retain claims to their fields? I will return to this question shortly. For the moment it is

---

[311] W H Stead, Concepts and Controls in Native Life, p 9.

[312] Charles Bullock, Can a Native Make a Will?, p 106.

[313] Charles Bullock, Can a Native Make a Will?,p 106.

[314] AOH 79, Kamusoro

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

worthwhile to briefly explore scholarly responses to these early conceptualizations of African landholding practices.

An extensive literature responded to the early anthropological construction of African social organization in terms of the 'tribe' and its implication on African land holding.[315] A central point in this literature was that, the "tribe" and the "customary" did not represent practices in the precolonial period but were fashioned in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries by African male elders, missionaries and the colonial state. The post-colonial state retained this twentieth century creation which only reflects the ideologies of African landholding in the colonial and postcolonial periods.[316] I do not wish to reproduce this criticism in this chapter but, will quickly point out that attempts to show how the 'tribal' and the 'customary' were fashioned in the colonial period did very little to tell us how Africans retained claims to their landholdings in the precolonial period.[317] This is because the scholarship focused on the politics of knowledge production in the twentieth century rather than the practices of land holding in the precolonial period. My point is to explore the practices that precolonial men and women

---

[315] On the implications of early anthropological constructions of African social organizations as tribes and their implications on land tenure in twentieth century Sub-Saharan Africa see among others, Terence Ranger, The Communal Areas in Zimbabwe; Angela Cheater, The Ideology of 'Communal' Land Tenure in Zimbabwe; Sara Berry, *No Condition is Permanent*; Thomas Spear, *Mountain Farmers: Moral Economies of Land and Agricultural Development in Arusha and Meru*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997 and Thomas Spear, Neo-traditionalism and the Limits if Invention in British Colonial Africa." *Journal of African History* Vol. 44, No. 1, 2003.

[316] See for example Terrence Ranger, The Communal Areas in Zimbabwe; Ranger Terence, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," in Terence Ranger and Eric Hobsbawm (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983; Angela Cheater, The Ideology of 'Communal; Martin Chanock, *Law Custom and Social Order*, Martin Chanock, "Paradigms, Policies, and Property: A review of the customary Law of Land Tenure," in Kristin Mann and Richard Roberts (eds), *Law in Colonial Africa*, Portsmouth: NH, Heinemann, 1991 and Sara Berry, *No Condition is Permanent*, Thomas Spear, *Mountain Farmers*, especially chapter 10 and Thomas Spear, Neo-Traditionalism and the Limits of Invention.

[317] James Giblin makes a similar observation. See James Giblin, Land Tenure, Traditions of Thought about Land, especially pp 141-142.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

used to retain claims to land. This was not only tied to membership in a patrilineage but to other relations as well. Let us pursue the question of how membership in patrilineal descent helped one to retain access to the land first.

In the African household that ethnographers like Stead outlined, the *imba* (sib) was the crucial element in terms of retaining control over land. Members of the same *imba* (sib) fought for one another. In addition, inheritance and other processes of social reproduction like the establishment of a new household reproduced this unit of agnates. A household's property including, in Bullock's phrase, a right to tenure, was shared among the agnates, i.e. members of a patrilineage. Outsiders, like wives did not have a claim to this land, less still the support to retain access to it. There is no doubt that sons retained claims to lands that were owned by the households, particularly those that they inherited from household patriarchs. However, to limit the discussion of African landholding practices to patrilineal inheritance is to ignore the cobweb of relations that precolonial men and women weaved to claim accesses to land and to retain those claims. As shown above, many precolonial farmers used their matrilineal connections to access land. Descent and inheritance were therefore only two among various ideologies and practices by which men and especially women retained claims to land. For this reason, I argue that the concept of belonging that undergirded precolonial (and even colonial and postcolonial) struggles to retain land was broader than the idea of patrilineal descent. It also included matrilineal connections and a whole host of other relations of patronage.

To understand the importance of the matrilineal connections in the struggles to access and retain land we should elaborate on the point made earlier about the *muzukuru*. While in its most direct way, the *muzukuru* denotes one's sister's son (and daughter) this

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

category also includes one's father's sister son, one's paternal grandfather's sister son and so on, so much so that all the sons (and daughters) of the paternal aunties in the lineage were one's *vazukuru* (plural for *muzukuru*). Thus, when Rwambiwa Chari was asked to explain how his parents were the *vazukuru* of the Chihota people, his response was: "you see the woman called Mhondo was the sister of the one who gave rise to the Gukuta [Chihota] people. This Mhondo who used to live here is their [Chihota people's] paternal aunt."[318] One can tell that this Mhondo was not Chari's mother or even grandmother but some maternal ancestor. This, we know, because Chari suggests that she was the sister of the founder of the Chihota dynasty, which by a conservative estimate must have occupied the area in the seventeenth century.[319] Chari himself was born around1893.[320] The same logic applies to the category *madzisekuru* (plural for *sekuru*).

The expansion of the lineage outside the household meant that the pool of *vazukuru* and *madzisekuru* that one could draw from in order for one to access land was also expanding. This provided multiple options for both parties, imposing a limit to the extent to which household patrons and their patrilineal and matrilineal clients could alienate one another without causing flight. Considering the fact that most patrons would want to maintain a good reputation in order to retain their clients, the availability of this wide range of options underwrote a moral economy in which paternal and maternal

---

[318] AOH 37, Rwambiwa Chari.

[319] The Chihota people claim to have separated from the Manyika who remained in the eastern highlands when they proceeded to the central watershed. They, like the Chikanga who ruled Manyika until the nineteenth century, belong to the Tembo totem. Considering that Portuguese documents mention Manyika in the late sixteenth century, it is possible, bearing in mind the slow process of migration that the founders of this dynasty whose sister was Mhondo may have settled in the area at the latest at the beginning of the sixteenth century. See N N3/33/8, History of the Mashona Tribes; NUA 2/1/6, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, AOH 39, Nhira Nzvere Chinhoyi.

[320] AOH 37, Rwambiwa Chari.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

patrons would exploit their clients without eliciting flights.[321] The key to the maintenance of such a moral economy depended on both the reputation of the patron and the clients' ability to be mobile. Until the colonial state curtailed—to some extent—the ability of the Africans' ability to migrate, the option of migrating and leaving an exploitative patron was always available for many precolonial farmers. And this was only one among many social relations that undergirded precolonial men and women's efforts to retain land.

The importance of the *muzukuru* may, in fact, explain why some patriarchs married their daughters to outsiders whom they then gave land—a theme key to the narratives of migration and settlement in northeastern Zimbabwe. The practice brought in more clients and ensured that the v*azukuru* born out of the marriage would reside close to their *madzisekuru.* If the v*azukuru* were important, surely, the women who bore these children were equally important. If the expansion of the pool of maternal relations was important in the struggles to retain patrons and clients and with this, claims to the land, the knowledge that one could utilize both paternal and maternal relations to access and retain land was even more crucial. What all this means is that men and women were able to retain claims to their land because they were always engaged in multiple efforts—through the utilization of multiple relations—to access the land.

Apart from utilizing multiple relationships beyond patrilineal descent, elders spoke the same language that anthropologists and other scholars now refer to as the

[321] The literature on the moral economy is expansive. See Thomas Spear, *Mountain Farmers*; William Munro, *The Moral Economy of the State*, James C Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*, New Heaven, Yale University Press, 1976 and E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century." *Past and Present*, Vol. 50, 1971.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

'politics of graves.'[322] Parker Shipton demonstrated how this ideology of attachment to the land functioned amongst the Luo of Southwestern Kenya.[323] The Shona cases lacked the elaborate emplacement of houses and graves exercised by the Luo. However, this did not minimize the use of these ideas of attachment. They certainly employed the 'politics of the graves and bones' to retain claims to the land previously inhabited by their households by burying their dead outside the homestead.

Another key idea of attachment employed by the Shona to retain claims to land was the concept of the *gura* (fallow land). During interviews, elders explained that once cleared by an individual member of a household, land was never abandoned; it was left to fallow.[324] It was this fallow land that the Shona called the *gura.* According to the elders, even the chief did not have the right to repossess fallow land and those who had cleared the land had a right to return to it after some years.[325] In practice, land could be abandoned but claimants could invoke the concept of *gura* to reclaim it. It was therefore the initial clearing that worked as the stamp of ownership of a particular piece of land. This applied to both the household fields and the *tsenza* and *madhumbe* plots owned and worked by women in the eastern highlands.

---

[322] See among others Joost Fotein, 'We Want to Belong to Our Roots'. Parker Shipton, *Mortgaging the Ancestors*; Joseph Mujere, Land, Graves and Belonging.

[323] Parker Shipton, *Mortgaging the Ancestors*, especially Chapter 4, pp85-108.

[324] Interview with Makanya, 29 June 2013; Interview with James Charova, 28 June 2013; AOH 79, Kamusoro.

[325] Interview with Makanya, 29 June 2013, Interview with James Charova, 28 June 2013.

للاستشارات المنارة
www.manaraa.com

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the micro-politics of land and power in precolonial northeastern Zimbabwe. It demonstrated that, in contrast to the argument that in precolonial Zimbabwe land was abundant, the most productive land was scarce. Precolonial farmers understood this fact. Consequently, they chose particular locales that could sustain the farming of grains supplemented by root crops and legumes. This preference for particular locales generated competition over productive land and led to the appropriation of ideas of social identity—kinship, status, generation and gender—in such competition. The result of this was uneven access to productive land. This contrasts with the egalitarianism that scholars of twentieth century Zimbabwe often attribute to the precolonial period. Precolonial men and women retained their claims to land by engaging in multiple forms of relationships within both the patri- and matri-clans. Ideas of attachment such as the concept of the *gura* cemented men and women's claims to a piece of land once they invested their labor in its clearance. They could bequeath these claims to their descendants.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

CHAPTER 4

"SPAWNING CONFLICTS, EMASCULATING POWER?" COLONIAL RULE AND THE POLITICS OF LAND IN RURAL NORTHEASTERN ZIMBABWE, 1890-1950S

Introduction

When the British annexed Mashonaland and Manica in late 1890, they found societies which limited the power of their chiefs. Chiefs were challenged by the ritual power of first-comers and by patrilineages of women whose spirits were propitiated to ensure the fertility of the land. *Mhondoro* (territorial spirit mediums) also provided alternative sources of authority.[326] In addition to the challenge offered to the institution of chiefship by spirit mediums, chiefs' claims to legitimacy were always contested from within chiefly houses. The late nineteenth century history of northeastern Zimbabwe is marked by recurring wars of succession in Manyika, Makoni, Nhowe, Chihota and other territories.[327]

What became of this politics for power over land and people once the British imposed their rule on Southern Rhodesia in 1890? In this chapter, I set out to answer this question. I argue that, even as the land question became increasingly racialized, conflicts over land and authority among the colony's African population continued. Thus, Martin Chanock's observation that in colonial Central Africa, "both subjectively and objectively,

[326] See the discussion in chapter 2.

[327] Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lessons 17, 27, 44, 64, 65, 73, 81, 82, 83; D.P. Abraham, The Principality of Maungwe; H Franklin, "'The War of the Tell-Tale' Between Chiefs Makoni and Mtasa." *NADA* No. 15, 1938, pp 39-40; David Chanaiwa, A History of Nhowe and David Beach, The Origins of Moçambique and Zimbabwe.

www.manaraa.com

people found themselves engaged in conflict not with economic forces, not just with white colonial government, *but with each other*" is apposite.[328]

The form that the conflicts took was partly shaped by how the colonial state related to the different forms of authority over land among Africans and partly by the ways in which Africans related to one another as they came to terms with the new conditions brought by colonialism. Southern Rhodesia's rulers identified authority over land among the colony's African population with the 'customary' leadership of chiefs and headmen. By contrast, they sought to diminish the authority of the *mhondoro* whom they accused of inciting the 1896-97 *Chimurenga* uprisings. This does not mean that chiefs obtained unchecked powers over land and people. Colonial changes in the legal sphere corroded the ritual bases of chiefly claims to land while state intervention in succession politics brought intense conflict among claimants to many chieftaincies. Moreover, colonialism introduced new sources of authority that rivalled chiefs and *mhondoro*.

The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section explores how colonial rule affected the authority of precolonial authorities. It argues that the *mhondoro* were subjugated by the colonial state and coopted by chiefs in local struggles. Section Two examines how the tension between colonial law and the practice of power on the ground shaped politics of land. The resulting ambiguities allowed political conflict over land to continue. The conflicts were exacerbated by administrative intervention in conflicts over chieftainships. I trace this in Section Three. This section also describes how policies meant to strengthen the administrative powers of chiefs produced contradictions that

[328] Martin Chanock, *Law, Custom and Social Order*, p 13 Emphasis in original.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

hindered the smooth exercise of authority. Section four explains how reforms in colonial Native and Agrarian policies produced contradictory outcomes that shaped competition for power over land from the late 1930s. Finally, I discuss the role of Christianity in the politics of land. I argue that authority over land was materially and ritually rooted and the spread of Christianity provided some Africans with an explanation for the declining authority of chiefs evidenced by the cultivation of lands that were previously considered to be sacred. I demonstrate that although some people saw this as the culmination of the impact of Christianity on local beliefs that served to legitimate authority over land, in practice the cultivation of these lands—which included stream banks and wetlands—was a result of increasing land shortages that accompanied racialized land alienation in colonial Zimbabwe. In this way, I demonstrate how broader colonial policies influenced relations among Africans.

Colonial Rule and the Fate of Precolonial Elites, 1890-1898

On 28 September 1890, barely three weeks after the B.S.A.C hoisted the British Flag at Harare Hill in Fort Salisbury, Lieutenant Colonel Pennefather, the head of the Company Police, sent instructions to his subordinate, Captain P.W. Forbes, to track northeastwards and sign treaties with local chiefs on behalf of the Chartered Company. The instructions, in part, read:

> you will proceed in a northeasterly direction [from Salisbury]. Your object will be to find out and visit a chief named Mavira [Nyavira?]. I can give you no exact information as to the locality where he lives….You will ascertain who are the principal chiefs in the country traversed by you.... It is important that you should ascertain if there is any supreme chief and if so who he is and where he lives. You may take with you what you may consider necessary in the way of blankets and rifles as presents….Only important chiefs should receive rifles as presents.[329]

[329] A1/6/1, Administrator's In-Letters, Manica Reports, Letter dated 28 September 1890 from Pennefather to Forbes.

www.manaraa.com

This was the first attempt by the Company officials to identify important chiefs and place them in a hierarchy. The new colonial administrators assumed that some hierarchy of authority over land existed among the indigenous inhabitants but never imagined that chiefs' powers were checked by *mhondoro*. They were prepared to find a 'supreme chief,' but not a *mhondoro* capable of checking the power of chiefs. Yet, they soon encountered this reality.

A few months after Forbes' mission to the northeast, Frederick Courtney Selous, the guide to the Company's Pioneer column, visited the powerful chief Mutoko of the Budya. There, he learned the significance of *mhondoro* and the powers they possessed over land and people. "[W]e reached our old camp near Kalimazondo's town, which is about 6 miles to the south west of Mutoko," Selous reported, "[and] here I was delayed four days whilst our communications were opened with the 'mondoro' or 'lion god' a sort of High Priest who appears to have more power in the country than Mutoko himself."[330] "No step of importance is ever taken in the country until this 'lion god' has been consulted," Selous explained, adding:

> he is the only god the people know of or worship. They pray to him and make him propitiatory offerings and the place where he stays is called 'zimbabye' [Zimbabwe], which undoubtedly means a place of prayer and sacrifice. All the tribes living in the neighbourhood of the river Mazoe, both north and south of it have a 'Mondoro' or lion gold or High Priest, whose office is hereditary and who has really more power than the chief…."[331]

---

[330] SE1/1/1 Frederick Courteney Selous, 1851-1917, Papers, Letter dated 25th January 1891 from F.C. Selous to the Administrator.

[331] SE1/1/1 Frederick Courteney Selous, 1851-1917, Papers, Letter dated 25th January 1891 from F.C. Selous to the Administrator.

www.manaraa.com

In fact, *mhondoro* (the same word is used as singular and plural) were found throughout the northern half of the Zimbabwean plateau and had probably checked the power of chiefs for centuries.[332]

However, the fate of the *mhondoro* in the formal politics of authority over land became tied to the outbreak of the 1896-7 *Chimurenga* uprisings. Although scholars have energetically debated the role played by spirit mediums in the rebellion, there was no doubt in the minds of the Chartered Company's administrators that they had incited the Africans to rise against the settlers.[333] Percy Inskipp, the undersecretary to the Company Administrator in Mashonaland, aired the administration's convictions when he reported that:

> Kagubi [Kaguvi] *alias* Gumboreshumba which means 'Lion's paw,' is a man of about 40 years of age. About three months from the recent rebellion, he with Matshayangombi [Mashayamombe] and other paramount chiefs, gave orders that the white settlers were to be murdered. Kagubi himself was the chief instigator, and to him all loot was to be handed. He gave orders to Nyanda [Nehanda] to spread the rebellion—Nyanda being an old mhondoro or goddess of twelve years standing—and she in turn gave orders to the people around her in Mazoe to murder the settlers in that district, stating that her instructions had come from another god called mlenga [Murenga], who promised that as soon as the whites had been massacred in the outlying districts, he, by a miracle, would kill all those in town.[334]

Kaguvi Gumboreshumba, whom the administration singled out as the chief instigator of the risings, was a *mhondoro* in central and northern Mashonaland. So too was Nehanda.

---

[332] Michael F.C. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, especially pp 253-282. For the long history of the competition for power among ritualists and political figures in another part of northern Zimbabwe see David Lan, *Guns and Rain.*

[333] For the debate see Terrence Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 1896-7: A Study in African Resistance*, London, Heinemann, 1967; Julian Cobbing, "The Absent Priesthood: Another Look at the Rhodesian Risings of 1896-1897." *Journal of African History*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1977; David N. Beach, "An Innocent Woman Unjustly Accused? Charwe, Medium of the Nehanda Mhondoro Spirit and the 1896-97 Central Shona Rising in Zimbabwe." *History in Africa*, Vol. 25, 1998 and Ruramisai Charumbira "Nehanda and Gender Victimhood in the Central Mashonaland 1896-97 Rebellions: Revisiting the Evidence." *History in Africa*, Vol. 35, 2008.

[334] The British South Africa Company, Reports on the Native Disturbances in Rhodesia, 1896-7, March 1898, p 79.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

The colonial state branded *mhondoro* as dangerous to the peace of the colony and as a bad influence that had to be rooted out. *Mhondoro* were driven underground.

The assault on Shona religious leaders, however, should not be read as the end of their power and the beginning of unchecked power of chiefs. David Maxwell's work among the Hwesa of northern Nyanga helps us understand the new dynamic between mediums and chiefs that emerged with the new colonial order.[335] Maxwell argues that precolonial Hwesa chiefs were not dependent on spirit mediums as their power rested on military mighty. He also suggests that spirit mediums were involved in a wider territorial cult and were thus largely autonomous from chiefs. However, the two groups reconfigured their relations as they came to terms with the limitations placed on their authority by colonial rule.[336] Colonial rule, Maxwell argues, "diminished the degree of political control chiefs could exercise on their subjects" because they no longer held the military power to enforce their authority.[337] They compensated for this by taking control of sacred forests and pools and seeking spiritual legitimation for their authority. Thus, as local power became increasing ritualized in the colonial period, *mhondoro* assumed an even greater importance in local politics as chiefs' legitimacy increasingly rested on their affirmation.

---

[335] David Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe: A Social History of the Hwesa People*, Westport, Pareger, 1999, pp 39. This paragraphs relies on Maxwell's work.

[336] The weakness with a narrow focus on material and military bases of power is that it ignores the fact that these communities did not have standing armies. More importantly it fails to recognize that chiefly authority was also ritually rooted in the sense that a chief's power rested on his ability to ensure the fertility of the land and in achieving this he almost always invariably worked with mediums. See the discussion in Chapter Two.

[337] David Maxwell, Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe, p 39.

www.manaraa.com

Law, Practice and the Politics of Authority over Land, 1898-1930s

In the three decades after the 1896-97 *Chimurenga* uprisings, African authority over land was also shaped by the way the new rulers imagined African institutions of power and how they regarded the people who controlled these institutions, and the ways in which chiefs responded to colonial rule. It was also shaped by African competition for power, particularly through succession politics. In brief, Zimbabwe's colonial rulers imagined a patchwork of 'tribes' under the rule of chiefs. In this view, chiefs were the sole authority over land among Africans.

Studies in the history of customary law have increased our understanding of how a regime of 'tribal' chiefs was created. They demonstrate that colonial governments, anxious to avoid social disruption, strengthened the authority of African chiefs and male elders. Central to this argument is the idea that customary law centralized, in the hands of chiefs, power that had formerly been diffused.[338] Chiefs, for example, began to preside over family matters that previously lay within the domain of patri-and matri-lineages.[339] The assumption of judicial power by chiefs was especially important in fortifying their authority. "This compulsory expectation that chiefs and headmen attend courts and take part in the delivery of judgments,' commented Martin Chanock, "altered their role across much of central Africa. The judicial processes provided an important avenue for those who were seeking political authority, little enough of which was available to Africans

[338] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*; Martin Chanock, *Law*, *Custom and Social Order*, pp 32-36.

[339] Elizabeth Colson, *Marriage and Family Among the Plateau Tonga*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1958, Martin Chanock, *Law Custom and Social Order,* p 35.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

under British rule."[340] Mamdani also argued that chiefs increased their power by assuming judicial authority. "Without Native Courts that enabled Native Administrations to turn their writ into law," he commented, "the Native Authority would have been emasculated as an active agent."[341] The centralization of power was assumed to have been completed when the colonial state assigned African access to land to the customary sphere dominated by chiefs.[342]

The realities of rural life in Southern Rhodesia, however, did not conform fully to this version of Indirect Rule. Family disputes continued to be heard within patrilineages and were only taken to headmen and chiefs if members of the patrilineage failed to reach an understanding. "As brothers, you could have your conflicts over your late father's field," explained *Ambuya* Chikonzo, "but you would take one another to your *babamunini*, your father's younger brother. You would still be making attempts to solve the dispute within you patrilineage (*mumba menyu*)."[343] "When you fail to agree," she continued, "your father's younger brother will take it to the kraalhead.[344] He will inform

[340] Martin Chanock, *Law Custom and Social Order,* p 35 .

[341] Mahmood Mamdani' *Citizen and Subject*.

[342] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, p 50.

[343] Interview with *Ambuya* Chikonzo, 25 April, 2014. I had this interview via Skype and am grateful to Joseph Jakarasi for liaising with *Ambuya* Chikonzo and for providing the skyping facility from Zimbabwe.

[344] In the hierarchy of 'customary' authority adopted by the colonial state, the kraalhead occupied the lowest rung followed by the headman and then the chief. Their main function was to collect taxes from members of their village—the kraal of the colonial parlance—hence their Shona name *Masabhuku* (the owners of a book or of the tax register). The colonial state imagined kraalheads to be the 'customary' heads of their villages who reported to the headmen and eventually the chief.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

the kraalhead that his late brother's sons are fighting over their father's field and together *babamunini* and the kraalhead will solve the dispute."[345]

More importantly, legal innovations in the colony did not necessarily consolidate the authority of chiefs. Instead, they opened gray areas where the authority of chiefs, headmen and kraalheads could be contested. The 1898 Order-in-Council withdrew judicial power from chiefs. "Strictly speaking," explained the colony's Attorney General in 1904, "native chiefs have no more right to try cases than any ordinary individual."[346] It was not until 1937 that the colonial state established Native Courts in the colony. Yet, chiefs continued to preside over cases that pitted their subjects against one another. Attorney General Tredgold, whose opinion I quoted above, understood this fact when he pointed out that "Should however any two natives take their case to be tried by the chief and consent to its being done, the Chief acts as an arbiter" but not a judge.[347] Many years later the Native Commissioner for Marandellas district conceded that "the so called arbitration by Chiefs is a fiction. They do, or at least in most cases, hear and determine Civil matters in conformity with ancient custom. The term 'arbitration' is therefore merely a means of disguising a fact [that is that chiefs were judging cases and not simply arbitrating] and giving a legal authority to what might otherwise be considered an illegal proceeding."[348] The chief, in practice, was therefore not an arbiter but a judge. It was this

---

[345] Interview with *Ambuya* Chikonzo, 25 April, 2014.

[346] N 3/1/3, Native Cases Tried by Chiefs, Letter dated 25th June 1904 from the Attorney General to the Chief Native Commissioner.

[347] N 3/1/3, Native Cases Tried by Chiefs, Letter dated 25th June 1904 from the Attorney General to the Chief Native Commissioner.

[348] S1561/59, Native Courts Bill 1936, Letter dated 14th November 1931 from Native Commissioner Marandellas to Chief Native Commissioner.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

tension between colonial law and practice which produced the ambiguities essential to conflict over authority.

The ambiguities were reinforced by the redefinition of offences against chiefs as offences against the state or criminal offences.[349] These included witchcraft accusations and murder. In 1899 Chief Kunzvi and three of his people (including the chief's brother) were convicted of contravening the Witchcraft Suppression Act (1899), as was a man from Makumbe's village.[350] Indeed, courts prosecuted many chiefs, healers (*n'anga*) and commoners alike for their participation in African ritual practices classified by the colonial state as witchcraft.[351]

Similarly, Native Commissioners rescinded fines—called *Maropa* (from *ropa* [blood])—imposed by chiefs for cases of murder committed by their subjects. The fines were imposed not on the individual but the lineage from which the murderer came. These interventions shook the material as well as ideological basis of chiefly claims to land. The chiefs' prerogatives to try murder and witchcraft accusation cases enabled them to accumulate wealth that was crucial in retaining patrons. However, it was not the material side of the fines that mattered most. New and older sources of revenue, including the

[349] The Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1899 made witchcraft accusations and presiding over such cases a criminal offence.

[350] N9/1/5, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Native Commissioner Salisbury's Annual Report for the year ended March 31st1899. D/3/5/1 Criminal Cases, Salisbury, Regina vs Kunzvi Nyandoro; N9/1/5, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Native Commissioner Salisbury's Annual Report for the year ended March 31st1899.

[351] D/3/5/1 Criminal Cases, Salisbury, Regina vs Kunzvi Nyandoro; N9/1/5, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Native Commissioner Salisbury's Annual Report for the year ended March 31st1899; NUA 2/2/1, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, Confidential, Letter dated 14th December 1900 from Native Commissioner Umtali to the Chief Native Commissioner; NUA 2/1/4, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters General, Half Year Report for the period ending September 30, 1903.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

monthly allowance that they received from the colonial state, compensated for the loss of *Maropa*. Instead, it was the loss of the symbolic power embedded in these practices which signaled the erosion of chiefly power. Chiefs retained *Maropa* arguing that they used it to perform rituals meant to cool the land which the accused 'heated' by spilling blood in their territory. Chiefs monopolized the authority to 'cool' the land because they claimed its 'ownership.' 'Cooling' the land also gave chiefs legitimacy over their competitors, for as we may remember from the discussion in Chapter Two, chiefs' dignity lasted as long as they were able to ensure the fertility of the land.[352] It was this legitimacy that the colonial state denied Shona chiefs by banning practices meant to 'cool the land.'

Several examples illustrate the interventions. When in 1904, Manyika Chief Chakanyuka Chiobvu Mutasa fined one Kachete four cattle, forty two goats and £3 for the death of Nyamatore, the Native commissioner, Inyanga, overturned this fine because the colonial state no longer recognized the practice.[353] In that same year, when chief Chikomba of Inyanga seized a woman and handed her over to Chief Mutasa, the area's paramount chief, as payment of *Maropa* the Native Commissioner told him that the custom was no longer recognised by the Government.[354] Years later, in 1917, the

[352] For a similar formulation about the ritual politics of power elsewhere in Africa, see Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals* and Randall Packard, *Chiefship and Cosmology: An Historical Study of Political Competition*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1981. See also the discussion about Marange and Marangeni in Chapter 2.

[353] NUC 2/3/1 Native Commissioner Inyanga, Out Letters: Native Department Officials, Letter dated 23rd August 1904 from N.C. Inyanga to N.C. Umtali.

[354] NUC 2/3/1, Native Commissioner Inyanga, Out-Letters: Native Department Officials, Letter dated 16th November 1904 from Native Commissioner Inyanga to Acting Chief Native Commissioner.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Superintendent of Natives at Umtali levelled the following accusations against Chief Makoni:

> he had failed to report a case of homicide in his district although he was informed of the fact by the head of the kraal at which it occurred; he had fined the Kraal and taken cattle as 'maropa' in settlement of the act; he had appointed and installed a headman under Spipunza's (sic) people without informing the Native Commissioner or receiving the consent of the Administrator.[355]

Despite Makoni's protestations that he was acting as his fathers had done, the superintendent of natives ordered him to return the cattle he took as *Maropa* and slashed his salary as punishment.[356]

Native Commissioners also increasingly assumed power to preside over petty criminal cases and those civil cases which remained within the domain of 'customary' authorities. Native Commissioners claimed that they, and not chiefs and headmen, were entitled to preside over civil cases that pitted Africans against one another by arguing that since the imposition of colonial rule, "natives regard the Native Commissioner as *ipso facto* the 'Paramount Chief in his district."[357] This quest for judicial authority by Native Commissioners was spawned by internal struggles for power within the colonial establishment but the effects were felt by chiefs and other 'customary' officials whose authority was undermined by such actions.[358]

[355] NUA 2/1/12, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 11th July 1917 from Superintendent of Natives to Chief Native Commissioner.

[356] It should be pointed out that Makoni's claim that his fathers had appointed headmen under Chipunza was a fabrication. The Chipunza dynasty was older than that of Makoni. See the discussion in Chapter Two. See also David Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe*, p 160.

[357] S138/41, Native Complaints and Problem, Letter dated 12th August 1930 from Native Commissioner Marandellas to Chief Native Commissioner.

[358] For a discussion of conflicts within the colonial establishment and the attendant clamor for judicial authority by the colonial state see Allison Shutt, "The Natives are Getting Out of Hand: Legislating

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Native Department officials also intervened in cases of *makunakuna* (incest), which not only lay outside the tentacles of criminal law but were breaches against the morality of kinship (*ukama*) which Africans believed hindered the fertility of the land.[359] When chief Svosve presided over three of those cases in 1930, the Assistant Native Commissioner for the sub-district of Wedza overturned his judgments, accusing the chief of assuming jurisdiction which now resided with the Native Commissioner.[360] The official reprimanded the chief for "endeavouring to enrich himself by imposing preposterous fines," adding, "I suggest that the 'business' be stopped at once."[361] These interventions, like the categorization of murder and witchcraft accusations as criminal offences, shook the epistemological foundations of chiefly claims to land and power. In Shona cosmology, *makunakuna* polluted the land, angering spirits and preventing rains from falling. In short, *makunakuna*, like murder and witchcraft "harmed' the land.[362] Chiefs claimed that they used fines imposed on those who committed *Makunakuna* to undertake ceremonies meant to 'clean' the land.[363] It was this power that Native Commissioners usurped.

The prevalence of cases involving *Makunakuna* and *Maropa* was part of the deepening local conflicts. So, too, were witchcraft accusations among parties competing

---

Manners, Insolence and Contemptuous Behaviour in Southern Rhodesia, 1910-1963." *Journal of Southern African Studies* Vol. 33, No. 3, 2007, p 657.

[359] See for example the discussion in David Lan, *Guerrillas and Rain*, especially Chapter 5, pp 72-111.

[360] S138/41, Native Complaints and Problems, Letter dated 11th August 1930 from the Assistant Native Commissioner Hwedza to Native Commissioner Marandellas.

[361] S138/41, Native Complaints and Problems, Letter dated 11th August 1930 from the Assistant Native Commissioner Hwedza to Native Commissioner Marandellas.

[362] I borrow the phrase from Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals*.

[363] S138/41, Native Complaints and Problems, Letter dated 18th August 1930 from Native Commissioner Marandellas to Chief Native Commissioner.

www.manaraa.com

for a chieftainship.[364] Consider, for example, the case of chief Zimunya and his brother Muradzikwa. In 1900, Zimunya complained to the Assistant Native Commissioner for the district of Umtali that Muradzikwa, who was his headman, had assumed the right of trying a witchcraft case which the chief considered his prerogative.[365] The Assistant Native Commissioner summoned Muradzikwa and told him that he had no right to take such cases even if he were a paramount chief, much less a headman before ordering him to "pay back…the £7-8-0 he had extorted."[366] In addition, the Assistant Native Commissioner ordered the twenty to thirty men who had accompanied Muradzikwa to the Native Commissioner's office "to salute and recognise Zimunyu as their paramount, which they did, much to the discomfort of Mradsikwa."[367] Yet, three years later, in 1903, the Native commissioner Umtali reported the death of Muradzikwa, explaining that "he was the brother of the paramount Chief Zimunyu. He never really recognized him as Chief."[368]

Administrative Intervention, Intra-African Conflicts and the Challenges of Rural Rule

Colonial administrative intervention fanned conflicts over power among Africans. The colonial state often appointed chiefs not on the basis of their legitimacy as heirs to

[364] See for example the discussion of the conflict between Cimbadzwa and Chiobvu in Chapter 2.

[365] NUA2/2/1, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives Umtali: Out-Letters, Confidential, Letter dated 14 December 1900 from Tom A Raikes to Chief Native Commissioner.

[366] NUA2/2/1, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives Umtali: Out-Letters, Confidential, Letter dated 14 December 1900 from Tom A Raikes to Chief Native Commissioner.

[367] NUA2/2/1, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives Umtali: Out-Letters, Confidential, Letter dated 14 December 1900 from Tom A Raikes to Chief Native Commissioner.

[368] NUA 2/1/5, Native commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters General, Letter dated 21st December 1903 from Native Commissioner Umtali to Chief Native Commissioner.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

the throne but for their potential as administrative officers. Such interventions accentuated rivalry within chiefly houses (*dzimba dzoushe or dzoumambo*). Those who felt that the chief lacked legitimacy defied his authority. In Makoni district, opposition to Chief Ndafunya, the successor to Chingaira Makoni who was executed by the B.S.A.C during the 1896-97 uprisings, threatened to be violent. In 1901, Chingaira's supporters led by the late chief's son, Mhiripiri, launched raids from the neighboring district of Mrewa, targeting the incumbent Chief and his supporters.[369] In September 1901, the Acting Native Commissioner reported that

> …a native Mhiripiri and four or five others came to Paramount Chief Makoni's kraal some four or five nights back, fully armed, and threatened to shoot Makoni and his chief men. These men arrived during the night and went into the kraal to look for Makoni and openly expressed their intention of shooting him. Luckily, Makoni was here as I had previously sent for him.[370]

These men, noted the Acting Native Commissioner, "have always been very bitter against the present chief as they consider that he is not the lawful Paramount and helped the white men to kill the old chief."[371]

Many similar cases of opposition to chiefs appointed by the colonial state were reported. "Revesai has been a continual thorn in the side of the present Umtassa," the Native Commissioner Umtali noted, in 1913, adding that "he was one of the Manyika tribe who refused to 'wombera' the present Umtassa but deliberately acknowledged Shiobvu as Chief in defiance of the Government and of native law of succession to the

[369] N3/1/10, Native Commissioner Rusape, Letter dated 6th September 1901 from Native Commissioner Rusape to Chief Native Commissioner.

[370] N3/1/10, Native Commissioner Rusape, Letter dated 27th September 1901 from the Acting Native Commissioner, Rusape to Chief Native Commissioner.

[371] N3/1/10, Native Commissioner Rusape, Letter dated 27th September 1901 from the Acting Native Commissioner, Rusape to Chief Native Commissioner.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

chieftainship of this district."[372] The verb 'wombera' comes from the Chishona adjective *Kuwombera*, (to clap your hands) which one usually does to show respects to one's seniors and to those in positions of authority. The practice is also known as *kuvuchira.* An anthropologist who did ethnographic research among the Shona in the 1940s noted that

> at his installation a new chief receives gifts of tribute and recognition (*civuciro*) [Sp. *Chivuchiro* from *kuvuchira*] from his ward-heads, village headmen, and important members of his family under his control, and even neighbouring chieftains who wish to avoid the impression of being hostile to him will send gifts in kind or money.[373]

He explained:

> these gifts, which vary from a half crown to a head of cattle, have a dual purpose of being expressions of rejoicing (*kupemberera*) and of recognition of his political superiority (*Kuvuchira*) [also known as *kuombera*] by his subjects. In the latter sense they are in practice obligatory, as failure to give them immediately raises the presumption of insubordination.[374]

Those, like Revesai, who refused to perform the gesture, did not recognize the authority of their chiefs.

The conflicts deepened as the colonial state ignored local succession practices to appoint chiefs who met their administrative priorities. "I have come to the decision that…Mnyamana would succeed [Zimunya]" the Native Commissioner Umtali told the chief Native Commissioner in 1906, adding, "[he] bears a good character and has the following of the majority of the Jindwe district. Mushonga [the other claimant] has a small following and his people are not on very friendly terms with those of Zimunyu."[375]

---

[372] NUA 2/1/11, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 20th May 1913 from Native Commissioner, Umtali to Canon Hallward.

[373] Jon F Holleman, "Some Shona Tribes of Southern Rhodesia" in Elizabeth Colson and Max Gluckman Eds), *Seven Tribes of Central Africa,* Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1951, p 378
[374] Jon F Holleman, Some Shona Tribes of Southern Rhodesia, p 378.

[375] NUA/2/1/6, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters General, Letter dated 1st February 1906 from Native Commissioner Umtali to the Chief Native Commissioner.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

In making this recommendation, the Native Commissioner ignored the succession practice which participants to the meeting to select a new chief explained to him.[376] The chieftainship alternated between the houses (*dzimba*) of Zimunya and Muradzikwa and in this particular moment it was the turn of Mushonga from the Muradzikwa house since the deceased chief had come from that of Zimunya.[377] Even Munyamana, whom the Native Commissioner recommended for the appointment, conceded that the chieftainship should go to the Muradzikwa family, only making his claims on the technicality that the rightful heir from that house had died before the chief.[378] The Muradzikwa house bitterly resented this action but the Zimunya learned that the practice of alternating houses could be broken so long as the Native Department officials were on their side.[379] The result, Native Commissioner Hulley reported in 1917, was that "neither branch will now settle down amicably under the domination of the other branch," adding, "I therefore beg to recommend that the Jindwe tribe be divided into two chieftaincies…."[380] The Zimunya chieftainship was split into two and has remained so.

The way colonial rule reshaped the politics of land in rural Zimbabwe involved not only intervening in the ritual and political struggles for power among Africans. The

[376] NUA/2/1/6, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters General, Transcript of Statements made Re Succession to Chief Zimunyu, Deceased, 1906.

[377] NUA/2/1/6, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters General, Transcript of Statements made Re Succession to Chief Zimunyu, Deceased, 1906. The said rightful heir was Muradzikwa whose death was reported in 1903. See the above discussion on the Muradzikwa-Zimunya conflict over the trial of witchcraft cases.

[378]NUA/2/1/6, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters General, Transcript of Statements made Re Succession to Chief Zimunyu, Deceased, 1906: Statement by Mnyamana.

[379] NUA 2/1/12, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters General, Letter dated 11th June 1917 from Native commissioner Umtali to Chief Native Commissioner.

[380] NUA 2/1/12, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters General, Letter dated 11th June 1917 from Native commissioner Umtali to Chief Native Commissioner.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

state itself became entangled in these conflicts by dictating where and how Africans should live and farm. Until wartime shortages encouraged industrialization in the 1940s and necessitated the stabilization of African labor in the urban areas, the state envisioned the colony's African population as migrant laborers whose permanent home was not in the emerging towns, farms or mines but their rural homes.[381] The colonial state thus created reserves as the permanent homes of the colony's African population. This was the place where African labor cheaply reproduced itself.

The reserves also served another function. Mamdani has demonstrated that central to colonial reserve policy everywhere in colonial Africa were efforts to divide Africans into ethnic minorities, each residing within neatly bounded territorial localities.[382] This policy of 'ethnic spatial fixing'—to borrow a phrase from the anthropologist Donald S Moore—allowed the colonial state to rule through local chiefs and to divert grievances towards these local representatives of the colonial state.[383] This also affected the articulation of power between chiefs and their subjects. For many years scholars argued that the bureaucratization of chiefs weakened their power. However, other scholars have recently demonstrated that Indirect Rule strengthened the power of chiefs who assumed administrative and judicial authority over Africans residing in their domains.[384] John

---

[381] For the transformation of the Rhodesian economy, see Giovani Arrighi, *The Political Economy of Rhodesia*, The Hague, Mouton, 1967.

[382] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, p 96.

[383] Donald S Moore, *Suffering for Territory*, especially Chapter 5, pp 153-183. See also Eric Worby, "Maps, Names and Ethnic Games: The Iconography and Epistemology of Colonial Power in Northwestern Zimbabwe.' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 1994, Pius S Nyambara, "*Madheruka* and *Shangwe:* Ethnic Identity and the Culture of Modernity in Gokwe, Northwestern Zimbabwe, 1963-1979." *Journal of Africa History*, Vol. 43, No.2, 2002.

[384] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, Martin Chanock, *Law*, *Custom and Social Order*

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Iliffe's conclusion that "whether the new system strengthened an individual chief depended on how effectively he exploited it" is, perhaps, closer to the reality.[385]

'Ethnic spatial fixing' produced unintended consequences. Instead of creating Native Reserves exclusively occupied by particular 'tribes,' the colonial state produced rural areas in which communities belonging to more than one chieftainship occupied each reserve. In doing so, it set the stage for incessant conflicts over territorial boundaries that have remained endemic.[386]

Similarly, boundaries undermined the 'customary' authorities that the colonial state sought to prop up. Attempts to confine Africans to neatly bounded communities by curtailing African mobility through pass laws affected chiefs and commoners alike. Enacted in 1902, the Pass ordinance made it mandatory for adult male Africans to obtain a pass from their respective Native Commissioners before they crossed district boundaries. In the eastern highlands where the earliest reserves cut through the boundaries of the administrative districts of Inyanga, Makoni and Umtali, pass laws made the smooth exercise of 'customary' authority difficult. The Superintendent of Natives for the Umtali circuit summed up the problem in 1908, telling the Chief Native Commissioner that "Mr Moodie [Native Commissioner, Inyanga,] has one of the most difficult districts to manage. Umtassa, the paramount chief lives in Umtali District and this fact has more or less thrown him out of touch with his sub-chiefs, each of whom is

[385] John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, p 327.

[386] For conflicts of boundaries, see NSG 1/1/2, Native Commissioner, Marandellas, Out-Letters: General, Letter dated May 14th 1907 from N.C. Marrandellas to Chief Native Commissioner; S 2985/Lan/1, Native Commissioner Umtali, Maps, Permits for Whites Wishing to Enter Reserves, Agreements, Labour and Land, Letter dated 27 August 1952 from Land Development Officer to Native Commissioner Umatali; Makoni District Files, PER/Chiduku, Letter from D.N.E. Mutasa to J Nkomo and Document titled: Boundary Issue: Chief Chiduku vs Chief Makoni, Makoni District, dated 20th March 1999.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

now more or less independent."[387] "Thus," added Superintendent of Natives Hulley, "instead of having only one or two chiefs to deal with Mr. Moodie has about seventeen."[388]

In other cases, Africans refused to recognize the authority of the local chief because their legitimate chief resided in a neighboring reserve or even another colony.[389] When the Anglo-Portuguese boundary was settled in 1892, about one thousand w*aVumba* who occupied the highlands southeast of the present city of Mutare fell into the British territory. The rest, including the chief, Chirara, found themselves in Portuguese East Africa. The Native Commissioner for Umtali soon found it "difficult to work them through Zimunyu whom they have never recognized as chief."[390]

Such challenges increased as displacements from settler farms saw communities settling in land that previously belonged to other groups. Following their displacement from Ruunji farm in 1944, for example, Muponda and his people relocated to the Honde valley. There, conflicts with people under Mupotedzi soon erupted.[391] A meeting convened by the Native Commissioner, Inyanga, to resolve the conflict gathered that although the boundary between the two communities was fixed, the disputes continued

---

[387] NUA 2/2/1 Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, Confidential, Report by Superintendent of Natives on Staff of Division III, Dated I July 1908.

[388] NUA 2/2/1 Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, Confidential, Report by Superintendent of Natives on Staff of Division III, Dated I July 1908.

[389] NUA 2/1/5, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 27th April 1904 from Native Commissioner Umtali to Chief Native Commissioner.

[390] NUA 2/1/5, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 27th April 1904 from Native Commissioner Umtali to Chief Native Commissioner.

[391] These kinds of conflicts were not isolated both in colonial Zimbabwe and elsewhere in colonial Africa where settler land alienation was significant. See for example, studies by Pius Nyambara, A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe, Pius Nyambara, *Madheruka* and *Shangwe*. Thabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau, 1905-1963,* Athens: OH, Ohio University Press, 1987.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

because "some of Mupotedzi's people are living in Muponda's area but pay tax under Mupotedzi's book and do not listen to Muponda."[392] Participants at this meeting also learned that "some of Muponda's people have lands in Mupotedzi's area though they live in Muponda's area."[393] In short, colonial land alienation and displacement produced results that contrasted with what the architects of Native Policy envisaged. Instead of residing in neatly bounded communities under the leadership of a local leader—kraal head, headmen or chief— Africans living under conditions of land scarcity defied boundary making and the authority of local officials.

Historians have shown that peasant production and labor migration threatened the authority of chiefs and African male elders forcing them to articulate a version of customary law that emphasized their power.[394] In Southern Rhodesia, it was not only labor migration and peasant production but also settler land alienation which threatened the authority of chiefs. 'Chief Mutasa visited me yesterday," reported the Native Commissioner, Inyanga, in 1933, adding:

> he stated that last year his kraal was burnt down. Whether accidental or otherwise he is unable to say. In accordance with Manyika custom it is necessary for Headman Mandeya to build the first hut of the Chief's new kraal. Word was sent to Headman Mandeya who went to Mutasa and informed him that his, Mandeya's, followers refused to comply with the custom. In refusing they stated that they had no time to do such work; that they lived on mission (Triashill), alienated and crown lands and had to find Government taxes.[395]

---

[392]S 2985/LAN/1, Minutes of Meeting with Muponda, Mupotedzi, Ragu, Chimbodza, Manhanda, Head Messenger Patrick and the Native Commissioner Inyanga.

[393]S 2985/LAN/1, Minutes of Meeting with Muponda, Mupotedzi, Ragu, Chimbodza, Manhanda, Head Messenger Patrick and the Native Commissioner Inyanga.

[394] Martin Chanock, *Law Custom and Social Order.*

[395] S 1542/C16/1, Complaints by Africans from Various Areas to the Native Department, Letter date 30 July 1933 from Native Commissioner Inyanga to the chief Native Commissioner.

للاستشارات المنارة
www.manaraa.com

In declining the chief's request, the *Nyamhuka* drove home the point that colonial land alienation had severed older forms obligations that legitimated chiefly authority over land. To understand this point, it is crucial to unpack the ideological basis of chief Mutasa's request. We may remember, from the discussion in Chapter Two, that Mandeya was one of the four exiled sons of Nyarumwe, the Manyika king killed by his brother, Nyamandoto, sometime in the seventeenth century.[396] We may also remember that Nyarumwe's successor acknowledged the relative autonomy of these four brothers by allowing them to establish their own territories as Mutasa's *machinda* (headmen in colonial parlance). In return for recognition of their independence the four brothers agreed not to contest the Mutasa chieftainship. Instead, they recognized the chief as their father and the paramount ruler of the territory of Manyika.[397]

The recognition of this authority was recalled by the practice that each time Mutasa's homestead was rebuilt, Mandeya was to build the very first hut. This was part of the rituals that also included *kuwombera* or *kuvichira.* They renewed the allegiance of lesser chiefs to the senior chief of the land. As long as the *machinda* and their subjects performed these rituals they reaffirmed not only their allegiance to the chief but the latter's claims to 'own the land.' It was this affirmation of chiefly power over the land that was severed when the Nyamhuka refused to rebuild Mutasa's homestead because they now lived not on the chief's land but that of the missionaries, the colonial state and private landowners.

[396] See the discussion in chapter 2.

[397] See the discussion in Chapter Two. See also Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lesson 89 and David N Beach, Oral Tradition in Eastern Zimbabwe, p 15.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

The Politics of Land, *c*.1927 to the 1950s

By the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, it was beginning to dawn on many Native Department officials that African chiefs were not the despots that they imagined them to be. The decade closed with a changed tone in Native Commissioners' assessments of the power of chiefs over their subjects. Whereas in most of their post-1897 reports Native Department officials stated that chiefs were doing their jobs satisfactorily, the 1919 reports from northeastern Zimbabwe concluded with concerns about the waning power of chiefs. "Nothing to report except the unanimous conclusion of all Native Commissioners that the power of the native chiefs is fast disappearing," wrote the Superintendent of Natives for the Umtali Circuit.[398] Likewise, the Native commissioner for the district of Inyanga noted that "chiefs and headmen… have very little authority but that is not their fault."[399] Thereafter, such comments marked most annual reports.[400]

Native Department officials accounted for the decline of chiefly power in terms of the impact of new institutions such as schools and mission stations. "Teachers and pupils," wrote one Native Commissioner, "consider that once a school is established they are independent and do not come under the control of headmen and chiefs….This has also been the case with several heads of kraals who consented to schools as a direct

---

[398] N9/1/21, Annual Reports, Native commissioners, Review of Reports of Native Commissioners in District III.

[399] N N9/1/21, Annual Reports, Native commissioners, Inyanga, See also N9/1/23, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Salisbury district, Superintendent of Natives, Salisbury: Annual Reports and returns, Division 1; Superintendent of Natives, Umtali, Annual Reports and Returns, Division III .

[400] See for example the reports for the districts under study in N9/1/22, Native Commissioner Annual Reports, 1920; N9/1/23, Native Commissioners Annual Reports, 1921; N9/1/24, Native Commissioners, Annual reports, 1921; N9/1/25, Native Commissioners Annual Reports, 1922; S235/501, Native Commissioners, Annual Reports, 1923.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

defiance of their headmen. This attitude of the young generation often leads to implications between them and the older people who are ignored."[401]

Concerned with the waning power of chiefs and headmen, officials often argued that the rising African elites of teachers and agricultural demonstrators working in the reserves should be placed under the authority of chiefs.[402] Native Commissioners also called for the formal recognition of chiefs' judicial powers over civil cases pitting Africans against one another.[403] Such lobbying led to the Native Affairs Act in 1927 and the Native Law and Courts Act a decade later. The former codified the hierarchy of Native Authority which consisted of kraalheads, headmen and chiefs under the supervision of Native Commissioners, giving it a stamp of authority and legal recognition. The latter returned to chiefs some of the judicial powers that the colonial state usurped in 1898. Indeed, studies in the history of Native Policy saw the 1930s as the period when the colonial state restored 'customary' authority in Zimbabwe.[404]

This was, however, a false restoration because precolonial Zimbabwean chiefs—at least those in the northeast—had not held despotic powers and it did not preclude their subjects from challenging their chiefs. Moreover, complications in the implementation of the law arose which rendered it ineffective. The Native Affairs Act strengthened the

[401] S235/501, Native Commissioner, Annual Reports, 1923, Native Commissioner Charter's Annual Report.

[402] S138/41, Native complaints and Problems, Letter dated 21st August 1929 from Native commissioner Marandellas to Chief Native Commissioner.

[403] S138/41, Native complaints and Problems, Letter dated 21st August 1929 from Native commissioner Marandellas to Chief Native Commissioner.

[404] This point and its weaknesses are discussed in Jocelyn Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, p 23.

www.manaraa.com

power of Native Commissioners more than that of 'customary' leaders.[405] Under the Act, Native Commissioners and not chiefs had the final say over the establishment of new villages.[406] Yet District Officers' authority was also limited by the fact that they needed the co-operation of local chiefs and headmen. "Headman Nengubo had been very lax in the discharge of his duties of supervision in this respect," the Native Commissioner Marandellas complained when Kasege built his homestead and cleared new fields without his approval in the early 1930s.[407]

Although the Native Law and Courts Act (1937) empowered chiefs to preside over certain civil cases among Africans, it placed a lot of limitations on their authority. Subjects could appeal against the judgment of the Native Courts. Section 10 (C) of the Bill read:

> any part to a civil case who is dissatisfied with the judgment of a native court in such case may, in such a manner and within a period as may be prescribed, apply to the court of the native commissioner of the district for the rehearing and retrial of such case by such last mentioned court, and thereupon the judgment of the native court in such case shall be of no effect.[408]

More importantly, the Bill did not give provisions for execution of judgments and for punishing contempt of court or the giving of false evidence.[409]

---

[405] See the discussion in Allison Shutt, The Natives are Getting out of Hand.

[406] S138/41, Native complaints and Problems, Letter dated 21st August 1929 from Native commissioner Marandellas to Chief Native Commissioner; Letter dated 22nd December 1930 from Chief Native Commissioner to Major Chomley.

[407] S138/41, Native complaints and Problems, Letter dated 21st August 1929 from Native commissioner Marandellas to Chief Native Commissioner.

[408] S1561/59, Native Courts Bill. Native Law and Courts Bill, Copy of the Act.

[409] S1561/59, Native Courts Bill. Native Law and Courts Bill, Solicitor General, Notes on Native Courts Bill.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Even Native Commissioners, who for the most part liked to see themselves as paramount chiefs of their districts, did not have absolute powers. The Chief Native Commissioner considered it his duty "to be accessible to all natives presenting their grievances."[410] The implications of this policy were summed up by F.W.T. Posselt, the Native Commissioner for the district of Marandellas. "At present," he noted, "they [Africans], have all to gain and nothing to lose by making fictitious allegations."[411] "If this is permitted," he continued, "I can foresee the time—not far distant—when every order by a district official will be subject to an appeal or a complaint."[412]

Jocelyn Alexander pointed out that another factor limiting chiefly power was development policies.[413] Development between 1929 and 1962 mainly involved agricultural demonstration, centralization, destocking and the Native Land husbandry Act.[414] Each of these policies were rooted in the view that African agriculture and land use were detrimental to the environment. The adoption of such policies facilitated the emergence of a technical bureaucracy including Native Agricultural Demonstrators and Community Assistants whose authority over land use and allocation rivalled that of chiefs, headmen and kraalheads.

---

[410] S138/41, Native complaints and Problems, Letter dated 27th June 1928 from Chief Native Commissioner to Native Commissioner Marandellas.

[411] S138/41, Native complaints and Problems, Letter dated 21st August 1929 from Native Commissioner Marandellas to Chief Native Commissioner.

[412] S138/41, Native complaints and Problems, Letter dated 21st August 1929 from Native Commissioner Marandellas to Chief Native Commissioner.

[413] Jocelyn Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, pp 23-26. This paragraph draws on Alexander's work.

[414] The policy of centralization was introduced in 1929. Its aim was to separate fields from grazing lands. This was to be achieved through the resettlement of Africans in linear settlements which placed fields on one side of the villages and grazing lands on the other. The term centralization was used by the architects of the policy and has since been adopted by scholars. See among others Eira Kramer, "The Clash of Economies: Early Centralization Efforts in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1929-1935." *Zambezia*, Vol. XXV, No. 1, 1998 and Jocelyn Alexander, *Unsettled Land.*

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

African agricultural demonstrators were intended to improve African agriculture in the Reserves by encouraging farmers to adopt the use of manure and crop rotation. Soon, however, they became involved in land allocation because they were responsible for separating fields from pastures.[415] The technical officers became further involved in land allocation as concerns with environmental degradation in the reserves increased in the late 1930s.[416] Such concerns prompted the colonial state to attack customary land use and tenure and entrust land allocation to the technical officers. These officials were empowered to demarcate land for cultivation and grazing in the Reserves.[417]

Yet, it would be a mistake to see the effects of changes in agrarian policy as swinging power over land from chiefs to technical officers. Often, the two worked together in mutually reinforcing ways. As Jocelyn Alexander has observed in another part of the country, land allocation required the chiefs' approval.[418] In fact, the African agricultural demonstrators who implemented this policy presented themselves to the

---

[415] For the stated goal of Native demonstration work in the reserves, see the exchanges in S1561/33, Land and Native Reserves especially Letter dated 23 October 1923 from the Assistant Native commissioner, Wedza to the Native Commissioner Marandellas; Letter dated 24th October 1923 from Native Commissioner Marandellas to Superintendent of Natives, Salisbury; Letter dated 23rd October 1923 from Superintendent of Natives, Umtali to Chief Native Commissioner.

[416] For the rising concerns about environmental degradation in the reserves in the 1930s, see William Beinart, "Soil Erosion, Conservationism and Ideas about Development: A Southern African Exploration, 1900-1960." In *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 11, No.1 1984; Ian Phimister, "Discourse and the Discipline of Historical Context: Conservationism and Ideas about Development in Southern Rhodesia 1930-1950." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 12, No.2, 1986, Victor E.M Machigaidze, "Agrarian Change from Above: The Southern Rhodesia Native Land Husbandry Act and African Response." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 1991 and David Anderson, "Depression, Dust Bowl, Demography and Drought: The Colonial State and Conservation in East Africa in the 1930s." *African Affairs*, Vol. 83, No. 332, 1984.

[417] For the role played by these officials, see the extensive correspondence in S2384./K5843/3236, Native Township, Chihota; S2588/1977, Correspondence, Land: 1931-1957, Inyanga, Volume 2.

[418] Jocelyn Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, p 24.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

chiefs first.[419] The more ambitious and intrusive policies like the Native Land Husbandry Act did not sideline chiefs, headmen and kraalheads. Although the policy was implemented not by the African demonstrators but by the white bureaucrats, known as Land Development Officers, these officials involved the local leadership of chiefs, headmen and kraalheads.

The Native Land Husbandry Act (1951) was preceded by massive displacements to accommodate post-War European settler immigration. It was also accompanied by the demarcation of fields and conservation measures that taxed household labor. These memories remain etched in many elders' memories. However, villagers remember this period as a time not only of great suffering when the colonial state increasingly intruded in their agrarian lives but also as one in which 'customary' leaders and technical officers colluded to enforce unpopular programs. "I did not see the demonstrators who taught people about new agricultural methods when we were still living in Mutasa." *Mbuya* Chikonzo explained.[420] "The ones that I know" she continued, "were the whites (*mabhunu*) who came to demarcate fields. They came and they started to demarcate fields and that is when we left our properties. I only saw the demonstrators when I was already in Bocha."[421] "The Land development officers came and worked with the kraalheads,"

[419] AOH 70, Mbofana Philip Willie George. Mbofana was amongst the early African demonstrators to be trained at Domboshava Government Training school and was deployed to Chihota Reserve in 1933.

[420] Interview between M*buya* Chikonzo and Joseph Jakarasi, 19 April 2014.

[421] Interview between M*buya* Chikonzo and Joseph Jakarasi, 19 April, 2014.

www.manaraa.com

*Mbuya C*hikonzo remembered in a follow up interview.[422] “The kraalheads,” she continued,

> directed them to the arable lands where we grew maize. That is where they began demarcating fields, giving each household small plots of land. We were no longer doing as before when we were growing up. Then we cultivated any piece of land that satisfied the demands of each household. Now they demarcated even smaller pieces saying that we should do this so that everybody gets a piece. The kraalheads were now incorporated in this whole business of demarcating fields. They were now in agreement with the demonstrators and began to say this is the new law that we should follow.[423]

Villagers made a distinction between demarcation and allocation, maintaining that Land Development Officers demarcated the fields but the ‘customary’ leaders continued to allocate the land. This is how one elderly woman responded when I asked her whether the arrival of the demonstrators and land development officers meant that kraalheads had lost their authority to technical officers:

> No. people would still go to the kraalhead because the allocation of the household plots was accomplished only because the demonstrators worked with the kraalheads. The demonstrators (which in fact incorporated Land Development Officers) came and worked through the kraalheads. So the kraalheads adopted this policy. If an individual married, he would go to the *kraalhead*. The *kraalhead* would allocate fields from the uncultivated potions of his land. He would demarcate similar acreages to those that were given to others when the demonstrators came.[424]

Thus, kraalheads adopted methods of land allocation introduced by technical officers while retaining control over villagers’ access to land.

Villagers’ assessments of the relations of power over land in the reserves seem to capture the reality of developments on the ground more than many scholars have been prepared to acknowledge.[425] They recognize that the colonial state’s attempts to re-order

---

[422] Interview with M*buya* Chikonzo, 25 April, 2014. Interview between *Ambuya* Chikonzo and Joseph Jakarasi, 19 April 2014.

[423] Interview with *Mbuya* Chikonzo, 25 April, 2014.

[424] Interview with *Mbuya* Chikonzo, 25 April, 2014.

[425] See for example, Michael Drinkwater, *Technical Development and Peasant Impoverishment.*

للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

the way Africans lived and farmed did not abolish the local power relations that defined access to land. The practice of approaching the headmen to get land for a new household, they argue, continued. "The custom (*tsika*) continued, the custom continued and it is still there," M*buya* Chikonzo insisted.[426] She explained that

> when a son marries, the parent follows the custom. He goes to the kraalhead's messenger and tells him that my son has married. The messenger goes to the kraalhead and tells him that so and so's son has married. Then the kraalhead gets to know of the request. He may write in his book that he has allocated a new field for the new household.[427]

My own experience from another Shona-speaking part of the country confirms her point about the persistence of this practice into the present.

Yet, the elders also recognized that the intrusiveness of technical development policies bred resistance which shook the authority of technical officers and customary leaders alike. They explained that as resistance to the Land Husbandry Act intensified, many villagers defied the directives to restrict their fields to places demarcated by technical officers and chiefs. Villagers linked this opposition to nationalist mobilization against the Native Land Husbandry Act. They explained this in the language of *kurima madiro* (freedom farming), a concept which the nationalist movement evoked to oppose the hated land husbandry Act and to mobilize rural farmers to the nationalist cause.[428] "It was regularly announced at meetings that people should settle were ever they like," Jena remembered, adding that the unregulated land use resulted severe soil erosion and

[426] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and *Mbuya* Chikonzo, 19 April 2014.

[427] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and *Mbuya* Chikonzo, 19 April 2014.

[428] Many Studies have shown that African Nationalists used opposition to the Native Land Husbandry Act to swell their ranks. They also show that it was African opposition that forced the colonial state to abandon the Act in 1962. See for example, Ngwabi Bhebe, *Benjamin Burombo: African Politics in Zimbabwe*, Harare, The College Press, 1989; Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla War*; Victor E. M. Machingaidze, Agrarian Change from Above.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

siltation.[429] Villagers in Gokwe in northwestern Zimbabwe similarly talked about resistance to the Native Land Husbandry Act in the language of *kurima madiro*.[430]

Yet, the implementation of colonial development and agrarian policies was not uniform across the colony. For example, the Native Land husbandry Act, that epitome of state intrusion in African social and economic life enacted in 1951, was never implemented in parts of the eastern highlands.[431] More importantly, the objective of colonial policy was rarely achieved. Thus the appointment of technical officers did not stop kraal heads, headmen and chiefs from allocating land in the reserves side by side with the African agricultural demonstrators and Land Development Officers.[432] Native administration and agrarian policies pulled in opposite directions allowing technical officers and 'customary' authorities to exercise power over land simultaneously. The result was that power over land remained a subject of competition among various elite groups.

Competing Religious Practices: Christians, Chiefs and Power over Land

As I have shown above, claims to land were rooted in ritual as well as material interests. The ritual sphere is one that increasingly came under threat from the influence of Christianity. This section discusses this impact of Christianity on authority over land in northeastern Zimbabwe. It demonstrates that Christians opposed ritual practices meant to

---

[429] Interview between Trymore Jena and Joseph Jakarasi, 20 April 2014.

[430] Pius S Nyambara, A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe, p 102.

[431] Ian Phimister, "Rethinking the Reserves: Southern Rhodesia's Land Husbandry Act Reviewed." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1993.

[432] See for example the discussions in Pius S Nyambara, A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe and JoAnn McGregor, "Conservation, Control and Ecological Change: The Politics and Ecology of Colonial Conservation in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe." *Environment and History* No. 1, 1995.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

ensure the fertility of the land because they were contrary to their beliefs. The expansion of Christianity also gave many rural people a way of coming to terms with a loss of authority over land signified by the increasing cultivation of lands that were formerly regarded as sacred. The occupation of those lands was caused by land shortages spawned by displacements from settler farms.

Chiefs' authority over land and people was tied to their control over the social reproduction of the African society. Missionaries and the marginalized people in Shona society saw mission stations as places of refugee for young African men and women. The Catholic priests at Triashill, for example, delightfully recounted stories of chiefs, fathers and husbands who unsuccessfully attempted to pull their subjects, daughters, and wives from the mission center.[433] "The girls were so keen to come to school that they ran away from their homes," a missionary wrote about the early days at Triashill.[434] "The father would come and demand that they should go back," he continued:

> Some wives also ran away to the school and the husbands came for them and they refused to go….On one occasion the husband brought the paramount chief to collect the girl and when she refused the P. Chief grabbed her but she evaded him and ran away. The chief went lumbering after her but could not catch her and the school children burst out laughing to see him trying to catch her and after that there was no more trouble in that way.[435]

For this reason, African 'customary' leaders felt that missionaries undermined their authority over women and young men.[436] For example, chief Chiobvu saw the

---

[433] Jesuit Archives Harare, Box 196, St Triashill, Account of the History of Triashill. Details of the Author missing.

[434] Jesuit Archives Harare, Box 196, St Triashill, Document titled "Forget me not re the difficulties of the early days."

[435] Jesuit Archives Harare, Box 196, St Triashill, Document titled "Forget me not re the difficulties of the early days."

[436] For this point, see the discussion in Chapter Three. For the colonial period, I develop this point further in Chapter Five.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

emerging mining centers, Native Commissioners and missionaries as a tripod of evil responsible for the loss of control over young men and women by chiefs and African male elders. "Our wives leave us and go to Penhalonga. All the advice of the Native Commissioner is to get divorce. Our wives go to Missions. We are prevented from taking them," the chief told a meeting of the local Native Council in 1925.[437] For the Shona, this loss of control over women's sexuality had wider significance. "Because female fertility was also associated with the fecundity of the land," wrote Elizabeth Schmidt, "control over this vital resource also determined whether a people would eat or starve."[438]

African Christians' opposition to African religious practices undermined the epistemological basis of chiefly claims to land. These claims rested on chiefs' ability to ensure the fertility of the land. Many Christians opposed practices meant to supplicate the ancestors and request good rains and bumper harvests. Personal memory allows me to elaborate on this point. My father, a local church leader in southern Zimbabwe, never contributed grain or money to the rain-making ceremonies (*mukwerera*) presided over by the chief, although he might join other local church leaders to pray for rains. For him, contributing to *mukwerera* was contrary to his Christian beliefs. In practice, this was a challenge to chiefly claims to power over land; claims that rested on the chief's ability to ensure good rains and the fertility of the land.

Similarly, in northeastern Zimbabwe, members of African Independent churches known as *mapostori* (Apostles) refused to contribute money towards rainmaking

---

[437] Quoted in David Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs*, p 49.

[438] Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives*, p 26.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

ceremonies.[439] Like my father, *Mapostori* claimed that they ensured the fertility of the land through prayer and fasting. In this way, they competed with chiefs and spirit mediums for the power associated with rainmaking and the general welfare of the communities. Unsurprisingly, Chiefs such as Bonda and Saunyama opposed *Mapostori* and excluded all Christians from rituals meant to ensure the fertility of the land.[440] Some chiefs petitioned the colonial state for the ban of Christian activities in their areas. In 1918, chief Muradzikwa and six of his headmen complained that:

> the situation caused by the revival movement of the American Episcopal Church among his people has become unbearable… young people run to the mountain crying out 'that they have the Spirit of God in them.' They yell out their past offences in a sort of confession of sins. Immorality is rife among both old and young. There will be starvation as the preparing of lands is in a neglected state [441]

The language of morality masked elders' anxieties about the progressive loss of control over their young men and women and the threat which the African converts to Christianity posed to their claims to power over land. The chief complained that "the native in charge of the station at Shetora has been going about among the kraals and in some parts has broken pots and upset beer."[442] These were the things that chiefs and elders used to supplicate the ancestors to ensure the fertility of the land, and it was likely for this reason that the chief expressed fears about starvation.

[439] S3276/1, Spirit Mediums, Healers, Churches and Cult Places, Manicaland, Inyanga.

[440] S3276/1, Spirit Mediums, Healers, Churches and Cult Places, Manicaland, Inyanga.

[441] NUA 2/1/12, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 9th October 1918 from the Superintendent of Natives, Umtali to the Principal, American Methodist Episcopal Church, Umtali.

[442] NUA 2/1/12, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 9th October 1918 from the Superintendent of Natives, Umtali to the Principal, American Methodist Episcopal Church, Umtali.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Displacements from settler farms resulted in higher population densities and ecological deterioration, in the reserves. The Svosve reserve in Marandellas district was one of the first places to collapse under the weight of increasing population density.[443] By the mid-1940s, the situation was so bad that it warranted a resettlement of a large number of the reserve's inhabitants in other parts of the district. An ad hoc committee set up to look into the land situation in reserves in the Marandellas district in 1946 reported that the Svosve reserve

> was in a very critical condition due to uncontrolled over tillage overstocking and the fact that the reserve had never been centralized. During the past year, this matter has been taken in hand, the reserve declared an intensive conservation area and the Governor-in-Council has declared that the population and stock be decreased to a reasonable carrying capacity.[444]

A few months later, the Director of Native Agriculture reported that "Svosve reserve is 46% overstocked and on a 6 head of livestock per family basis, it is 166% overpopulated."[445] The arable lands as demarcated for occupation by the Land Inspector in September, 1945, he continued,

> constitutes approximately 10% of the entire area less waste. The total acres suitable for tillage is estimated at 2400 acres. This at 6 acres of lands per family, would take only 400 families while total number of families in 1945 was 905. If the 2400 acres of tillable lands are divided among 905 families it would mean an average of 2.6 acres per family.[446]

---

[443] Jennifer A Elliot, "Soil Erosion and Conservation in Zimbabwe: Political Economy and the Environment." Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Loughborough University of Technology, 1989.

[444] S2384/K5843/3236, Native Township, Chiota Reserve, Master-builder certificates, Chihota Agricultural Census, Marandellas; Svosve Reserve; Soil Erosion e.t.c., Report of an ad hoc Committee on Marandellas District, 12 November 1946.

[445] S2384/K5843/3236, Native Township, Chiota Reserve, Master-builder certificates, Chihota Agricultural Census, Marandellas; Svosve Reserve; Soil Erosion e.t.c., Letter dated 25th March 1947from the Director of Native Agriculture to the Provincial Native Commissioner.

[446] S2384/K5843/3236, Native Township, Chiota Reserve, Master-builder certificates, Chihota Agricultural Census, Marandellas; Svosve Reserve; Soil Erosion e.t.c..

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Needless to say, many of these families had abandoned these demarcated areas and were growing crops on banks of streams, vleis and water courses.[447]

Villagers understood this ecological time bomb not only as the consequence of colonial land policies but also as a reflection of the declining power of chiefs and the expanding influence of Christianity. In the years before the land shortages, most of these lands had been spared the hoe (and later the plough) because they were considered sacred. In Shona cosmology, the cooler areas near rivers and water courses are the abode of the spirits and for this reason they, under normal circumstances, cannot be cultivated.[448] But these were abnormal situations. Interestingly, when one elder in Svosve was asked about what the chiefs did to stop the cultivation of wetlands, streams and water courses, this is how he replied:

> "e-eh, the owners/custodians of these lands abandoned the enforcement of customs/traditions. They did not punish the offenders. Those who were found cutting trees were not sanctioned and as I said before when I said *mapostori* went and prayed in the sacred mountain, Christians were now saying 'we will go to these places and we will see what happens. With our God, nothing will happen to us.' The area has so many Christian denominations and most of the people are Christians and the church has a huge influence….In addition, most of the chiefs are no longer genuine traditionalists….Some of the chiefs are now Christians themselves and a reluctant to enforce the customs.[449]

These words echoed a comment SaMuponda sarcastically made about chiefs in 2013. "Do you think these chiefs who now supplicate their ancestors putting on neck ties are

---

[447] S2384/K5843/3236, Native Township, Chiota Reserve, Master-builder certificates, Chihota Agricultural Census, Marandellas; Svosve Reserve; Soil Erosion e.t.c., Letter dated 10th December 1946 from the Acting Director of Native Agriculture to the Chief Native Commissioner.

[448] See for example the discussion in Billy Mukamuri, "Local Environmental Conservation Strategies: Karanga Religion, Politics and Environmental Control." *Environment and History*, Vol. 1, No.3, 1995; Gerald Chikozho Mazarire, "'The Chishanga Waters have their Owners': Water Politics and Development in Southern Zimbabwe." *Journal of Southern African Studies,* Vol. 34, No. 4, December 2008 and Joseph Mujere, "The Marumbi Rain Cult: Gender and the Interface between Rain Making and the Politics of Water in Gutu." Paper Presented at the 'The Power of Water: Landscape, Water and the State in Southern and Eastern Africa' Conference, CAS, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, 28-29 March 2007.

[449] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and George Mavhiringidze, 23 April 2014.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

genuine chiefs," he retorted?[450] Such views reflect local understandings of the changes in power relations over land that colonialism and Christianity brought to northeastern Zimbabwe.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that colonial rule did not bring to an end competition for power over land and people in northeastern Zimbabwean societies. Instead, it intensified the competition not only among chiefs, or between chiefs and *mhondoro*, but among many other elite players as well. This has been the central argument of this chapter. Such conflicts have continued in this form since the late 1940s.Thus, by the mid-twentieth century, the context for the kind of rural struggles for land and power experienced in contemporary rural Zimbabwe had been set.

[450] Discussion with SaMuponda, 30 June 2013.

www.manaraa.com

CHAPTER 5:

COLONIAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE, STATE INTERVENTION AND THE SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF ACCESS TO LAND, 1890-1950S

Introduction

Chapter Four asked how colonial rule affected relations among those Africans who controlled the institutions of political and ritual authority over land. However, the imposition of colonial rule did not only influence the politics of land. It also affected both the social geography of land and the language in which Africans articulated the social bases of claims to the resource. In this chapter, I pursue these two points. I argue that the language of landholding that developed in the colonial period captured the ideal more than the lived reality of many Africans. With its emphasis on membership in patrilineages as the basis of African landholding, this discourse not only narrowed the range of relations that allowed Africans to access land (see chapter 3), but it also constructed an African who was a cultural and not a socio-economic being. That is, it was on the basis of one's belonging within a cultural sphere of the patrilineage and the 'tribe' that one could access land. However, the African was also an economic being and a colonial subject. I argue that the imperatives of survival in a colonial economy, together with state intervention in African agrarian lives informed African decisions about where to live and farm.

The chapter has three sections. The first section examines how the development of a colonial economy affected the social dynamics of land holding and use. Scholars of colonial Zimbabwe and other former settler colonies have often discussed the socio-

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

economic changes that came with colonialism in terms of the stimulation and strangulation of an African peasantry.[451] Often this approach has implied that African farming communities were undifferentiated. This section shows that African farmers' experiences were variegated, as they depended on a number of factors which included differential access to resources and markets. These had a bearing on local patterns of landholding and use while contributing to the cultivation of new social relations among Africans.

Section Two explores the impact of colonial agrarian policies on rural conflicts over land. It argues that Africans not only understood the administrative logic of colonial agrarian interventions, but that they also interpreted their implementation in terms of local alliances and conflicts. Thus state intervention became enmeshed with local conflicts. State intervention also shaped the social dynamics of access to land. The colonial experience similarly informed how Africans articulated the social basis of claims to land. I discuss this in the last section of the chapter. I show that, even though the discourse sought to narrow the terms of access to land to land by invoking ideas of belonging to a patrilineage, Africans exploited a variety of avenues to access land.

[451] See for example Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War*, Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives*, Kenneth D Manungo, The Role Peasants Played in the Zimbabwean War of Liberation; Ian Phimister, "Peasant Production and Underdevelopment in Southern Rhodesia, 1894-194, with Particular Reference to the Victoria District." In Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons (eds), *Roots of Rural Poverty in central and Southern Africa*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1977.

www.manaraa.com

Socio-Economic Change, Agricultural Innovation, and Differential Access to Land, 1890s-1920s

In the discourse of land tenure that developed in the colonial period, African access to land depended not on individual initiative but on membership within a corporate community. "Land," wrote one administration official in 1903,

> is held under the tribal system & is as a rule divided under sub-chiefs who are sons of the ruling house. …the sites of the gardens are shown to his people by the headman of the kraal. After picking the sites for his own and his immediate relations' gardens the headman allows the remainder of his people to pick their lands in succession according to their status in the kraal.[452]

Colonial officials called this system communal land tenure. They described it as a time honored practice that was crucial in maintaining African social relations. "The people generally," claimed the Morris Carter Land Commission of 1925, "know no other form of tenure and, many of the chiefs are obviously afraid of losing their already diminishing influence and power if individual natives of their tribes are given the opportunity of, and encouraged in, acquiring land of their own."[453] Colonial officials interested in promoting this vision of African land tenure were reluctant to let Africans acquire individual titles to land.[454]

The idea that African land tenure was communal was also promoted for other reasons. For example, under the Native Land Husbandry Act enacted in 1951, the colonial state abolished this version of African landholding. It replaced it with a system

---

[452] N3/6/3, South African Native Affairs Commission, Written Evidence from the Native commissioner, Chibi district.

[453] ZAH 1/1/1 Land (Morris Carter) Commission, Final Report, paragraph 252.

[454] Terence Ranger writes that when one colonial official wrote that under the so called communal land tenure all the land was vested in the chief who held it in trust for the whole 'tribe' he "emphasized the power of Makoni because he wanted the chief to impose agricultural and conservation rules on his people." Terence Ranger, The Communal Areas of Zimbabwe, p 355.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

of individual family plots assigned by government officials. In response, proponents of the system defended it by pointing to security of tenure as its main advantage. "What 'communal tenure' in indigenous (Rhodesian) society does mean" wrote the anthropologist J F Holleman,

> is that, because the land and its resources belong to the community, every full member of this community has an inalienable right to a reasonable share according to his requirements. For this reason this right is secure as is a person's membership of the community. In customary law, the permanence and inviolability of the land rights of individuals are not conceived, as is ownership in most Western law, as a relationship to a specific holding in perpetuity, but as a perpetual relationship with any such unencumbered portion of the land of the community as may be available for individualized occupation whenever required from time to time. Here in lies the individual's security, that is, in his vested right as a member of the community to claim a share.[455]

This defense described an ideal situation. Notwithstanding the supposed guarantee to a reasonable share of land that came with one's membership within a community, researchers found disparities in land holdings among rural households in Zimbabwe. Some of these households were on the verge of landlessness.[456]

The defense of 'communal' land tenure failed to acknowledge the fact that the lived life of African farmers was not shaped only by the 'customary' ideals of membership within patrilineages. In reality, Africans lived in a colonial world that was also informed by their own individual aspirations and the actions of colonial officials, settler farmers, missionaries and many others. In this real world, socio-cultural factors informed African access to land in tension with the socio-economic realities of a colonial society. In this section, I explore how these factors influenced the patterns of landholding and use among the African inhabitants of northeastern Zimbabwe. I begin by discussing how enterprising Africans negotiated the new realities of integration and exclusion from

[455] J F Holleman, *Chief, Council and Commissioner*, p 62.

[456] Pius S Nyambara, A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe.

www.manaraa.com

the colonial economy and how this in turn informed the social dynamics of land use and holding in the Reserves.[457]

In their quest to take advantage of the expanding markets to improve themselves, African men and women pursued a wide range of activities. From their earliest encounters with Europeans, they displayed their willingness to exploit economic opportunities to their advantage. Accounts by European travelers from the late-precolonial period contain reports of Africans who took advantage of the presence of Europeans to engage in trade.[458] In the mid-1880s, Walter Montagu-Kerr passed through the *vaShona* country on his Journey from the Cape to Livingstonia Mission. He camped among Chief Nyamweda's people, on the southern banks of the Hunyani River, a short distance from where, a few years later, the Pioneer Column established Fort Salisbury. His camp, he wrote, was soon crowded by Mashona people whose young men were "eager and anxious to know what the white man was going to do."[459] "'Was he going to hunt meat?" Did he wish to trade? and so forth," Montagu-Kerr recounted, "were the class of questions asked."[460] "Gradually," he continued,

> the crowd of visitors began to swell to considerable dimensions, and we had quite a lively market scene, which brought with it a shower of light to our gloomy spirits, enlivened by the turmoil of

---

[457] The paradox of African integration and exclusion in the colonial economy is discussed in James L Giblin, *A History of the Excluded Making Family a Refuge from the State in Twentieth Century Tanzania*, Athens: OH, Ohio University Press, 2005.

[458] Frederick Courtney Selous, *Travel and Adventure in Southeast Africa*, New York, Arno Press, 1967, pp 473-474; Walter Montagu-Kerr, *The Far Interior: A Narrative of Travel and Adventure from the Cape of Good Hope Across the Zambezi to the Lakes Region of Central Africa*, London, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1887, p 110; N9/1/6 Native Commissioners' Annual Reports, 1900, Native Commissioner Marandellas' Report, N9/1/7, Native Commissioners' Annual Reports, Native Commissioner Goromonzi's Report. See also Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives.*

[459] Walter Montagu Kerr, *The Far Interior*, p110.

[460] Walter Montagu Kerr, *The Far Interior*, p110.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

> countless voices. Produce of all descriptions common to the country was brought forward. We had rice, corn meal, sweet potatoes, ivory, ostrich feathers, and assegais.[461]

Other late nineteenth century travelers like Frederick Courtney Selous similarly described the enthusiasm to trade shown by the *vaShona* whom they encountered on the Zimbabwean plateau.[462]

With the onset of colonial rule, enterprising Shona men and women adopted innovations in agricultural production that had a bearing on the social dynamics of land. They experimented with new crops, eliciting some occasional praise from colonial officials. "I have in various reports from Lomagundi and Melsetter mentioned that in my opinion the Mashona works his lands better than any other native tribe I know," T B Hulley, the Native Commissioner for the district of Umtali wrote in 1897.[463] "And the willingness they show to learn anything about agriculture," he continued, "they will plant anything they think they can get a sale for."[464] The following year, Hulley reported that the Africans in Umtali district "seem eager to get any seed of any grain or vegetable which would find ready sale with the Europeans. In this," he elaborated, "I have already seen potatoes, cabbage, cauliflower, onions, cucumbers, beans etc growing for which the native had no previous knowledge."[465]

Elders told similar stories of ambition, hard work and innovation with new crops. Echoing narratives of Africans who left settler farms in order to take up lands in reserves

---

[461]Walter Montagu Kerr, *The Far Interior*, p110.

[462] Frederick C Selous, *Travel and Adventure in Southeast Africa*, New York, Arno Press, 1967; J Percy FitzPatrick, Cited in Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives*, pp 54-5.

[463] N9/1/3, Native Commissioners' Annual Reports, 1897, Native Commissioner Umtali's Report.

[464] N9/1/3, Native Commissioners' Annual Reports, 1897, Native Commissioner Umtali's Report.

[465] N9/1/4 Native Commissioners' Annual Reports, 1898, Native Commissioner Umtali's Report.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

so as to pursue the 'peasant option,' informants told stories of enterprising individuals like George Mavhiringidze's grandfather who moved from areas occupied by members of their patrilineages to seek productive land elsewhere.[466] There, they experimented with new crops that were in demand among settlers (see below) while developing businesses that serviced areas neglected by big retailers.[467] However, the stories the elders told also depart from the usual narratives of African responses to market opportunities in that they talk of individual and not group experiences.

Couched in the language of personal ambition and hard work, oral accounts of resettlement and agricultural improvement suggest that not everybody adopted the innovations alluded to by Native Commissioner Hulley. In fact, it was a few who innovated in these ways who would stand out as successful farmers. "What distinguished my grandfather from the rest of the African farmers in Nhowe," Mavhiringidze explained, "were the methods that he adopted to cultivate his crops. When we had grown up so that we could understand what was happening, we could notice that he was an energetic farmer. When other people's gardens were getting water logged, his crops would do well because he grew them on raised beds."[468] Mavhiringidze also suggested that his grandfather innovated with new crops which had a ready market from the neighboring white farmers. "The thing that we especially saw as we were growing up which set him apart from the rest of the neighboring farmers," "Mavhiringidze elaborated,

[466] Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War*, pp 32-33.

[467] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and George Mavhiringidze, 21 April, 2014.

[468] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and George Mavhiringidze, 21 April 2014.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

was that he grew carrots, he grew peas, he grew onions and sold these crops to whites on the farms. He became well known among the whites on the farms who all now knew that Mavhiringidze (referring to his grandfather) would supply them with these vegetables. This we could see as we were growing up and it really distinguished him from the rest.[469]

Other indicators point to the kind of rural differentiation that George Mavhiringidze alluded to. The ability to purchase a plough, for example, indicated differences in wealth held among Africans. The plough required investments in money both for the purchase of the implement and for the cattle that were used as draught power. In the first few decades of the twentieth century very few households had the implement (See Table 5.1below). African ownership of the plough in this region is mentioned for the first time in 1909. In that year, the Native Commissioner for Makoni reported that, in his district, only one African had a plough.[470] His counterpart in Umtali district, similarly, reported that there was only one African in the district who had adopted European implements for cultivation. He had a plough, drill and cultivator.[471] There were no African owned ploughs known to local Native Department officials in the districts of Goromonzi, Marandellas and Inyanga.[472] The Native Commissioner for Goromonzi decried the failure of the Africans to "to avail themselves to the offer of ploughs made by the Government in last June, the reason being that they had no oxen."[473]

Table 5.1 below gives us a sense of the distribution of the implement. The table shows the estimated number of ploughs and the estimated population of Africans in each of the five districts between 1909 and 1922 respectively. The ratio of the ploughs to the

[469] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and George Mavhiringidze, 21 April 2014.

[470] N9/1/12, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner, Makoni, 1909
[471] N9/1/12, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner, Umtali, 1909
[472] In these districts, Native Commissioners stated in their Annual Reports for 1909 that there were no African owned ploughs. See, N9/1/12, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Reports by Native Commissioner, Goromonzi, Native Commissioner, Marandellas and Native commissioner, Inyanga.

[473] N9/1/12, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner, Goromonzi, 1909.

www.manaraa.com

population of each district suggests that those who owned implements constituted a very small minority. Even in places like Marandellas, which saw a significant rise in the number of ploughs from 1916, the ratio of the ploughs to the district's population in that year was still one plough per every thirty six people. Going by the formula used by Native Commissioners to calculate the number of people in their districts, for every household that had a plough, nine did not have one.[474] The gap was even wider in Inyanga where there were, reportedly, only nine ploughs in 1916 among the 18,572 residents of the district.[475]

Table 5.1 Number of Ploughs owned by Africans and Estimated Number of Africans residing in each of the five Districts of Goromonzi (Salisbury), Marandellas, Makoni, Umtali and Inyanga from 1909 to 1922.

Year	Goromonzi		Marandellas		Makoni		Umtali		Inyanga	
	Ploughs	Population	Ploughs	Population	Ploughs	Population	Ploughs	Population	Ploughs	Population
1909	0	15880	0	15341	1	20463	1	No data	0	17000
1910	2	16533	0	18084	2/3	20704	2	25000	0	17700
1911	4	17470	1	18084	X	20704	3	18450	X	17800
1912	5	17933	1	18762	X	20704	3	19100	0	17800
1913	12	18928	4	19301	5	22011	8	20050	1	17000
1914	13	19915	18	19848	5	22239	X	22256	1	17000
1915	X	No data	26	20440	X	22550	X	No data	X	18388
1916	34	21962	104	21894	30	23328	X	23759	9	18572
1917	41	22298	280	22144	X	24024	X	23970	9	16674
1918	43	22409	380	23015	X	24770	X	23390	X	17539
1919	52	22192	440	24450	X	26270	X	23387	X	22463
1920	57	22649	600	26228	X	27870	75	23765	X	22984
1921	63	24999	X	27258	X	28392	X	24153	X	24081
1922	71	19740	X	27364	X	28392	X	24759	X	23548

Source: Constructed from the figures provided in Native Commissioners' annual reports for each of the five districts from 1909 to 1922. Where I have put an X on the number of ploughs, the officials did not state figures but used comments such as "no noticeable improvement," "has not extended beyond five kraals" or simply "increasing."

[474] Native Commissioners estimated the number of people in their districts by multiplying the number of people on their tax registers by 3.5, arguing that this figure represented the average number of children and wives per each tax payer's household. These estimates may, therefore, have a big margin of error. For the problems with this methodology and the demographic data in general, see David Beach, "Zimbabwean Demography: Early Colonial Data." In *Zambezia*, Vol. xvii, No, 1, 1990.

[475] N9/1/19 Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Inyanga 1916.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Colonial officials initially argued that the low uptake of the plough reflected not only the Africans' confidence in their hoe but some kind of conservatism against the adoption of European methods of agriculture.[476] However, it did not take long for them to realize that Africans were not averse to adopting ploughs. "Only four natives have ploughs. This is an increase on the number in use last year," the Native Commissioner for the district of Marandellas reported in 1913, adding "and I have no doubt in the near future more natives will make use of them as there is an inclination to borrow their neighbours' plough and oxen, when the planting season comes on."[477] Three years later, the Native Commissioner for the district of Goromonzi noted that plough owners were "doing flourishing trade ploughing the lands for their neighbours."[478]

As the fact that those who did not own ploughs were inclined to borrow or hire from those who had purchased them confronted the officials, they noted that the real reason why so few Africans owned the implements lay somewhere else outside African conservatism. "Fifty two ploughs are owned by Natives and numbers of natives are anxious to purchase these implements but the supply is very irregular and the prices are high," reported the Native Commissioner for Goromonzi (Salisbury) district in 1919.[479] His counterpart in Marandellas similarly pointed to prohibitive prices as the reason behind the low uptake of ploughs. "The demand [for ploughs] this planting season," he

---

[476] See for example, N9/1/12, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Makoni District,1909; N9/1/13, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, report by Native Commissioner for Goromonzi District, 1910; Report of Native Commissioner for the district of Umtali, 1910; N9/1/16, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Makoni, 1913.

[477] N9/1/16, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Makoni, 1913.

[478] N9/1/19, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Goromonzi, 1916.

[479] N9/1/22, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Goromonzi/Salisbury, 1919.

www.manaraa.com

noted “was greater than during last year probably largely on account of the excellent harvest reaped last year and the fact that large quantities of grain were sold by the natives at remunerative prices.”[480] “Many, however,” he continued, “were prevented from buying ploughs on account of the greatly increased cost.”[481] In that same year, the Native Commissioner for the district of Umtali bemoaned that “few new implements have been purchased, due to the exorbitant prices charged by merchants,” adding, “in some cases worn out ploughs have not been replaced for the same reason.”[482] Colonial district officials continued to express concerns about the prohibitive prices of ploughs.[483]

The cost of the plough and the investment in repairs and in draught power (cattle and donkeys) meant that not everybody was able to adopt the implement. Thus early plough owners were relatively wealthy individuals. Among the six people who owned farming implements in Marandellas district in 1913 was a chief who owned a scotch cart, while others were traders.[484] Even when ploughs became relatively common in the 1940s, relative wealth determined the form of draught power that a household could use and the amount of land that they could plough. Ideally, the draught power of choice was cattle,

[480] N9/1/22, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Marandellas, 1919.

[481] N9/1/22, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Marandellas, 1919.

[482] N9/1/22, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Umtali, 1919.

[483] See for example, N9/1/23, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Umtali, 1920.

[484] N9/1.16, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Marandellas, 1913.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

for they could cultivate more land than donkeys.[485] Those without cattle used donkeys to pull the plough, but were considered to be poor.[486] Thus, ownership of agricultural implements became a signifier of a household's position on the social ladder.

The use of the plough affected the social geography of African land use and landholding. As it became available to a number of farmers, the plough allowed more land to be put under cultivation. "From enquiries made and judging from personal observation while patrolling," wrote the Native Commissioner for Makoni district in 1916, "the acreage under cultivation is greater than it used to be and is this year considerably larger than it was last year."[487] The official ascribed the expansion of the acreage under cultivation to the marked increase in the adoption of the implement, remarking that "until this year the plough was scarcely known at the kraals."[488]

As African farmers adopted the plough they also opened additional lands in previously ignored environments. Most Shona farmers located their fields in wooded areas and on hillsides because they believed that where trees did not grow, crops would not do well.[489] However, they did not stump the wooded lots on which they cultivated

---

[485]This derives from personal experience. As a young boy growing up in a rural area in Mberengwa, in Southern Zimbabwe, we would cultivate a much bigger acreage with cattle than when we used donkeys as draft power. See also interview between Joseph Jakarasi and Trymore Jena, 19 April 2014.

[486] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and Trymore Jena, 19 April 2014. Nancy Jacobs alludes to this kind of social differentiation in her discussion of the Bophuthatswana Donkey Massacre of the early 1980s. The rich elites who owned cattle spearheaded the destruction of donkeys which mostly belonged to poor families ostensibly to serve the pasture for cattle. See Nancy J Jacobs, "The Great Bophuthatswana Donkey Massacre: Discourse on the Ass and the Politics of Class and Grass." *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 106, No. 2, 2001; Nancy J Jacobs, *Environment, Power and Injustice*, especially chapter 8.

[487] N9/1/19, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Makoni, 1916.

[488] N9/1/19, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Makoni, 1916.

[489] N9/1/14, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Goromonzi, 1911; N9/1/15, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Goromonzi,

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

their crops using the hoe, but instead just chopped the tree branches. Land cleared in this way could not be easily ploughed because the stumps obstructed the oxen and the plough itself constantly got stuck on roots. The plough induced African farmers to make use of the open lands which required less clearing and stumping. Indeed, in 1913, the Native Commissioner for the district of Goromonzi reported both the increase in the number of African owned ploughs in his district from 5 in the previous year to 12 that year and the cultivation of new fields in open lands. "The old fallacy of theirs [the Mashona] that where trees will not grow crops will not thrive," he noted, "is dying out, and there are a few cases of lands being made in the open country."[490] Four years later, he reported that forty one ploughs were owned by Africans "who are now taking to the open land and vleis for cultivation purposes and are not dependent on thickly wooded parts for their lands as in former times."[491]

Yet, because not everybody could afford to invest in the plough and livestock, it was the few better-resourced farmers who were able to expand their land holdings by opening fields in a variety of micro-environments. For example, in 1914, the Native Commissioner for Goromonzi District observed that Africans cultivated wooded parts of

---

1912; N9/1/16, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Goromonzi, 1913. For completely different reasons though, oral informants also claimed that Africans preferred to cultivate hillsides. For example, Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and Mbuya Chikonzo, 19April, 2014 and AOH 80, Makutu Taonezvi, AOH 84 Jera Chanji.. It seems to me that the preference for hillside fields shown in the sources can only be traced to the violence and insecurity of the nineteenth century. See the critique of the discussion on agriculture under siege in Chapter 3.

[490] N9/6/1/13, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Goromonzi, 1913.

[491] N9/1/20, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Goromonzi, 1917.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

the reserve except the thirteen plough owners who "are working open lands."[492] These also retained their fields on the wooded lots at the same time that they were expanding into the open lands. Once these claims were made, it was difficult to dislodge them. The initial act of clearing and cultivating the land formed the basis of one's claim to the land. Many of those who had used the plough to open new lands could afford to let them lie fallow and still invoke the concepts of *gura* (fallow land) to claim lands which they formerly cultivated but had abandoned.

The adoption of new agricultural implements had other consequences. It created opportunities for cooperation both inside and outside kinship groups. Plough owners strengthened relationships with their neighbors by ploughing for them. Expansion in areas under cultivation increased demand for labor for weeding and harvesting, much of which was mobilized through beer parties (*humwe/hoka/nhimbe*). Such gatherings offered the hosts opportunities to flaunt their wealth by feeding the working parties with delicacies in order to gain a good reputation that would help mobilize huge gatherings in subsequent seasons.

Cooperation extended to the transportation of crops to the market. David Kamusuko explained how this worked. "Say at one area they may have two scotch carts," he recounted, "so they would make a contract, where they put their sacks in the cart and they each produced cattle to be spanned so that they could pull the cart."[493] Exclusions were also not uncommon. Makutu Taonezvi, pointed out that the organization of transport to carry grain to the market involved *chizivano* (nepotism) adding that scotch

[492] N9/1/17, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Goromonzi, 1914.

[493] AOH 79, David Kamusoko.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

cart owners would charge high or low amounts depending on their relationship to the person seeking their services.[494]

The expansion of new implements together with the African participation in the migrant labor economy affected gendered relations of production. Historians of women and gender have often argued that these two factors expanded the burden placed on women, who for the most part remained in the reserves.[495] This analysis ignores the fact that women had their own voices. At the time that the Native Commissioner for Makoni reported the arrival of the first plough in his district in 1909, he also claimed that "many native women are becoming averse to heavy work in the lands," adding, with some optimism, that "this will become an important factor in inducing the men to follow European methods of cultivation."[496] The assertion that women were opposing heavy labor was an exaggeration. The point, though, is that some women in the rural areas appreciated the value of farming implements and believed that the adoption of these tools lessened their workload.

Discussions of agricultural innovation, labor migration and female exploitation also ignore the importance of off-farm income in the social dynamics of agricultural production. From the early days of African participation in the labor migrant economies, those with access to off-farm income began to hire labor. "The natives of this district employ quite a number of natives from other Districts (principally Mrewa and Mtoko) during the ploughing season, the usual wage being 10/- per [month]," reported the

---

[494] AOH 80, Makutu Taonezvi.

[495] See, for Example, Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives.*

[496] N9/1/12, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Makoni, 1909.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Goromonzi Native Commissioner in 1909.[497] In that same year, his counterpart in Makoni noted that "some of the Native Messengers who are constantly employed do employ other natives on a monthly wage to do their cultivation."[498] In interviews, elderly women emphasized this point by coding it in the moral language of real 'husbandhood.' A 'real man', one elderly woman pointed out, would remember to send money so that his wife could mobilize labor for the cultivation of the fields; he would remember to send money to his wife so that she would pay the tax for the household's livestock and land.[499]

Agricultural innovations did not merely depend on one's work ethic and business acumen. One's location in relation to market opportunities mattered. It was mostly those Africans located near markets or those who had access to means of transport who were able to sell crops and buy new implements that allowed them to exploit fields in different micro-environments. In this respect, the experiences of Africans located in the districts of Goromonzi, Marandellas, Makoni and parts of Umtali generally differed from those who resided in Inyanga and the outlying areas of Umtali district.

Whereas most Africans in Goromonzi, Marandellas and Makoni were able to sell crops and to use the proceeds to purchase farming implements such as ploughs, scotch carts and harrows, very little of such trade occurred in outlying districts such as Inyanga. "The natives harvested excellent crops throughout the district last season and disposed of approximately thirteen thousand bags of grain to traders and others," noted the

[497] N9/1/12, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Goromonzi, 1909.

[498] N9/1/12, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Makoni, 1909.

[499] Interview with Mbuya Chikonzo, 25 April 2014.

www.manaraa.com

Goromonzi district Native Commissioner in 1921.[500] Yet, in that same year, the Native Commissioner for the district of Inyanga reported that only about five hundred bags of grain were sold to Europeans.[501] Indeed, there is a marked contrast in the reports of how Africans disposed of their surplus crops in the region. Reports from Goromonzi, Marandellas and Makoni often decried the fact that the African residents of these districts disposed of most of their crops to traders only to run short of food in the later parts of the year.[502] In contrast, administrative reports from Umtali and Inyanga are awash with regrets for how every good harvest meant an increase in the production and drinking of beer with a concomitant impact on labor supply.[503]

A number of factors account for these differences. Goromonzi and parts of Marandellas were closer to Salisbury and the districts were combed by European traders who purchased grain for sale in the colony's capital.[504] Mining centers such as Arcturus provided further markets to Goromonzi farmers. Places like the Chiduku reserve in Makoni district were located near the railway line which connected Salisbury, with the

[500] N9/1/24, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Goromonzi, 1921.

[501] N9/6/24, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Inyanga, 1921.

[502] See, for example N9/1/7, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Makoni, 1901; N9/1/12, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Makoni, 1909; N9/1/12, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Marandellas, 1909; N9/1/14, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Goromonzi, 1911, N9/1/17, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Makoni, 1914, N9/1/18 Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Marandellas, 1915.

[503] See, for example, N9/1/7, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Umtali, 1901; N9/1/8, , Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Inyanga, 1902-1903 N9/1/12, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Inyanga, 1909; N9/1/18, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Inyanga, 1915.

[504] See for example the discussion in Richard Hodder-Williams, *White Farmers in Rhodesia, 1890-1965: A History of Marandellas District*, London, The Macmillan Press, 1983, p 24.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

border city of Umtali and, ultimately, Beira on the Indian Ocean coast.[505] In contrast, the absence of a sizeable population center that could provide a market for grain in Inyanga district was one of the reasons why very few farmers traded their grain. As the area's Native Commissioner observed in 1909, crops in the district were mostly grown for home consumption, "the trading done being small owing to the distance from any market."[506] Apart from the emerging administrative town of Inyanga, there was no other center of a sizeable population in the district. The nearest mining community at Penhalonga was almost a hundred kilometers from Inyanga center. Umtali was even further away. The lack of local markets was compounded by the unforgiving rugged topography of the eastern highlands which made it difficult to establish transport networks necessary for the transportation of bulk grains. "The natives possess no vehicles of any sort," noted the Native Commissioner for the district in 1913. "The nature of the country," he continued, "is all against that."[507]

While those Shona men and women in Inyanga faced more challenges in trying to reach the market, the difficulties of negotiating the mountainous terrain in the eastern highlands were felt even by those who were in the Umtali district. But there, the proximity to a market center stimulated innovation. In order to take advantage of the emerging market in Umtali, the more enterprising of them turned to other crops that seemed more profitable. "Many [Africans] located further afield [from the town of Umtali]" noted the Native Commissioner for the district in 1921, "have discovered that, under the existing conditions, it pays better to grow potatoes for market than mealies or

---

[505] Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla War.*

[506] N9/1/12, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Inyanga, 1909.

[507] N9/1/16, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Inyanga, 1913.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

rapoko [finger millet], with the result that these tubers are more extensively cultivated by natives than formerly."[508] Those Africans living within the vicinity of the town and at Old Umtali, he reported, "are capturing a fair amount of the green grocery trade, and the vegetables produced by them take a lot of beating for variety, size, and quality."[509]

The daily struggles of producing and marketing crops to meet the demands of family and state, together with the ever-hanging threat of displacement, combined to shape the ways in which many Africans articulated their visions of land holding. The language which they developed drew upon ideas of community membership and personal ambition. This is especially evident in the contributions made by Africans to the Morris Carter Land Commission of 1925. While their views were evidently ignored by the Commissioners who went on to claim that Africans preferred communal land tenure, contributors showed their willingness to acquire individual titles to land.[510] Kawadza, one of the contributors to the Commission, was the first African to purchase a plough and farm in the Umtali district.[511] As a share cropper, he lived on a farm near the town of Umtali and, from the fruits of his agricultural pursuits, managed to save some money to

---

[508] N9/1/24, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Umtali, 1921.

[509] N9/1/24, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Umtali, 1921.

[510] The recommendations of the Morris Carter Commission formed the basis of the 1930 Land Apportionment Act which not only legalized racialized land holding in the colony but assigned half of the country's land to white settlers. It thus set the foundation for the emotive politics of race and land in the colony. For analyses of the impact of the commission See Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination* and Henry V Moyana, *The Political Economy of Land*. Their conclusions were reported in the final report of the commission. See also Arthur S Cripps "African Land Tenure. (A Plea for Tolerance)." In *NADA*, No 4, 1926.

[511] ZAH1/1/3, Land (Morris Carter) Commission, Oral Evidence, Contribution from Kawadza, pp 995-999.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

purchase a farm in the neighboring district of Makoni.[512] He told the Commissioners that, if land was set aside for individual purchase under reasonable terms, similar to those accorded to him, many Africans would follow in his footsteps and apply for that land. Kawadza had entered into an agreement in which he paid annual instalments of £89 for the purchase of his farm.[513]

Other Africans who contributed to the Commission similarly expressed their willingness to buy land but requested to do so in groups for practical, and not socio-cultural, reasons. Consider, for example, the following conversation between the Commissioners and local African leadership from Umtali district:

> Kadzima [Brother of Chief Mutasa]: We are very so pleased to see that there is this Commission to set aside the land for natives to buy, because our reserves are so very small.
>
> [Commissioner]: This Commission is not dealing with the question of reserves at all. Reserves have been set aside for all time, and they are considered to be adequate for natives. The land which is set aside may be adjoining reserves, but it can only be set aside for the purpose of purchase or lease. CHITOMBO: I understand that, but we should like to have land adjoining the reserves, so that if we purchase it, it will really belong to the reserve.
>
> [Commissioner]: But that land cannot be part of the reserve; it will become the individual property of the native who may purchase it, in just the same way as Kawadza has purchased land in the Makoni district. It would be the absolute property of the one who bought the land! [CHITOMBO]—Yes, I understand that it will belong to the individuals, but if we club together and buy a certain piece of land, and we want to put it in into the reserve… …
>
> [Commissioner]: We cannot view with favour the acquisition of land which will lead to tribal or communal tenure!—KADZEMA [Brother of Chief Mutasa]: There would be some difficulty in regard to some individuals acquiring land because, where are they going to get the money from to purchase the land with?[514]

---

[512] ZAH1/1/3, Land (Morris Carter) Commission, Oral Evidence, Contribution from Kawadza, pp 995-999. For some time, share croppers in Southern Africa fared much better than their counterparts in the reserves. This is because as share-croppers they continued to have access to relatively good land compared to the land in the reserves. See for example the experiences of Kas Maine in Charles van Onselen, *The Seed Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper, 1894-1985*, New York, Hill and Wang, 1996.

[513] ZAH1/1/3, Land (Morris Carter) Commission, Oral Evidence, Contribution from Kawadza, pp 995-999.

[514] ZAH 1/1/3, Land (Morris Carter) Commission, Oral Evidence, Contributions from Kadzima Mutasa (Chief Mutasa's brother), Headman Chitombo, Headman Munyarara, Chief Maranke, Hama (Son of Chief), Headman Muchenje, Headman Matanda, Headman Mutsayo (Mutsago?), Chief Zimunya, Headman Munyarari, Headman Hukuimwe and Headman Chigodora, pp 1000-1004. For similar views by Africans

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

This exchange point to two things: African understandings of their economic situation and the commissioners' misunderstanding of the witnesses' language of cooperation. When these men (there were no women in this group) asked to be allowed to buy land that was close to the reserves as a group they offered suggestions as to what was practicable under their economic situations. The wages they received as migrant laborers, coupled with the absence of financial support from colonial financial institutions, did not allow most of them to raise sufficient capital to purchase farms as individuals. It was in this context that they offered to pull their resources together and purchase land. However, the commissioners interpreted this as a reflection of African desires to hold land as a community, something that validated their claims that this was a primordial practice.

In contrast, the witnesses invoked ideas of community to challenge the colonial state's efforts to relocate them to poorer lands further away from the markets. The Morris Carter Commissioners interviewed Africans from Umtali District with an eye toward establishing a Native Purchase Area in the more arid southwestern corner of the Umtali District, an area that historically formed the territory of the *waBocha*.[515] They repeatedly asked the contributors if they knew the land between the Sabi, the Makuni, the Makasi and Magara rivers.[516] Anticipating this move, a number of African contributors who lived as tenants on the farm Gilmerton near Umtali shot down the prospects of settling in the

---

who contributed to the Commission from other parts of the country see Angela P Cheater, The Ideology of Communal Land Tenure, p193.

[515] Native Purchase Areas were Lands set aside for purchase by Africans under the Land Apportionment Act and had to be held under an individual freehold tenure. For a discussion of Native Purchase areas see Alison K Shutt, "'We are the Best Power Farmers:' Purchase Area farmers and Economic Differentiation in Southern Rhodesia, 1925-1980." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1995.

[516] ZAH 1/1/3, Land (Morris Carter) Commission, Oral Evidence, Contributions from Materi, Hama, Tapei, Chiwezhe, Mahuwe, Tsekwa, Gatawa, Munema, Taurwi, Mambudzi, Karuma and Masukuta, pp 1014-1024.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

proposed area by stating that the land belonged to the *WaBocha.* They also stated that they preferred to purchase land on farm Gilmerton because "it used to be our old tribal land."[517]

The witnesses' concerns were as much about attachment to ancestral lands as they were about economic conditions. "I hope that the land which the Government does set aside will be land near to the markets," one of the contributors stated. "Farm Gilmerton," he continued, "would be a very suitable place. If we are too far away from the markets, then we cannot get our grain readily to the market."[518] It was, perhaps, for this reason that the Gilmerton tenants opposed buying land in the area earmarked for the Native Purchase area, for this was not only further away from Umtali but also lies in the rain shadow of the eastern highlands and is therefore semi-arid. State intervention in African agriculture soon added another layer of factors that informed how Africans lived and farmed in the rural areas, providing another context in which social conflicts played out. I turn to this in the next section.

State Intervention, Local Conflicts and Social Dynamics of Land, 1930s-1950s

From 1890 to the late 1920s, the colonial state indirectly intervened in African agriculture. Even when, from 1908 onwards, the state began to undermine African farmers by promoting settler agriculture, it did not, in these years, impose its own vision

---

[517] ZAH 1/1/3, Land (Morris Carter) Commission, Oral Evidence, Contributions from Materi, Hama, Tapei, Chiwezhe, Mahuwe, Tsekwa, Gatawa, Munema, Taurwi, Mambudzi, Karuma and Masukuta, pp 1014-1024. The statement in quotation was made by Taurwi and is on p 1019.

[518] ZAH 1/1/3, Land (Morris Carter) Commission, Oral Evidence, Contributions from Materi, Hama, Tapei, Chiwezhe, Mahuwe, Tsekwa, Gatawa, Munema, Taurwi, Mambudzi, Karuma and Masukuta, pp 1014-1024. The statement in quotation was made by Taurwi and is on p 1019.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

of how African farmers ought to grow their crops or organize their settlements.[519] In fact colonial officials' expectations were that as Africans were exposed to European methods of agriculture, they would realize their benefits and adopt them. The pace at which African men and women adopted ploughs and the use of manure frustrated many officials.[520]

Beginning in the late 1920s, the colonial state began to intervene in African agriculture. In 1926, it appointed Emory D Alvord as the Agriculturalist for the Instruction of Natives. It deployed African Agricultural Demonstrators trained at Domboshava and Tsholotsho government training centers, to work under Alvord. The demonstrators encouraged Africans to adopt crop rotation and the use of manure. As we have seen, they were also involved in the demarcation of fields and sites of settlement. As concerns with environmental degradation deepened from the 1930s onwards, the colonial state introduced more intrusive conservationist measures, including the compulsory construction of contour ridges on land assigned by the state to individual households and the outlawing of stream bank cultivation.

Colonial agrarian interventions were meant to achieve objectives that ranged from conservation to governmentality.[521] They ensured African legibility to the state.[522]

---

[519] Victor E.M Machingaidze, The Development of Settler Capitalist Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia with Particular Reference to the Role of the State, 1908-1939," Unpublished DPhil Thesis, University of London, 1980; Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*, Robin Palmer, "The Agricultural History of Rhodesia." In Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons, *Roots of Rural Poverty*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1977.

[520] N91/12, , Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Makoni, 1909; N9/1/25 Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, Report by Native Commissioner for Goromonzi, 1922.

[521] JoAnn McGregor, Conservation, Control and Ecological Change; Donald S Moore, *Suffering for Territory*.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Gwatidzo Panyanyiwa stated that the linear settlements were introduced by the demonstrators who "did not want the scattered huts because they were a problem to the police. So," he continued, "they decided on having huts built in lines, so that policemen would just follow lines."[523]

The more intrusive policies such as the Native Land Husbandry Act of the 1950s were also meant to create a permanent peasant population and a class of landless Africans who would provide a stable labor force to the expanding post war economy. Contributing to the Bill in 1951, the Minister of Native Affairs, P B. Fletcher stated that

> the natives must realize that, if they want to become great people and to make a contribution to the development of Africa, they must face the fact that, as the years go by, a smaller percentage of their people will be able to engage in agriculture. Greater and greater numbers must seek a future in industrial development because there is no future for all natives living on the land taking one another's washing[524]

A policy paper that explained the Act claimed that the African male kept "one foot in the reserves while dabbling in some paid occupation and tends to be grossly inefficient in both."[525] The Act sought to stop this tendency by assigning permanent land holdings to those in the reserves and turning those in the urban areas into permanent laborers.

Africans responded in a number of ways. Some of them resisted the policy interventions.[526] "The Demonstrator found it difficult to contend and overcome

---

[522] I am alluding to the idea of legibility in the sense that it is discussed in James C Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed*, New Heaven, Yale University Press, 1998.

[523] AOH 89, Gwatidzo Panyanyiwa, See also AOH 84, Jera Chanji.

[524] Quoted in VEM Machingaidze, Agrarian Change from Above, p 567.

[525] Quoted in VEM Machingaidze, Agrarian Change from Above, p 567.

[526] AOH 70, Philip Mbofana. Mbofana was one of the first demonstrators to work in Chihota reserve in the Marandellas district.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

overwhelming conservatism of the masses of people, the popular idea being that the Government would eject the people from the Reserve and populate it with Europeans as soon as it was developed agriculturally," recounted a Land Development Officer in 1947.[527] A former demonstrator remembered the hostility that he encountered when he was first deployed to the Chihota reserve in 1943: "we had a difficult time I tell you," he said, adding,

> we had nowhere to stay. We could be offered a disserted house left by someone. Were in a real tough situation…. We could stay out till a few who had compassion admitted us into their homes....We were faced with great difficulty. There was great fear of the government during those days for people had recently been harassed…. They were beaten….The white policemen came and forced people to carry some luggage….So people thought that the demonstrators had also come to deceive them.[528]

Elders similarly remembered subtle oppositions in the form of song compositions which critiqued colonial policies of *chibaro* (forced labor), road construction, cattle culling, contour ridging and the resettlement of Africans in linear settlements.[529] Composed in the 1950s, recounted the elders, the song's lyrics stated that "Mangwende resists cattle culling; all our heads have been destroyed; they started with *chibaro*, followed by road constructions, now its cattle culling and all that stuff." "It was a political protest song," they elaborated, adding that "if one was heard by the colonial officials singing it one

---

[527] S2384/K5843, Native Township, Chihota Reserve, Document titled, "Agricultural Demonstration Work in Chihota Reserve" written by the District Land Development Officer. It does not have a date but is date stamped 9 September 1947.

[528] AOH 81, Madziwanyika, Bvudzijena, Taonezvi Mazive, Simon Zhuwarara, Chikore. This was a group interview and these were Chikore's reminiscenses.

[529] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and John Mupfumi Tigere and Edmund Ndoro, 23 July 2014.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

would be disappeared."[530] Some farmers continued to grow crops on land set aside as grazing areas.[531]

However, other villagers adopted the changes introduced by the demonstrators but did not abandon their old practices, prompting the colonial state to withdraw the Master Farmer and Master of Tillage Certificates that it had awarded them (see Plate 5.1 and 5.2 below for two such withdrawn certificates).[532] Others embraced the conservationist measures because they offered them the opportunity both to clearly demarcate the boundaries of their land claims and to also increase their harvests.[533] For example, in 1944, Acting Chief Chihota requested that "he be allowed to define by pegging the lands around his kraal that his kraal inmates cultivate."[534] He offered to contour ridge the area.

---

[530] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and John Mupfumi Tigere and Edmund Ndoro, 23 July 2014. Chief Mangwende who is mentioned in the song vigorously resisted the NLHA in the Mangwende reserve in Mrewa district to the north of Goromonzi district. The colonial state dethroned and banished him to Seke reserve. It set a commission to look into the resistance. See Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Alleged Discontent in the Mangwende Reserve (Mangwende Reserve Commission), 1961. See also J F Holleman, *Chief, Council and Commissioner*. Holleman was a member of this commission and was largely responsible for putting the Commission's final report which also forms the core of the book.

[531]S2384./K5843/3236, Native Township, Chihota, Letter dated 14 May 1945 from Native Commissioner, Marandellas, to Director of Native Agriculture.

[532] S2384./K5843/3236, Native Township, Chihota, Letter dated, 14th February 1945 from the District Land Development Officer to the Assistant Native Commissioner Wedza.

[533] It is important to note that even though many scholars have argued that the policy of Centralization was a failure, individual farmers claimed that when they adopted the methods taught by demonstrators, especially the use of manure, their yields improved. See for example AOH 81 Madzivanyika, Taonezvi Mazive, Simon Zhuwarara, Shekede and Chikore, AOH 80, Makutu Taonezvi.

[534] S2384./K5843/3236, Native Township, Chihota, Letter dated 8th October 1944 From the Native Commissioner, Marandellas to The Director of Native Development.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Figure 5.1 Master Farmer Certificate awarded to an African farmer in Marandellas district.

Certificate of Award

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

Source: NAZ, S2384./K5843/3236, Native Townships, Chihota.

www.manaraa.com

Figure 5.2 Master of Tillage Certificate awarded to an African farmer in Marandellas district.

Certificate of Award

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

Master of Tillage

Source: NAZ, S2384./K5843/3236, Native Townships, Chihota.

Historians of Zimbabwe have written about these policies in terms of how they cemented African attitudes against the colonial state. They argued that, by intruding into African agrarian lives, the colonial state nudged rural Africans towards anti-colonial resistance and nationalist politics.[535] These arguments reflect the devotion among many historians of the former colonial world to the anti-colonial cause. These analyses help us to understand African collective responses to the expansion of the colonial state, especially resistance to such expansion. They do little, however, to account for the

[535] Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War*, Ngwabi Bhebe, *Benjamin Burombo*.

المنارة للاستشارات

www.manaraa.com

diversity of responses that I have discussed, including the adoption and adaptation of some of the ideas that accompanied colonial agrarian policy. By emphasizing African resistance to state intervention they only tell part of the story of how African reacted to those policies.[536]

When Africans made sense of colonial polices they understood them not only in terms of the expansion of the colonial state, but of local rivalries and competition over land. The entanglement of local conflicts and state efforts to make Africans legible is captured in the case of Christopher Kasege of Marandellas district. Kasege not only resisted instructions to move his homestead but also angered the local Native Commissioner by appealing to the Chief Native Commissioner in Salisbury. Two versions of Kasege's story exist: the one told by the angry Native Commissioner and Kasege's own narration of the issue. In 1929, the district's Native Commissioner ordered Kasege to relocate his homestead. He argued that Kasege had built his homestead in a village different from the one to which he belonged. He also had not sought the Native Commissioner's authority before building his homestead.

Kasege's account of the problem was different. He stated that he used to live at Chiremba's village near Epworth Mission on the outskirts of Salisbury. He obtained permission to relocate to Marandellas district where his brother who was a teacher at Nengubo mission lived. He accused Lamuel, the son of a Native Messenger called Simon of causing his problems. Lemuel, Kasege claimed, had caused his brother to be transferred from Nengubo mission where he replaced him. He also claimed that Lemuel

---

[536] For a study that reveals the benefits of thinking outside the box of statist narratives, see James L Giblin, *A History of the Excluded*.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

had taken his land and the local headman promised to give him another piece but had not done so. Finally, Lemuel and his Father had caused the arrest of Kasege's relative. They were angry when Kasege paid his relative's fine and Samuel promised to use his position as a Native messenger to cause the Native Commissioner to remove him from the district. "The Native Commissioner did not order me to leave," Kasege claimed, adding, "Simon told me to move and said it was the Native Commissioner." [537]

For Kasege, then, the question was not one of illegal resettlement but that of work place rivalry between his brother and Lemuel and abuse of power by the Native Messenger. "Simon," Kasege continued, told his wife (outside the Native Commissioner's Office where she was dragged on behalf of her husband who was away at work by the Native Messenger) that "'as you cannot get on with my son Lemuel, you must move away from where he lives.' My wife returned home and Lamuel again told her that we must move, as we did not get along with him."[538] The Native Commissioner for Marandellas alluded to this conflict by stating that he had attempted to settle a dispute between the wives of Kasege and Lemuel.[539]

Colonial intervention in African agriculture affected access to land. Women's access to *madhumbe* and *tsenza* disrupted the colonial vision of African land holding based on patriarchy. "In *tsenza* plots," wrote the anthropologist Donald S Moore, "women farmed freely (*kurima madiro*) on state-owned land spatially beyond their

[537] S138/41, Native Complaints and Problems, Christopher Kasege's Statement.

[538] S138/41, Native Complaints and Problems, Christopher Kasege's Statement.

[539] S138/41, Native Complaints and Problems, Letter dated 21st August 1929 from the Native Commissioner, Marandellas to Chief Native Commissioner.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

government allocated fields, legally registered in their husbands' names."[540] As the colonial state expanded its conservationist measures, it threatened women's access to these fields. Two elderly Manyika women told me that, before they were evicted from the well watered Nyamukwarara valley, they grew finger millet and *madhumbe* in the same fields.[541] After their relocation, however, *madhumbe* could only be grown on their river side gardens. However, demonstrators would not allow stream bank cultivation, arguing that it caused siltation.[542]

There were other ways in which state agrarian intervention affected access to land. The implementation of the Native Land Husbandry Act, under which most of the conservation measures were carried out in the 1950s coincided with a period of massive displacements of Africans from settler farms. As most of the evictees were dumped in the teeming reserves, there were genuine fears of land shortages for future generations. The fears were compounded by the demarcation of boundaries for individual households' fields which engendered a feeling that these were permanent allocations. Villagers feared that, in future, fathers would have to divide their small holdings among their sons. Fathers began to collude with kraalheads to acquire land for their unmarried young sons. "At the time we got married, our husbands had already been allocated land for their fields. They were allocated these fields before they got married," *mbuya* Chikonzo recounted. "When the policy of allocating land to individual households began, when the white officials that I previously referred to were allocating lands of particular acreages to the individual households," she continued,

---

[540] Donald S Moore, *Suffering for Territory*, p 117.

[541] Interviews with Mbuya Shava and Mbuya Mashizha, 26 June 2013.

[542] Interview with Mbuya Shava and Mbuya Mashizha, 26 June 2013.

www.manaraa.com

> the elders in the area would hold land for their young unmarried sons. If one had a young son he took the opportunity to hold land on his behalf. So when we arrived our husbands had already been allocated land. When I got married, my husband had already been allocated five acres. So, I was married and for some time we stayed on my in-laws' homestead. But we would go out and cultivate our five acres.[543]

This was a departure from an earlier practice in which, only after marrying, a man would seek land for a new homestead and for farming.

The Native Land Husbandry Act further entrenched disparity landholdings among rural Africans. "At Sadza village the headman turned out to have twelve acres, and an angry commoner complained that he had been given only three," Terence Ranger learned when he accompanied the nationalist, George Nyandoro, to Seke Reserve in 1958.[544] By making land allocations to male heads of each household, the colonial state further deepened gendered disparities in access to land by subordinating female's access to land to their status as wives.[545] However, the disenfranchisement was never complete because, the imposition of new legal paradigms did not end older forms of negotiation over land rooted in 'custom.' Rather the two persisted side by side creating what Pius Nyambara has called a gap between legal paradigms and 'customary' practices which allowed individuals to negotiate their access to land, including buying land from village heads, headmen and chiefs under the guise of paying a token of appreciation. [546] In this way, women, immigrants and junior men continued to access land outside the one allocated to family patriarchs by the state.

---

[543] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and Mbuya Chikonzo, 19 April 2014.

[544] Terence Ranger, *Writing Revolt: An Engagement with African Nationalism, 1957-1967*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2013, p 33. For disparities elsewhere in Zimbabwe, see also Pius S Nyanmbara, A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe.

[545] See Ian Phimister, Rethinking the Reserves and Donald S Moore, *Suffering For Territory*, p 117.

[546] Pius S Nyambara, A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe, p 3.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Villagers pointed to the ways in which interventions by the colonial state complicated the social dynamics of land holding when they talked about conflicts over land that involved 'immigrants' and 'first comer' patrilineages. Trymore Jena pointed out that in the Wedza reserve conflicts pitting 'first-comer' patrilineages against immigrant households ended when the later threatened to take the cases to the district officers. He argued that both parties knew that the maps kept in the district office contained exact boundaries. Thus, the same tools of colonial governmentality were also useful in local conflicts over land.[547]

Colonial Intervention, the Language of Land Tenure and the Social Reality of Landholding

Up to this point, I have tried to demonstrate how the changes that accompanied the incorporation of Africans into the colonial economy together with those that followed state intervention in African agrarian lives influenced both the ways in which Africans related to the land and to one another. That is, I have tried to construct a story that shows how changes brought by colonial rule affected the social geography of northeastern Zimbabwe. These changes were accompanied by increasing interest in the articulation of what constituted African land tenure and, more generally, African customs and laws.[548] A comment on this discourse of African land tenure is in order, if only, because it alludes to

---

[547] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and Trymore Jena, 19 January 2014.

[548] See, for example, the correspondence in N3/23/1, Native Laws and Customs, particularly, a Letter dated 12th December 1919 from the Acting Attorney General to the Secretary, Department of the Administrator.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

the social realities under which Africans made claims to the land.[549] Thus, part of my goal in this section is to expand the narrative of the impact of colonial rule on the social dynamics of land by developing a story which discusses the discourse of African land tenure in relation to the social realities on the ground. Not only does this allow us a better understanding of the development of normative descriptions of African land tenure that persist to this day, but it also demonstrates the dynamism of African social relations that have remained crucial in rural struggles for land.[550]

In Chapter Three, I argued that the idea that claims to land depended on membership within patrilineages ignored the range of social relations that historically allowed individuals to access land. Here, I will demonstrate that even as officials and African male elders sought to discursively narrow these relations to membership within a patrilineage, the conditions produced by colonialism made it impossible for Africans to adhere to such normative descriptions of land tenure. In fact the colonial experience encouraged ordinary men and women to produce a counter narrative of how individuals accessed land before the changes brought by colonialism. I begin by sketching out these narratives and counter-narratives.

As the twentieth century progressed, both Africans and colonial officials elaborated what they considered to be the authentic African practices of land tenure.

[549] Scholars have demonstrated the idea of communal land tenure was a twentieth century creation. See Angela P Cheater, The Ideology of Communal Land Tenure in Zimbabwe and Terence Ranger, The Communal Areas in Zimbabwe.

[550] Craig J Richardson, "The Visual Evidence of the Cost of Destroying Property Rights," p.1. http://www.cgdev.org/section/initiatives/archives/zimbabwe/land/costofdevelopment (Accessed on 21 March 2010). The article does not have a date of publication. However, one may deduce its date of publication from an endnote which explains the date the pictures that the author used to arrive at his argument were taken. On endnote 2, the author states that "the 2005 photo according to google earth was taken between 2003-2005. The 2006 photo was taken in the last 6 months" (p2). If this is the case, then the article must have been written in late 2006 or early 2007.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Rooted in the language of custom, this discourse claimed that, among Africans, access to land depended on membership within a corporate group, usually the patrilineage or its 'more developed' form, the 'tribe.' This formulation rested on the claim that no individual could own the land and even the chief who was sometimes called the owner of the land (*muridzi wenyika*), only held it as a trustee of the community.[551]

This discourse was tied to similar imaginations of the African family. Just as individuals could not own land, so the argument went, they also did not matter much in the African family. Instead, the clan, consisting of members of the same patrilineage (constructed through patrilineal descent), constituted the most important unity of the African family.[552] One's position within the patrilineage constituted the clan hierarchy or what the administrative official described as one's "status within the kraal."[553] The status was granted according to ideas of patrilineal descent, seniority, and gender.[554]

The idea that clans constituted the core of the African family and that membership within patrilineages formed the basis of African landholding especially permeates early ethnographic material and the documents from the colonial archive as well as the official discourses of Zimbabwe's post-colonial rulers.[555] Scholars have suggested that this

---

[551] See W H Stead, Concepts and Controls in Native Life, Charles Bullock, Can A Native Make a Will?

[552] See W H Stead, Concepts and Controls in Native Life, Charles Bullock, Can A Native Make a Will? See also, the discussion in Chapter 3.

[553] N3/6/3, South African Native Affairs Commission, Written Evidence from the Native commissioner, Chibi district.

[554] W H Stead, Concepts and Controls in Native Life, Charles Bullock, Can A Native Make a Will? and Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives*, particularly chapter 1.

[555] For the official pronouncements by post-colonial government officials see the discussions in Terence Ranger, The Communal Areas of Zimbabwe and Angela P Cheater, The Ideology of Communal Land Tenure in Zimbabwe.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

official construction of land tenure had purchase among officials because it strengthened the power of chiefs and male elders whom the former sought to incorporate in their schemes of rule.[556]

However, it was not the only narrative of how Africans accessed land. In contrast, more recent oral accounts of how *vaShona* men and women accessed land say very little about the role of chiefs and elders, suggesting rather that land was abundant and everybody was free to settle wherever they liked.[557] Consider, for example, the following conversation between Dawson Munjeri and Gwatidzo Panyanyiwa:

Munjeri:	Which places would you say are your old village sites? Places that you know and that you remember by their names?
Gwatidzo:	We were just wondering in this area without going very far.
Munjeri:	I see.
Gwatidzo:	We just shifted from house to house.
Munjeri:	Why would you do that?
Gwatidzo:	Just because you no longer liked the place. So you would just decide to move to another house.
Munjeri:	I see. But when you thought of moving to another place, did you consult anyone or did you just shift on your own?
Gwatidzo:	You would just shift on your own
Munjeri:	You didn't tell anyone?
Gwatidzo:	Unless you father was still alive. You would just tell him that you want to shift to another place.
Munjeri:	Yes but was there a person who gave permission as regards the place one could settle?
Gwatidzo:	No.
Munjeri;	You just settled anywhere?
Gwatidzo:	Yes, we just settled anyhow.
Munjeri:	Is that so?
Gwatidzo:	yes.
Munjeri:	So you deserted quite a number of homesteads?
Gwatidzo:	Yes, quite many[558]

This construction emphasized the freedom to choose one's fields without the worries of having to deal with an alien authority.

---

[556] See for example, Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives*.

[557] AOH 89, Gwatidzo Panyanyiwa.

[558] AOH 89, Gwatidzo Panyanyiwa.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

However, as the conversation continued, the elder suggests that the kind of freedom they previously enjoyed ended as the colonial state increasingly intervened in their agrarian lives from the 1930s onwards:

Munjeri:	When then did you seriously settle here?
Gwatidzo:	We came here because of the introduction of village in lines (sic).
Munjeri:	I see, lines.
Gwatidzo:	Yes, Lines.
Munjeri:	I see.
Gwatidzo:	Yes
Munjeri:	When were the lines introduced?
Gwatidzo:	In 1940
Munjeri:	In 1940?
Gwatidzo:	No, in 1938.
Munjeri:	Is that so. How were they introduced?
Gwatidzo:	They were introduced by the agricultural demonstrators.[559]

Colonial intervention in African agrarian lives, in Panyanyiwa's view, did not only re-order how Africans lived and farmed. It also curtailed their freedom to move as they fell under the observation of a regime of power that was previously non-existent.

Three decades later, elders couched their discussions of how their parents and grandparents accessed land in terms that similarly emphasized their freedom to choose sites of homesteads and fields before the colonial state intervened.[560] They discounted the claim that headmen picked theirs and their close relative's lands before everybody else got an opportunity to pick their own fields, a claim which suggested that 'outsiders' were treated differently. "During the times that I grew up," *mbuya* Chikonzo explained,

> the practice that somebody allocates land to a family was not yet there. We used to cultivate our crops on the hills on the highlands. One would go and peg his/her own fields (the Shona word *munhu* that she uses means a person or a human being and is gender neutral). He/She would tell others his/her boundaries. Another individual would peg his/her own fields nearby and would go on to clear them. People would organize together as a community and would say 'this year we are cultivating on this particular hill because of the problems caused by baboons. They would cultivate on the same hill and would say this field belongs to this household, this field belongs to this household. They did this so that they could help one another to guard their crops against the

[559] AOH 89, Gwatidzo Panyanyiwa.

[560] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and Trymore Jena, 19 April, 2014.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

> baboons. This is how people farmed. They also cultivated on the wetlands. On the wetlands, they would allocate plots to each other, indicating the boundaries to each one of them. In the wetlands, they would construct ridges where they grew maize. This is how the land (she uses the word *ivhu* which can also mean soil) was allocated.[561]

Membership within a community here served a different purpose. It does not appear as the basis of access to land but as crucial to the battles against vermin which threatened individual households' crops.

When, in recent times, elders alluded to the idea that membership in patrilineages was useful to the social dynamics of access to land, they made a point that was evidently different from that which is conveyed in early ethnographic reports, the colonial archive and official pronouncements. Instead of portraying membership within patrilineages as the basis of access to land within their communities, they implied that this was a language of exclusion that gained currency as competition for land increased in the colonial period. This competition, the elders suggested, was a result of the overcrowding in the reserves in the wake of settler land alienation. It was also a result of competition for particular micro-environments, especially those that were suited for particular crops.

Trymore Jena who grew up in the Wedza reserve in Marandellas district elaborated on this point. He put this within an earlier conversation (in the interview) of *ugariri* (a practice where a prospective son-in-law who did not have resources to pay *roora* would live among his in-laws, performing labor in lieu of cattle). Some of the *vagariri* (prospective sons-in-law), he explained, ended up staying among the lineages of their fathers-in-law because, in many cases, local conflicts had caused them to leave their own lineages. Others settled in the area after negotiating with local chiefs. "The 'first

---

[561] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and Rosemary Chikonzo, 19 April 2014.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

comers' would ask the new comer about his place of origin," Jena explained. He added that:

> he would then tell them where he had come from. He would be told that, 'fine we are assigning you some work. You will work in our household but you should build your own home on this place.' The people who had offered him work would allocate him the place because land was still abundantly available. So this is how things worked. So the *vagariri* would be allocated their own place. This explains why if you look around in the same village you will find that we have somebody belonging to the Jena clan here but his neighbor belongs to a different clan. He is of the *Shumba* totem. The next household may belong to somebody from a different totem as well. This is because they would have settled in the way I have just described…. These people were able to settle and have their own families. There are some people within our village…. I think they belong to the *Museyamwa* group. I asked my elders to explain why these people ended up with a piece of land which is said to be theirs among the people of the Jena clan (the Jena belong to the *Soko* totem and are the ruling families in Wedza). I was told that these people came from Maungwe. Maungwe is the area around Rusape right? They came asking for a place and chief Chigodora (Trymore's grandfather) gave him the land. Our chiefs would allocate the land if they like the person.[562]

When asked why those who belong to the Soko totem (Jena himself belonged to this group) began to question claims to land by the people who belonged to the *Museyamwa* group, Jena explained:

> the wetland (*bani*) [the area the Museyamwa now claimed as theirs] is never dry. You can grow bananas, sugar cane and many other crops all year round… we also grow *tsenza*. When many areas began to dry up and the land for *tsenza* cultivation became scarcer, many members of the Jena clan began to ask why those who belong to the *Museyamwa* clan who were 'outsiders' were monopolizing this wetland.[563]

Jena made a crucial point. The introduction of new crops (bananas and sugar cane) and a market for older crops like *tsenza* led to competition for the microenvironments where these crops were grown. In laying claims to that land, individuals invoked ideas of patrilineal descent that distinguished 'owners of the land' from 'outsiders.'

What then do we make of the divergence between what the early collectors of African ethnography and the more recent informants said as regards to how individuals accessed land? Undoubtedly, both narratives have been embellished. However, the

[562] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and Trymore Jena, 19 April 2014.

[563] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and Trymore Jena, 19 April 2014.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

privileging of particular ways of accessing land in these accounts should not be read as attempts to simply misrepresent African systems of landholding. After all, the early collectors of African ethnography did not just invent concepts of clan control over land. They drew on oral traditions supplied by their African interlocutors.[564] Similarly, elders who told recent stories of individuals picking land as they wanted were aware of social practices meant to regulate access to land. Rather, what this suggests, to me, is the need to pay attention to the context in which the discourse was produced.

In the colonial context of southern Rhodesia, where the threat of displacement to pave way to settler farmers was always a reality and Indirect Rule was the preferred method of colonial rule, the discourse of communal land tenure served a purpose. Elders emphasized the communal nature of African landholding to underscore the inalienability of the resource. As many young men left their rural homes to look for jobs in the emerging mines, settler farms and towns, they also invoked the idea of communal land tenure hoping to retain claims to land in their communities even when they were away. Meanwhile, colonial officials favored the idea of 'communal' land tenure because they thought that it strengthened the powers of chiefs and elders. It was, perhaps, for this reason that the members of the Morris Carter Land Commission suggested that it be retained.[565]

---

[564] See for example the discussion of the creation of customary law in Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives*, pp 106-110. Schmidt's discussion drew on Martin Chanock's *Law, Custom and Social Order.*

[565] The Oral evidence provided to the commission by the Africans' suggests that they were not averse to the idea of individual tenure as the commission claimed in its final report. See for example ZAH 1/1/3, Land (Morris Carter) Commission, Oral Evidence, Contributions from Kadzima Mutasa (Chief Mutasa's brother), Headman Chitombo, Headman Munyarara, Chief Maranke, Hama (Son of Chief), Headman Muchenje, Headman Matanda, Headman Mutsayo (Mutsago?), Chief Zimunya, Headman Munyarari, Headman Hukuimwe and Headman Chigodora, pp 1000-1004; Contributions from Materi, Hama, Tapei,

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

The context in which elders told the more recent stories of how Shona men and women accessed land was different from that of the early colonial period. Oral history accounts at the National archives were collected in the early years of independence. Expectations of a return to an imagined prior era of unrestricted access to land were high, but the new post-colonial government seemed to be slow in ensuring this. When it eventually embarked on a resettlement program, the new state imposed its own vision of how people ought to live and farm in the resettlement areas, producing a deep resentment from the supposed beneficiaries.[566] As Gwatidzo Panyanyiwa continued his conversation with the oral archivist, Dawson Munjeri, in early 1982 (slightly over two years after Zimbabwe's independence in 1980) the old man subtly voiced both the expectations and the frustrations:

> Munjeri: But from what you see, about the way of life in the past and today, are the grievance still the same or are they now different from what they were in the past?
>
> Gwatidzo: They are now different
>
> Munjeri: I see. What are you grievances now?
>
> Gwatidzo: We are staying here but we are not satisfied. But we are still blind and we do not know what is happening and we have no direction.
>
> Munjeri: What you do not know is what we want to know. We want to know what keeps you ignorant?
>
> Gwatidzo: As you can see, we are surrounded by these farms and we haven't gotten enough space. Now we would prefer it if we were moved over to that side or this one. But as it is we haven't been told anything and we do not know whether that is going to happen. That is why we are just staying like this.[567]

Chiwezhe, Mahuwe, Tsekwa, Gatawa, Munema, Taurwi, Mambudzi, Karuma and Masukuta, pp 1014-1024.

[566] See the discussions in Jocelyn Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, especially chapters 5, 6 and 7, Donald S Moore, *Suffering for Territory* and Terence Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks.*

[567] AOH 89, Panyanyiwa Gwatidzo.

www.manaraa.com

Decades later, some elders believed that the era of unrestricted access to land was achieved during the Fast Track Land reform instituted after 2000. Explaining why prospective fathers-in-law were able to allocate land to prospective sons-in-law who came as *vagarari*, Jena stressed his point about the abundance of land in the precolonial and early colonial period by likening it to what, in his view, obtained during the recent Fast Track Land Reform exercise. The situation that obtained prior to colonial restrictions, Jena maintained, was "similar to the land invasions that we had very recently; I would just settle wherever I wanted. Nobody limited me… Land was abundant."[568]

The divergence in ethnographic and administrative accounts of African land tenure and social organization and the stories told by elders in more recent times, suggests the need not only to pay attention to context, but also to distinguish between discourse and the reality of how Africans accessed land as they came to terms with the conditions imposed by colonial rule. When, in the early colonial period, elders claimed that access to land depended on membership within a patrilineage, they did not only invoke a language that enabled them to critique the avariciousness of a colonial state which dispossessed a whole community and assigned that land to a single settler. They also did not just hone this language in local disputes over productive land similar to those that Jena described. More importantly, they articulated their own idealized vision of how kinship relations ought to structure access to land and how that system accorded them authority over junior men and women of their households.

[568] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and Trymore Jena, 19 April 2014.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

However, a closer look at African family affairs and on the reality of African access to land on the ground in the course of the early twentieth century suggests that things were more complicated than the ideas espoused in the discourses of land tenure and African social organization described above (just as things were more complicated than Jena's images of people settling wherever they chose during the Fast Track Land Reform Exercise of the early twenty-first century).[569] In fact, the discourses simplify reality by creating idealized views. Consider, for example, the African practices of inheritance (*kugara nhaka*) and guardianship (*kusara pavana*). These practices not only guaranteed the social reproduction of the family after the death of the father (somebody had to assume the father figure), but the rituals that accompanied their enactment offer a glimpse into the complex power relations within a household.

In the early twentieth century, elders described the practices of *kugara nhaka* and *kusara pavana* to missionaries and administrative officials. In one such case in the 1920s, headmen Samushonga and Sadomba set down with W S. Bazely, the Native Commissioner for the district of Inyanga. The resultant account reveals both the official's efforts at making normative statements about the importance of patrilineal connections in the reproduction of male dominated households and the reality of African family dynamics. "As a general rule," Bazely noted, "the eldest son of the deceased inherits his

[569] Researchers agree that although the first wave of farm invasions that led to the fast track land reform were spontaneous, they were soon directed by state officials. See for example the discussion in Jocelyn Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, Chapter 8.

www.manaraa.com

father's bow, and with it his name, his wives, his property and the guardianship of the younger children."[570]

However, Bazely also learned of another fact of life among the Manyika practices of inheritance. "It is quite in accordance with Manyika custom," he continued,

> for a dying man to make arrangements for the care of his infant children and property. He calls his sons-in-law (actual and prospective), his sisters and the elders. He may declare that he is unwilling to allow his nearest male relative or even any of the males in his clan to be guardian and he may then hand over the care of his wives, his children and his property to a son-in-law or his sister or to one of the elders or to one of his friends.[571]

This point sat uncomfortably with the normative statement that patrilineal inheritance was the general rule. It also tells us something about household conflicts. The flexibility to choose somebody else was meant to accommodate instances in which family feuds made it impossible for somebody to entrust the lives of his children to members of his patrilineage. And such situations were not uncommon.

Bazely also described the Manyika practices that accompanied the rituals of inheritance. He raises questions about the dominance that is often assigned to African male elders in such practices. "The heir is actually nominated by his *Samukadzi*, (eldest sister or nearest female relative of the same clan and generation)…," Bazely noted, adding that "she pours beer dregs (*masese*) on the ancestral bow and hands it to him." "The heir," he continued, "is not allowed to refuse to *adiate* (accept the inheritance)…."[572] It did not occur to Bazely and many others thereafter, that such a practice granted the *Samukadzi* wide discretionary powers to nominate somebody else of

---

[570] W S Bazely, "Manyika Law and Custom Regarding Inheritance of Wives and Property and the Guardianship of Children." *NADA*, No. 7, 1929, p 110.

[571] W S Bazely, Manyika Law and Custom, pp 110-111.

[572] W.S. Bazely, Manyika Law and Custom, p 12.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

her choice rather than the most senior son of the deceased patriarch. One can only imagine the kinds of lobbying behind the scenes that preceded the *kugova nhaka* ceremonies in which the *Sarapavana* (guardian) was chosen and the extent to which the *Samukadzi* considered many other factors before making her nominations.

Put within the colonial context of Southern Rhodesia, these facts were especially crucial. As settler land alienation reduced the amount of land available for Africans, younger generations increasingly depended on fields passed from grandfathers and fathers. Land was thus added to the list of property that had to be shared among the children of the deceased household patriarch. Despite the decisions of the dying father and the participation of the *Samukadzi,* male seniority did not always guarantee privileged access to land when one inherited the position of his father. In fact, among the Shona, it was the youngest son who was supposed to remain at his father's homestead, inheriting both the family dwellings and fields.[573]

If discussions of families as male dominated clans obscure the complexities of lived life in Shona households, the characterization of membership within patrilineages as the basis of African access to land ignored the range of life circumstances that informed how people made choices about where to live and farm under colonial rule. Admittedly, Shona men and women understood the utility of the discourse of 'communal' land tenure as a moral critique of colonial land policies and as a useful tool in those conflicts which pitted villagers against one another. Some even used this discourse to gain land. They were, however, also aware of the fact that the reality of rural life often allowed people to

[573] This practice seemed to have been widespread in Southern and eastern Africa. Sally Falk Moore found a similar practice among the Chagga of Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. See Sally Falk Moore, *Social Facts and Fabrications: Customary Law on Kilimanjaro, 1880-1980*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, p 83.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

look beyond patrilineages in order to access land. This was the case in the precolonial period and remained so after the imposition of British rule in 1890.

In the precolonial period, family feuds gave individuals the main impetus to leave their patrilineages and settle among matri-kin or even none kin.[574] Colonialism brought new challenges which, like social conflict within families, encouraged people to move and settle among maternal kin or even non-kin. "Before we settled near Nhowe Township," George Mavhiringidze explained, "we used to stay at a place called *Dhirihori* in the same area under chief Svosve. That's where our grandparents lived."[575] "I was told that for us to settle at Nhowe," he continued,

> it was because of the exploits of our grandfather who was interested in getting into business. He went to this area in order to venture into business. He went there so that he could establish a trading store. So he built the store long back before we were born. So I can say we were the first ones to venture into business in that area.[576]

Mavhiringidze described his grandfather as a successful farmer, explaining that the people who were already living in Nhowe welcomed him because "he was a person who could feed the community [*munhu anogutsa nzvimbo*]."[577] Confidence that moving to other places would better position the migrant to gain something from the emerging colonial economy provided the urge to settle elsewhere. One's capabilities as a farmer and businessman ensured his acceptance by the host community.

Apart from the quest for personal improvement, the hardships which came with colonial dispossession forced many Shona men and women to seek refuge with maternal

---

[574] See the discussion in chapter 3.

[575] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and George Mavhiringidze, 21 April 2014.

[576] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and George Mavhiringidze, 21 April 2014.

[577] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and George Mavhiringidze, 21 April, 2014.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

relatives.[578] In the Eastern highlands, for example, elders remembered how, in the unsettled conditions created by colonial land alienation, the exploitation of matrilineal connections made a difference between access to relatively good agricultural land and enduring hardships in the semi-arid environments that the colonial state assigned Africans as reserves.[579] A story told by Mbuya Chikonzo captures this point. She put her discussion within the context of how colonial land alienation progressively restricted African choices of arable land before the colonial state eventually evicted them to pave way for white settlers. "The arrival of European settlers brought an end to the practice of cultivating along hillsides in the area of my birth near Mapara School in chief Mutasa's area," she recounted. "When the settlers arrived," she continued,

> they began allocating land, giving each household a standard acreage of arable land. They would say this acreage is sufficient for your family. They were allocating the household fields on the low lands. The settlers had alienated most of the fertile lands on the highlands where they grew their own crops. So they removed our parents from the highlands and then allocated them these standardized plots on the lowlands. Because the land where we were allocated fields was insufficient for all the people in the area the settlers (she used word *mabhunu* which refers to settlers but she most likely referred to the colonial state.) told all the Africans in this area to relocate to Chiadzwa in Bocha. All the people who were in Mapara's *dunhu* (ward) were expelled and ordered to relocate to Chiadzwa. Chiadzwa was semi-arid and waterless. The state claimed to have drilled wells but the distances between them were too great. This was the problem that was in Chiadzwa. But my family [referring to her parents and siblings as she is describing events that occurred before she was married] never went to Chiadzwa. We had our maternal grandmother who had earlier settled in headmen Chikonzo's *dunhu*. Our grandmother's brother said to us 'you should not go to Chiadzwa because stories coming from there suggest that there are lots of hardships. So you should come and settle with us here in headman Chikonzo's *dunhu*.'[580]

Their maternal kin, not only ensured that *mbuya* Chikonzo's family were allocated land in a relatively well-watered area, but saved them from severe hardships. "Those who

[578] For family feuds in the precolonial and early colonial periods see Interview with with Charova, 28 June 2013, AOH 26, Makuvire Chigonero; NUA2/1/1 Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Letter dated 21 December 1896 from the Native Commissioner Umtali to Chief Native Commissioner, Jason Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika, Lesson 128.

[579] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and Mbuya Chikonzo, 19 April 2014; Interview with Mbuya Chikonzo, 25 April 2014.

[580] Interview Between Joseph Jakarasi and Mbuya Chikonzo, 19 April 2014.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

went to Chiadzwa," she stressed, "encountered many problems. They suffered a lot. They travelled long distances to just fetch drinking water…. The hardships were so great that almost all the people abandoned the area in less than five years. They moved to other places in search of relatively good farming land."[581] It was these realities of life under colonial rule, more than ties to primordial ideas of kinship that especially informed people's decisions about where to live and farm.

Conclusion

The main thread followed by Historians of colonial Zimbabwe has emphasized the rise and decline of an African peasantry. In their accounts, this peasantry appears as an undifferentiated lot. In contrast, I have drawn on individual stories of innovation to show that not everybody was able to make use of colonial opportunities. Very few farming households had access to key agricultural implements such as ploughs, harrows and scotch carts in the first three or so decades of colonial rule. It was the few who had access to these implements who were the first to expand their fields to open grasslands that farmers had previously avoided. However, innovations in agricultural production and marketing also depended on one's location in relation to market opportunities. The kinds of changes in land use that accompanied the adoption of the plough and the rise of African trade in grains in Goromonzi, Marandellas, Makoni, parts of Umtali and other similarly located districts arrived in Inyanga and parts of Umtali very late. There, a lack of markets combined with an unforgiving topography which made the transportation of agricultural products a challenge.

[581] Interview Between Joseph Jakarasi and Mbuya Chikonzo, 19 April 2014.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

The differentiated social geography of access to land that developed with the expansion of the colonial economy was further heightened by state intervention in African agriculture. Colonial conservationist measures, for example, threatened women's access to river side gardens. However, in contrast to meta-narratives of state intervention and peasant resistance, I have tried to show, in this chapter, that there were many responses to state intervention as individuals weighed its costs and benefits. Whereas most Africans understood the administrative logics of these polices, they also interpreted their implementations in terms of local alliances and conflicts. The expansion of the colonial state became entangled with local conflicts over land.

Finally, I demonstrate that while African land holding has been tied to a construction of kinship relations that emphasize membership within patrilineages, many men and women continued to exploit a variety of connections to access land. The urge to improve oneself under the conditions imposed by colonialism saw some of them leaving their patrilineages to settle with non-kin. There, they established farming and retail businesses. The exigencies of colonial dispossession and displacement also saw many taking refugee with maternal kinsmen. I have also shown that the images of a male dominated household which permeates discussions of family relations and land holding among Africans are simplistic.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

CHAPTER 6

LIFE IN THE CREVICES OF COLONIAL POWER: 'SQUATTERS', TENANTS, LANDLORDS AND THE STATE, 1890-*C.*1950

Introduction

After the imposition of British colonial rule in 1890, increasing numbers of Southern Rhodesia's Africans ended up living in the poorer lands that the colonial state set aside for their exclusive occupation. Colonial officials called these lands Reserves and, later, Tribal Trust Lands. However, not all of the colony's Africans were able to find land in the Reserves. Nor did all of them find it desirable to move into these areas. For much of the twentieth century, many indigenous inhabitants of the colony found their homesteads and villages enclosed within land claimed by companies, individual settlers and missionaries as farms.[582] They became tenants and 'squatters' on land that they had occupied for generations. Tenancy and "squatting" added new burdens on top of the taxation and other obligations brought by colonial subjugation. Some paid rent. Others provided labor. Mission tenants had to accept Christianity and abandon their religious and cultural practices such as ancestor veneration and polygyny.[583] In this chapter, I tell their story.

I explore the question of how these men and women negotiated access to land and legitimated their claims in the face of new demands by their landlords and the state. I also

[582] The numbers of Africans living outside reserves as tenants and 'squatters' on farms varied throughout the colony, but they were especially high in the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe and in parts of Matabeleland. See for example, Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination.* Here I am focusing on the experiences of those in northeastern Zimbabwe, the majority of whom lived in Inyanga and Umtali.

[583] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and John Mupfumi Tigere and Edmund Ndoro, 23 July 2014.

www.manaraa.com

examine how, through interaction with settler and missionary land owners as well as colonial officials, "squatters" and tenants contested settler power. I show that African families on white farms not only offered their labor and rent in return for the right to live and farm but also employed a variety of actions to contest and negotiate their subordination. Some invoked cultural idioms such as the need to continue tending to the graves of their ancestors. Others made claims based on past relations with the colonial state. Neither did those on mission farms merely accede to missionary social control. Many continued with practices such as ancestor veneration, if only covertly.

African residents on white owned farms occupied crevices that existed within the colonial state and between the colonial state and the settlers. Indeed, their experience blurs the dichotomies of black and white in the narrative of land in colonial Zimbabwe.[584] Relations between tenants and 'squatters' on the one hand and settlers on the other, had a bearing on settler-state relations, for the colonial state had to give some attention to African complaints.

The chapter has five sections. The first section explores the processes that transformed the inhabitants of northeastern Zimbabwe into 'squatters' and tenants, paying particular attention to the scale of land alienation in the two districts of Umtali and Inyanga. It also pays attention to the reluctance by the colonial state and settler land owners alike to expel Africans from white farms in the early years of colonial rule. The second section discusses how fault lines between members of the different arms of the colonial state and between bureaucrats and individual settlers enabled Africans to remain

[584] Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*, Henry V Moyana, *The Political Economy of Land in Zimbabwe.*

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

on their land. The third section discusses African strategies to retain land when settler land owners clamored for their eviction. In section four, I consider the plight of African tenants on missionary owned land. Tenants on these farms faced missionary efforts at social control. Finally, I examine the changing fortunes of African tenants from the 1930s onwards. Their status as tenants changed with the passage of the Land Apportionment Act which made it illegal for Africans to reside on white land except as laborers. This criminalization of African presence on land set aside for white occupation turned them into 'squatters.' I place the word 'squatter' in parenthesis because, for most of these men and women, these lands constituted their ancestral homes.

The Making of 'Squatters'

Until their forced removals in the 1950s, many Africans in northeastern Zimbabwe lived as tenants and "squatters" on land alienated by European colonists. In 1908, some eighteen years after the British colonization of Southern Rhodesia, ninety percent of the Africans in the district of Inyanga lived "on private or BSACo ground."[585] In 1912, the district's adult males, representing at least a quarter of its total African population, numbered an estimated 4271.[586] Of these men, only 600 had homesteads in the reserves. Two thousand five hundred and seventy one resided on alienated land and the remaining 1100 on unalienated (later Crown) land.[587] In Umtali and Makoni many Africans lived on land claimed by settlers and the BSAC. The population of African adult men in Umtali in

[585] NUC 2/1/3, Native Commissioner Inyanga, Letter dated 5 December 1908 from Native Commissioner Inyanga to the Chief Native Commissioner.

[586] As noted in Chapter 5, Native commissioners multiplied by four the number of African male adults in their tax registers to estimate their districts' populations. Thus the number of adult males represented roughly a quarter of the district's population.

[587] NUA 2/1/10, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali, Return Respecting Adult Males in the Umtali Circuit, i.e., Umtali, Melseter, Rusape and Inyanga Districts, 29 April 1912.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

1912 stood at 6140 souls. Three thousand three hundred and thrity of these resided in the reserves, 2250 lived on alienated land while another 560 were on unalienated land.[588] Of the 5074 African men in Makoni district in 1912, 1365 of them lived on private land. The remainder resided in the reserves.[589] While most Africans in Marandellas and Goromonzi lived in the reserves, in the eastern, highlands large numbers of Africans continued to live on farms well into the 1940s.[590] A 1948 census showed the total number of African tax payers in Umtali district to be 13066. Half of them lived in the reserves. A quarter of them lived on alienated land. The remainder lived in Native Purchase Areas.

How do we explain the presence of so many Africans on land set aside for white occupation? This question has intrigued the few scholars who have explored the history of African tenancy in the colony. John Keith Rennie argued that Africans remained on settler farms as labor tenants because this relationship was desirable for the undercapitalized farmers who took up land in the early years of colonial rule.[591] More recently, scholars have begun to question the privileging of settler interests in the making of tenants and squatters in colonial Zimbabwe. Pius Nyambara argued that the lives of tenants at the expansive Rhodesdale estate located in the central parts of the colony "were not entirely reorganized around the interests of white settlers, with the latter wielding enormous power over helpless victims….In settler areas," he maintained, "control of

[588] NUA 2/1/10, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali, Return Respecting Adult Males in the Umtali Circuit, i.e., Umtali, Melseter, Rusape and Inyanga Districts, 29 April 1912.

[589] NUA 2/1/10, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali, Return Respecting Adult Males in the Umtali Circuit, i.e., Umtali, Melseter, Rusape and Inyanga Districts, 29 April 1912.

[590] N3/3/4, Male Adult Natives Resident in Mashonaland, Return of Male Adult Natives residing in Native Reserves Mashonaland showing number who worked and the period worked; Return of Male Adult Natives residing on Alienated Land in Mashonaland showing number who worked in Mashonaland during 1911.

[591] John Keith Rennie, "White Farmers, Black Tenants and Landlord Legislation: Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1930." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1978, p1.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

social life of the tenants was negotiated between the settler farm owners and tenants in ways that render the conception of *domination* inadequate." Nyambara pointed out that "while the colonial state put in place legislation to circumscribe the activities of the tenants, the reality on the ground was that tenants often enjoyed a high degree of autonomy and economic independence."[592] I agree with his assessment that African access to land as tenants depended not merely on the interests of capital, but also on the Africans who understood the benefits of remaining on alienated land rather than moving into the reserves. Unlike Nyambara, however, I argue that the politics of tenancy involved not only the calculations of Africans and settlers but also of the colonial state. Indeed, many Africans exploited what I have termed the crevices of colonial power—competing interests among settlers, differences between settlers and state functionaries and differences within the colonial state. African tenants' experiences were also differentiated along lines of gender, generation, status and class.

Across Zimbabwe, the pattern of land alienation was uneven. In Makoni, argued Terence Ranger, farmers voluntarily left settler farms for Chiduku reserve in order to pursue the 'peasant option,' because the reserve was ideally suited to African production for the market. The Chiduku reserve followed the line of the new Beira-Umtali-Salisbury railway and was connected to the markets by a network of farm roads.[593] The same cannot be said of Umtali and Inyanga. There, conditions conducive to African exploitation of colonial markets hardly existed. Moreover, extensive colonial land alienation in the eastern highlands left little land available for the establishment of Native

[592] Pius S Nyambabra, "'That Place was Wonderful!" African Tenants on Rhodesdale Estate, Colonial Zimbabwe, *c*.1900 to 1952." *The International Journal of African historical Studies*, vol.38, No.2, 2005, p 269.

[593] Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War*, p 33.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

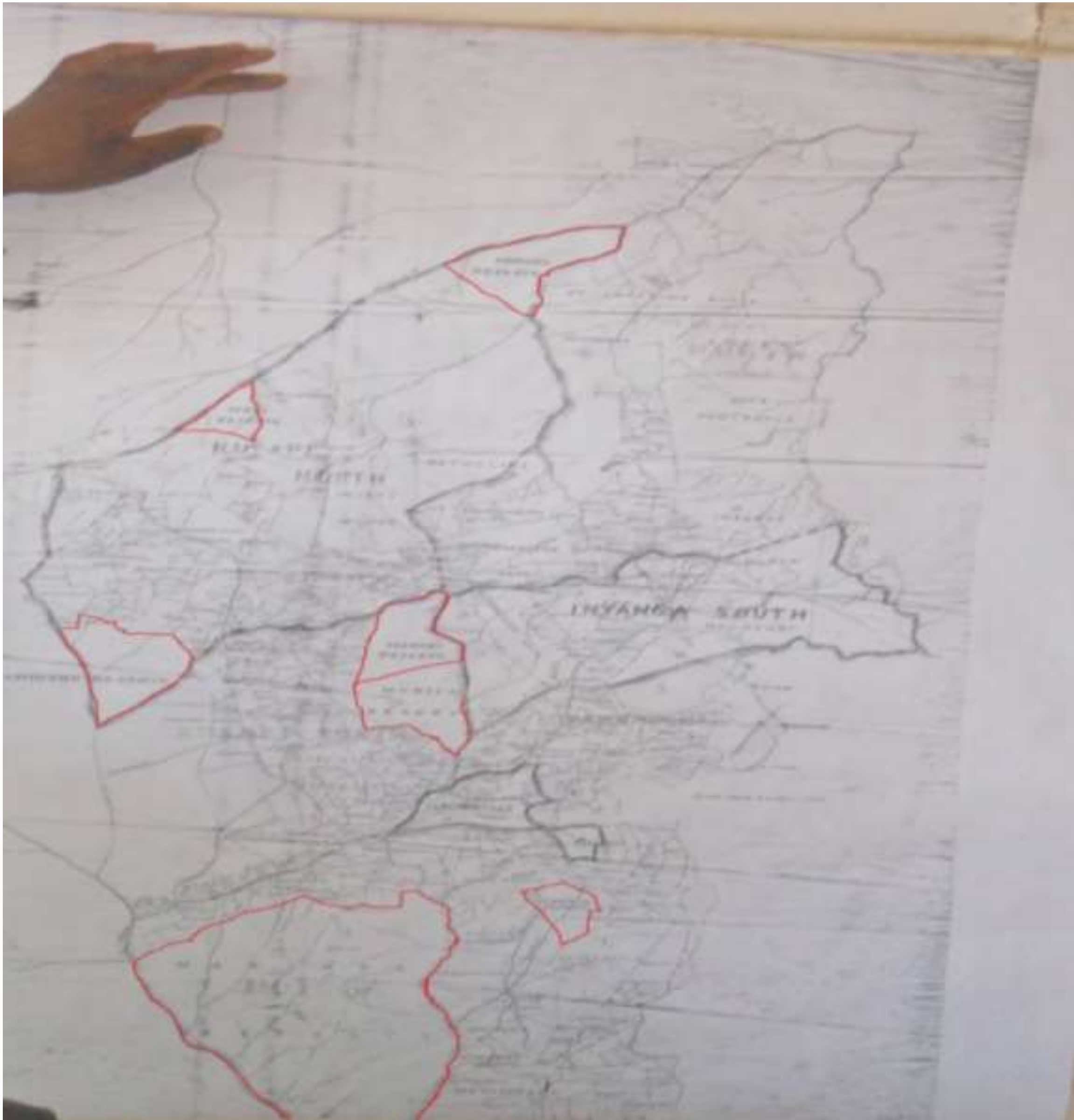
Reserves (See Map 6.1 below). "[It was] particularly unfortunate," lamented the Native Commissioner, Umtali, in 1900, "that nearly all the ground had been taken up here before my appointment and those parts which have been unappropriated are either too small for reserves or not suitable."[594] In Inyanga, wrote Robin Palmer, "nearly the whole district…had been alienated by 1902, and the N/C [Native Commissioner], unable to select any large unalienated blocks, simply took what was left. The land," Palmer continued, "was quite unsuitable for reserves, being precipitious, inaccessible, badly watered and generally very poor."[595]

---

[594] Quoted in Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*, p 266. T B Hulley, the Native Commissioner in question began his tenure in Umtali in June 1896. See NUA2/1/8, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Document titled Services of Officers, Thomas Benjamin Hulley.
[595] Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*, p 257.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Figure 6.1 Map showing surveyed farms and reserves in Umtali, Inyanga and Makoni districts in 1901. I highlighted the reserve boundaries by inserting a red line on top of the original one.



Source DT 6/1/4 Civil Commissioner and Resident Magistrate, Umtali: Registers, Surveyed Farms, Umtali [including Inyanga] and Makoni districts.

Much of the land earmarked for African settlement was regarded as unsuitable for human habitation. “The greater portion of the block is very rough country,” noted the Native Commissioner, Inyanga, of Rodell Farm, targeted for the resettlement of Africans

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

in 1908.[596] He also described portions of Bannockburn, another of the farms then being considered for African occupation, as mostly open hilly country with little or no timber.[597] When Terence Ranger argued that Makoni farmers voluntarily moved to reserves because the land there could support a 'peasant option,' he generalized on the basis of the Chiduku reserve, but in the rest of the district, land set aside for reserves was largely of poor quality. In 1912, the Native Commissioner for Makoni district described the Makoni Reserve as broken country that only afforded sufficient room for the families already living there. Those, including chief Makoni himself, who lived on alienated land "could not find room there for their cultivation and grazing of stock."[598]

In Inyanga and Umtali, after years of hesitation caused by concerns over the establishment of African reserves on land that bordered Portuguese East Africa, the colonial state established reserves in the Honde and Nyamukwarara valleys. These low lying areas were hot and malarial.[599] The Maranke reserve (see Map 6.1) was prone to periodic droughts as it was located on the rain shadow of the eastern highlands. Similarly, northern Inyanga, which the colonial state also targeted for the resettlement of Africans, marked the transition into the fringes of the highlands. The area is characterized by unpredictable rainfall patterns and periodic droughts. In 1916, the *vaHwesa* who inhabited most of this area survived "on wild fruits and such grain they could trade"

[596] NUC 2/1/3, Native Commissioner Inyanga, Letter dated 1 August 1908 from Native Commissioner Inyanga (other details missing).

[597] NUC 2/1/3, Native Commissioner Inyanga, Letter dated 1 August 1908 from Native Commissioner Inyanga (other details missing).

[598] N3/16/1, Native Affairs Correspondence, Land: General, Letter dated 21 May 1912 from Native Commissioner Makoni to Superintendent of Natives, Umtali.

[599] See for example the descriptions of the localities by the Native Commissioner Umtali in NUA 2/1/11, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Report Dated 4 May 1914 by Native Commissioner Umtali.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

owing to “a total failure of crops.”[600] “Except on the [banks of the] Gairezi [River] where all people live,” noted the district’s Native Commissioner at the time, “[the area] is waterless, mountainous and covered with thick bush. [The *vaHwesa*],” he continued, “are poor and possess few cattle and small stock.”[601] Unsurprisingly, most Africans on the highlands were reluctant to leave their old homes for the poorer lands demarcated by the colonial state as reserves. In 1919, Chief Saunyama, then living on Crown land, stated that he could not move to the Inyanga Native Reserve because he and his people could not withstand the cold there.[602] He expressed the fears of many others. “The Native” noted the Native Commissioner Inyanga, “is deeply attached to his ancestral home and does not like moving more especially if such move entails him going from highveldt to lowveldt.”[603]

The continued presence of Africans on private lands was facilitated by other factors. In the first few decades of colonial rule, many of the farms in the region were owned by companies who held them for speculative rather than productive purposes. In these circumstances, colonial dispossession was not immediately followed by displacement. In 1910, T.B. Hulley, the Native Commissioner for Umtali summed up the implications of the existence of large swathes of company owned land in the district. “It is interesting,” he wrote,

---

[600] NUC 2/1/6, Native commissioner Inyanga: Out-Letters, general, Letter dated 4 August 1916from Native Commissioner Inyanga to Superintendent of Natives, Umtali.

[601] NUC 2/1/6, Native commissioner Inyanga: Out-Letters, general, Letter dated 4 August 1916from Native Commissioner Inyanga to Superintendent of Natives, Umtali.

[602] N 3/16/6, Land: Native Rent on Unalienated Land, Letter dated 25 July 1919, from Native Commissioner Inyanga to Superintendent of Natives, Umtali.

[603] NUC 2/1/3, Native Commissioner Inyanga: Out-Letters, general, Letter dated 10 April 1909 from Native Commissioner Inyanga to Chief Native Commissioner.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

> to note that four Landowning Companies owning properties totaling 123, 151 morgen in the district, at present unoccupied, impose no burden whatsoever on the natives living on their land….It is evident therefore that in the Umtali district what is known as 'nigger-farming' [by which he meant sharecropping] is practically non-existent. In consequence of the fact that no rental is charged by the large Companies, the number of natives living on these properties and outside the reserve is very great.[604]

Many other smaller farms were owned by individual absentee landlords with similar consequences. "The block of farms Wicklow, Inyanga valley, Withington, Inyanga, Fruitfield, Inyangombe, Placefull, Beddeford, Pungwe source and Erin, situated in the Yangaare are all more or less occupied by natives," reported the Native Commissioner, Umtali in 1898.[605]

The slow development of settler agriculture in the region also enabled many Africans to remain on their old homes, even though that land had, in colonial legal terms, passed into the hands of white settlers. "With the exception of a vegetable garden—about 30 yards long by 20 yards long—in front of the store and native lands" noted a 1905 report on Farm Hannover in Inyanga, "no agricultural work has been performed on the above farm…."[606] A Dutch farmer in Inyanga was not prosperous "owing to some extent to the restrictions in regard to African Coast Fever, and also the absence, in this district, of a market for the sale of farm produce."[607] Under these circumstances, both the state and settler landowners understood the benefits of leaving Africans on white farms. "It would be to the advantage of the natives and the country generally," wrote the Native Commissioner for Umtali in 1909, "if for the present, the land could be held for the

---

[604] N9/1/13, Native Commissioners' Annual Reports, 1910, Native Commissioner Umtali's Report.

[605] NUA 2/1/2, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 25 February 1898 from Native Commissioner Umtali to Civil Commissioner Umtali.

[606] NUC 2/2/1, Native Commissioner, Inyanga: Out-letters, Lands Department and Civil Commissioner Umtali, Letter dated 8 September 1905 to Civil Commissioner Umtali.

[607] NUC 2/2/1, Native Commissioner, Inyanga: Out-letters, Lands Department and Civil Commissioner Umtali, Letter dated 22 June 1906 from Native Commissioner Inyanga to Civil Commissioner, Umtali.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

natives, as more can be got from it by what is commonly called 'native farming' in the way of tax, rent and indirect revenue than by the sale of the land itself."[608]

African presence on alienated land also became tied to the labor question. Lacking a guaranteed supply of labor, settler farmers signed agreements with Africans on their farms through which they allowed them access to land for fields and grazing in return for labor. In 1903, rumors circulated in the district of Inyanga suggesting that Africans were to be resettled in consolidated villages. Max Angelbeck, a farmer in the district, warned that this would adversely affect labor supply on the farms. "Now, I have several small kraals on my farm from which I am getting my work boys on the farm," he explained, adding that "the nature of the country, as you know, does not allow to have large kraals because there are everywhere only small pieces of land which can be cultivated. Therefore," he concluded, "all the kraals will shift from the farm and I would not have a single boy, if the natives have to act as they have been told."[609]

The continued presence of Africans on alienated land was also tied to modes of colonial rule. Colonial officials envisioned reserves as bounded spaces inhabited by members of a particular 'tribe'.[610] In practice, it was impossible to find land that could accommodate such visions. This complicated efforts to relocate Africans from settler farms into the few available reserves. In the eastern highlands, colonial officials debated the desirability of mixing people under different chiefs. The Native Commissioner,

---

[608] NUA 2/1/8, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters General, Letter dated 15 January 1909 from Native Commissioner Umtali to Chief Native Commissioner.

[609] NUA 1/1/2, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: In-Letters, General, Letter dated 1 June 1903 from Max Angelbeck to Native Commissioner, Umtali.

[610] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject.*

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Inyanga, argued that these communities "have to be quite different from each other and their original boundaries are distinct and observed today. Scotsdale," he continued, "is in Saunyama's country and it is no use suggesting to natives from Umtasa's that there is ground on Scotsdale."[611]

Similarly, a Special Land Committee set to look into the inadequacy of land for Africans in the Umtali district in 1931 pondered what to do with the people under chief Zimunya who could not be accommodated on land earmarked for their settlement. It weighed the possibilities of moving them into the northeastern portion of the Maranke reserve, the historic home of the *waBocha.* Apart from the difficulty of finding additional land in the area, argued the committee, another factor to consider was "one of tribal mixture." [612] "Maranke Reserve," it maintained, "has a chief with a number of headmen under him; each headman has a recognized area for the use of his people; and any people of a new tribe introduced into these areas is a constant source of friction and trouble." As the Committee observed, a considerable influx of people could not be placed in any one area by themselves. "It follows that they would be placed, if moved into this reserve, into the areas of various headmen and so would accentuate the trouble," it concluded, adding that "for some years to come, administratively, it would be unwise to endeavour to force a settlement of this nature."[613] These officials exaggerated the differences which, in

[611] NUC 1/4/1, Native Commissioner Inyanga, In-Letters: Miscellaneous, Letter (no date) from Native Commissioner Inyanga to Superintendent of Natives Umtali.

[612] S1542/L4, Lands: Application for and Purchase of Lands for African Occupation, Report of the Special Land Commission dated 28th August 1931, p 6.

[613] S1542/L4, Lands: Application for and Purchase of Lands for African Occupation, Report of the Special Land Commission dated 28th August 1931, p 6.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

practice, represented political rather than cultural identities, but such views led them to postpone plans to relocate African 'squatters.'

The Contradictions of Colonial Power and the Experiences of African 'Squatters'

The passage of large chunks of land into the hands of large companies, the slow take off of settler agriculture, administrative bickering over the desirability of mixing Africans from different chieftaincies in a single reserve and African opposition to relocation in drier, hotter and malarial locales all produced conditions conducive for the presence of black tenants on white owned land. However, from early in the twentieth century, this presence was opposed by "*bona fide* white farmers on the ground that it locked up both land and labour that could be put to better use."[614] The commercial branch of the BSAC also pushed for the relocation of Africans to pave way for settler immigrants. From as early as 1902, the Company tried to relocate Africans, including those who occupied the Imbeza valley near Umtali, to give way to settler farmers with the hope that these could utilize the plots for market gardening.[615] These early attempts to evict Africans and the conflicts within the colonial state negate the earlier narratives of tenancy in colonial Zimbabwe.

[614] Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*, p 89.

[615] NUA 2/1/1, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 2 April 1914 from Native Commissioner, Umtali to Chief Native Commissioner.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Historians have linked the fortunes of African tenants to the development of settler agriculture.[616] They identified three key points of transition. In the first period, from 1890 to 1908, settlers holding land for speculative purposes were content to let Africans remain on the land under a variety of conditions, including as rent paying and labor tenants.[617] Beginning in 1908, the BSAC turned its attention to the promotion of settler agriculture at the expense of the African farmers. At this point, the interests of farmers took center stage as they campaigned against all forms of tenancy except labor tenancy.[618] The high point of this campaign was the enactment, in 1908, of the Private Locations Ordinance, which stipulated the conditions under which Africans could remain on alienated land. The Ordinance, whose implementation was delayed to 1910 because of opposition from absentee landlords, specified that a maximum of forty adult males were permitted on every farm of 3175 acres.[619] These men had to enter into written contracts witnessed by a Native Commissioner.[620] The Second World War marked the third and final turning point in the experiences of African tenants on white farms. The War improved the fortunes of Southern Rhodesian settler agriculture, particularly tobacco farming, sparking a wave of white immigration into the colony.[621] In order to accommodate the new immigrants and the expansion of settler agriculture, Africans were

---

[616] J K Rennie, White Farmers, Black Tenants, Pius S Nyambara, The Place was Wonderful, Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*.

[617] J K Rennie, White Farmers, Black Tenants; Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination.*

[618] See the discussion in J K Rennie, White Farmers, Black Tenants. The other forms of tenants included share cropping and rent tenancy.

[619] This was the standard farm that the colonial state allotted to white settlers.

[620] The Ordinance is discussed in detail in J K Rennie, White Farmers, Black Tenants and Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination,* pp 89-91.

[621] See among others, Steven C Rubert, *A Most Promising Weed: A History of Tobacco Farming and Labor in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890-1945*, Athens: OH, Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1998.

المنارة للاستشارات

www.manaraa.com

turned out of white-owned farms. The farms became increasingly dependent on labor imported from Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Portuguese East Africa.

The focus on the economic logic of labor tenancy gives a false sense of consensus among settlers and the colonial state and suggests that it was only the interests of settler farmers that shaped the politics of tenancy. However, tenants' struggles for access to land have to be understood within the context of their own calculations and of the contingencies of governing a colony that had disparate interests.[622] During Company rule (1890-1923), BSAC administrators' allegiances lay both with the Company shareholders and the steadily increasing settler population. Similarly, when the settler state took over in 1923, it did everything to safeguard the interests of settlers, especially the increasingly powerful farmers.[623] However, the imperatives of maintaining law and order dictated that they could not completely ignore the plight of their African subjects. In the years that followed the African risings of 1896-97, both the Imperial Government and the Chartered Company's directors were anxious to ensure that Africans would not revolt again.[624] Consequently, officials from the Native Affairs Department (NAD) often intervened on behalf of Africans against European settlers in the hope that this would keep the Africans contented.

[622] Pius Nyambara's study of the experiences of labor tenants at Rhodesdale estate reveals these calculations on the part of Africans.

[623] For the history of settler politics in Southern Rhodesia and the rising influence of farmers see for example Colin Leys, *White Politics in Rhodesia, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959*; D J Murray, *The Governmental System*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976; John Alistair. McKenzie, "Commercial Farmers in the Governmental System of Colonial Zimbabwe," DPhil Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1989.

[624] The Imperial government made this point clear by out-lawing forced labor, one of the major grievances that sparked the 1896-7 risings. Find source. On the risings, see Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

The interventions by NAD officials also reflected contradictions within the colonial state. Conflicts over land became enmeshed with contestations over the boundaries of authority. Many NAD officials strongly felt that African administration was their domain and would not countenance any encroachment into their territory by other members of the colonial establishment. Consider, for example, the case of Trooper Williams of the British South Africa Police (BSAP) who was stationed in Makoni district. In 1908, Williams received a complaint from G.R Winsch of Farm Diana that Africans under headmen Nyarotwa, Madziwa and Mawowo were cultivating on his farm. Williams coerced those under headman Nyarotwa to share half of their crops with Winsch and evicted the families under headmen Madziwa and Mawowo from the farm.[625]

Williams received a sharp rebuke from T B Hulley, the Superintendent of Natives for the Umtali Circuit. Hulley demanded "to know what inducement he [Williams] held out for these natives to agree to pay Mr. Winsch half of their crops…; by what authority he turned off Madziwa and Mawowo."[626] Hulley also queried whether the policeman knew the conditions under which the land was granted to Winsch and if indeed, he had ascertained the authenticity of the beacons demarcating the boundaries of the farm before he evicted the concerned Africans.[627] Hulley further expressed his displeasure at the trooper's conduct. "The Department [of Native Affairs] has been at endless trouble about cases of this nature. The Attorney General has held that natives must have sufficient

---

[625] NUA 2/1/8, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Extract from Exhibit "A" Rex v Mukutsha.

[626] NUA 2/1/8, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 31 December 1908 from Superintendent of Natives Umtali to O.C. "D" Troop, BSAP.

[627] NUA 2/1/8, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 31 December 1908 from Superintendent of Natives Umtali to O.C. "D" Troop, BSAP

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

notice to allow them to clear their crops, and there are other conditions also. I forward you a copy of his opinion," he wrote. "With reference to Trooper Williams' high handed action in turning certain natives from the farm," he continued,

> I would draw your attention to the Order in Council 1898, Section 85.I think that if this man acts in this manner, it is dangerous to allow him the free run of the district, and I think that he should be clearly made to understand his position. In this case, taking the facts from his own statement, he has made these natives agree to give up half of their crops when there was no obligation on their part to do so. He has turned natives off a farm contrary to His Majesty's Order in Council and has generally taken upon himself the duties of Native Commissioner[628]

Nevertheless, Native Department officials like Hulley were more frequently known for trampling on the same rights of their subjects which they purportedly protected, a view expressed in the names Africans gave them. Africans in Umtali called Hulley *Dambuza* [*Dambudzo*], (one who gives troubles), the Assistant Native Commissioner, W. A Levine, *Chikanda Mseve* (one who throws an arrow) and the clerk-in-charge at Penhalonga, B Johnston, *Chiparadzanyika* (One who destroys the country).[629] Indeed, these officials mixed coercion with consent.

Native Commissioners occasionally intervened against settler molestation of African tenants. A few cases illustrate this point. In August 1904, the Umtali Native Commissioner learned that a settler farmer called A H Chaser was about to collect rent on Africans living on his farm near Penhalonga. He told Chaser that he was not entitled to charge rent until he had given the resident Africans a year's notice.[630] In 1909, the Assistant Native Commissioner, Umtali told a Mr. Holand that "the natives residing on

---

[628] NUA 2/1/8, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 5 January 1909 from Superintendent of Natives, Division III to O.C. D Troop, Umtali.

[629] NUA 2/1/10, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Report dated 19th April, 1912, titled Native Nomenclature.

[630] NUA 2/1/5, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 11 August 1904 from Native Commissioner Umtali to A H Chaser.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Farm Hoboken are under no obligation to work for Mr. Nauhuas."[631] In 1916, C.V. Burton who farmed at Jerain, demanded from his tenants payment in cattle for an undisclosed case. The tenants took Burton's letter of demand to the Native Commissioner of Inyanga. "Mr Burton," stated the Native Commissioner, "should be told that he has no right to do this kind of thing," adding, "I have told my natives that they are on no account to take any notice of these scraps of paper."[632] In October, 1917, the Manager of Premier Estate requested permission to remove one Kulibwanya from the farm. The Native Commissioner declined to grant the wish.[633]

The interventions by Native Commissioners demonstrate the dynamics that enabled some Africans to continue living on alienated land. While Native Commissioners were not advocates of African rights, paternalistic attitudes explain why they might support African tenants. Native Commissioners thought of themselves as protectors of Africans against settler avariciousness. When T. B. Hulley informed A. H. Chaser that he had no right to charge rent to Africans residing on his farm without giving them a year's notice, he concluded by pointing out that, as the Native Commissioner, he had to see that Africans were protected.[634] Similarly, when in July 1917, Native Commissioner Hulley learned that the Rezende mines were cutting wood on land earmarked for African settlement, he invoked colonial paternalism. "Though it is far from its intention to

---

[631] NUA 2/1/8, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter date7 June 1909 the Assistant Native Commissioner, Umtali to Holand, Hoboken Farm.

[632] NUC2/1/6, Native Commissioner Inyanga: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 31 August 1916 from Native Commissioner, Inyanga to Superintendent of Natives, Umtali.

[633] NUA 2/1/12, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 29 October 1917 from Native Commissioner Umtali to the Manager, Premier Estate, Old Umtali.

[634]NUA 2/1/5, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 11 August 1904 from Native Commissioner Umtali to A H Chaser.

www.manaraa.com

hamper the mining industry," Hulley wrote, "the principles involved in the regulations regarding the entry upon native reserves, i.e. the protection of native interests by this department should be preserved."[635]

Colonial paternalism aside, Native Commissioners understood the importance of pragmatism in dealing with settler-tenant conflicts. To understand the root of this pragmatism, it is crucial to think about how a few colonizers justified their rule over the numerically superior colonized peoples. Colonial rule thrived by differentiating the civilized ruler from the uncivilized ruled. One way in which colonial administrators constructed their images of civilization was by pretending that they respected their own laws (they also claimed to respect the African laws that were 'not repugnant to natural [read European] justice).[636] A number of cases illustrate this point. In 1900, a farmer called Mathew W White complained that Africans had made their gardens on his farm without his permission. He demanded payment once the crops were harvested. He charged the Africans in question 1/- a week, for any hut they had built on the land; 2/6 for each head per month as grazing fee; threatened to destroy any cattle or goats found trespassing and finally, stated that, "any native found upon these farms who shall not be employed here, or seeking work undertaking produce to market, will be removed."[637] The

[635] NUA 2/1/12, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 2 July 1917 from Superintendent of Natives to the Business Manager, Rezende Mines, Penhalonga.

[636] For connections between ideas of civilization and the rule of law, see the discussion in Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject.*

[637] NUA 1/1/1, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: In-Letters, General, Letter dated 16 November 1900 from Mathew W White to Native Commissioner, Umtali.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Native Commissioner Umtali told White that his proposal for reprisals was "most illegal."[638]

Similarly, in 1904, the Umtali Native Commissioner rejected the request of a settler farmer called C Weissenborn to seize African crops grown on his land without permission. "It is not within my power to confiscate the crops which have been put on your land," wrote the Native Commissioner.[639] A few weeks later, the Native Commissioner advised Weissenborn to be less confrontational and to arrange for a reasonable settlement with the 'squatters,' adding that this "would save a deal of trouble and expense."[640] These officials knew that the legal route was slow and expensive. As the Inyanga Native Commissioner, put it in 1907, the cost of suing for rent and filing for conviction was so expensive that the Companies concerned with nonpayment of rent on their properties were discouraged to pursue that option.[641]

As Native Commissioners wedged into conflicts between settler landowners and African tenants, they deployed a variety of arguments. Because most of the conflicts concerned settler demands for rent and labor, the colonial officials made it clear that they were not opposed to the principle that Africans should meet these conditions to gain access to alienated land. However, they expressed reservations about the timing of

---

[638] NUA 1/1/1, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: In-Letters, General, Letter dated 12 December, 1900 from Assistant Native Commissioner, Umtali to Chief Native Commissioner.

[639] NUA 2/1/5, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 24 March 1904 from Native Commissioner, Umtali, to C Wissenborn, Premier Estate.

[640] NUA 2/1/5, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 19 April, 1904 from Native Commissioner, Umtali, to C Wissenborn, Premier Estate. See also, Letter dated 22 April 1904 from Native Commissioner, Umtali to C Wisservborn, Premier Estate.

[641] NUC 2/1/2, Native Commissioner Inyanga: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 26 March 1907 from Native Commissioner Inyanga to Chief Native Commissioner.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

demands for rent. "I quite agree with the endorsement of the Magistrate that it is quite legal for owners of land to charge Natives living on their land rent," wrote the Native Commissioner, Umtali in 1904. "The owner," he continued, "cannot however come at any time and demand rent on his own terms."[642]

It was also not uncommon for Native Commissioners to insist on the unfairness of evicting Africans at particular times of the year. "I have received instruction from Mr. Taberer [the Chief Native Commissioner] to remove the natives you complain of," the Assistant Native Commissioner, Umtali, told one settler farmer. "Considering, however, how far advanced the rain season is," he continued, "I think it would be a little unfair to turn out the natives at this very moment."[643] The Native Commissioner for Umtali expanded the moral arguments against the summary evictions of Africans from alienated land. He implored the colonial state to insert a clause in the permit of occupation "giving natives the right to attend and reap all growing crops."[644] "As natives prepare their lands long before sowing," he argued "prepared lands [must] be considered in the same manner as growing crops."[645] A few years later, Hulley refused to sanction the forced removal of Africans occupying the Imbeza Valley because their crops had been planted.[646] "If it had

---

[642] NUA 2/1/5, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 15 April 1904 from Native Commissioner, Umtali to Chief Native Commissioner.

[643] NUA 2/1/4, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 19 December 1900 from Assistant Native Commissioner, Inyanga to White.

[644] NUA 2/1/8, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, general, Letter dated 22 October 1908 from superintendent of Natives, Division III to Chief Native Commissioner.

[645] NUA 2/1/8, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, general, Letter dated 22 October 1908 from superintendent of Natives, Division III to Chief Native Commissioner.

[646] NUA 2/1/11, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 2 January 1914 from Superintendent of Natives to Chief Native Commissioner.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

been intended to eject them this year," he argued, "action should have been taken earlier."[647]

Contesting Power, Negotiating Access to Land: African Initiative and the Politics of Tenancy

Conflicting viewpoints within the colonial state and between officials and settlers facilitated the continued presence of Africans on alienated land. However, more important were the initiatives of the African tenants who sought to retain their lands. Some signed labor agreements which they did not fulfil. Others petitioned the colonial state to be allowed to purchase the land on which they lived. Others emigrated into neighboring Portuguese East Africa, but continued to exploit their fields.

In November 1908, the BSAC government sent a circular canvassing Native Commissioners' opinions on the implications of charging rent on Africans living on Company land. "There is no doubt that should such a rent be imposed, that in the majority of cases, it will be paid rather than move on to reserves, but most of the natives on the border would move into Portuguese territory," wrote the Native Commissioner for Umtali in response to the circular. Similarly, his counterpart in Inyanga warned that "the charging of rent by the Company on their ground may make a difference more particularly to Saunyama and Katerera's people. The latter, living on the Portuguese border, will probably go across."[648]

[647] NUA 2/1/11, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 2 January 1914 from Superintendent of Natives to Chief Native Commissioner.

[648] NUC 2/1/3, Native Commissioner Inyanga: Out-Letters General, Letter dated 18 September 1908 from Native commissioner Inyanga to the Chief Native Commissioner.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

By the time of these warnings, some Africans had crossed the border in response to settler demands for rent. In 1904, a large number of Africans under chiefs Tangwena, Saunyama and Mandeya moved to the Portuguese territory in consequence of the warning given to them by landowners that they would have to pay rent or move.[649] In January 1905, Chief Tangwena and his people "flatly refused to pay rent."[650] They argued that sooner than pay rent, they would abandon their crops before it fell due in March.[651] When, in 1909, the BSAC gave notice that Africans must agree to pay rent or leave the company's land, many Africans in Inyanga and Umtali moved across the border into Portuguese East Africa.[652] The cross-border migrations prompted the government to postpone the action "in order to avoid trouble."[653] However, when in 1916, the company demanded rent from Africans living on its farms, Chief Katerere and his people told the Inyanga Native Commissioner that they would rather move to Portuguese East Africa than pay rent in Southern Rhodesia.[654]

For some Africans, the migration into Portuguese East Africa did not necessarily mean leaving their old farms, for they remained in the vicinity of their old homes. "As far as I can gather," wrote the Native Commissioner, Inyanga in 1904, "Tshikomba and the

[649] NUC 2/3/1, Native Commissioner, Inyanga: Out-Letters, Native Department Officials, Letter dated 6 January 1905 from Native Commissioner Inyanga to Acting Chief Native Commissioner.

[650] NUC 2/3/1, Native Commissioner, Inyanga: Out-Letters, Native Department Officials, Letter dated 5 January 1905 from Native Commissioner Inyanga to Acting Chief Native Commissioner.

[651] NUC 2/3/1, Native Commissioner, Inyanga: Out-Letters, Native Department Officials, Letter dated 5 January 1905 from Native Commissioner Inyanga to Acting Chief Native Commissioner.

[652] Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*, p 257.

[653] NUC 2/1/4, Native Commissioner Inyanga: Out-Letters General, Letter dated 13 October 1910 from Native Commissioner Inyanga to L.L. Ewing.

[654] NUC 2/1/6, Native Commissioner, Inyanga: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 4 August 1916 from Native Commissioner Inyanga to Superintendent of Natives, Umtali.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

heads of kraal under him, who have moved, have gone to a point just beyond the boundary, due east of his old kraal."[655] Similarly, in 1906, the Native Commissioner, Umtali stated that the majority of Africans who left the district in 1906 wanted to avoid paying rent to the agents of the Holdenby block. "This land," he explained, "joins the border and the removal of a kraal for such a short distance (sometimes less than a hundred yards) is a matter of little moment to the natives."[656] These men and women continued to cultivate their lands in Southern Rhodesia, for most of these farms were owned by absentee landlords. For Native Department officials, this practice was particularly difficult to prevent. It required the cooperation of Portuguese officials which was not always forthcoming. In 1918, the Superintendent of Natives for the Umtali circuit noted that little could be done to stop this practice. "With reference to natives living in Portuguese Territory and cultivating on the farms," he wrote, "I cannot get the Natives in this territory. A complaint to the police might have some effect, but it would require a border guard to deal with the case."[657]

The option to move into Portuguese East Africa was especially appealing to those communities who lived near the border. As the Native Commissioner Inyanga noted in 1916, these border communities contrasted conditions in Portuguese East Africa with

[655] NUC 2/3/1, Native Commissioner, Inyanga: Out-Letters, Native Department Officials, Letter dated 9 December 1904 from Native Commissioner Inyanga to Chief Native Commissioner. The Native Commissioner points out that Chief Chikomba's old homestead had been two to three miles west of the Border in Southern Rhodesia.

[656] NUA 2/1/6, Native Commissioner and superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 1 October 1906 from Native Commissioner Umtali to Chief Native Commissioner.

[657] NUA 2/1/12, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives Umtali, Letter from Superintendent of Natives to Chef Native Commissioner.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

those obtaining in Southern Rhodesia.[658] Neither system of colonial rule was necessarily benign. Both taxed their African subjects while coercing them to engage either in poorly paid wage labor or in the production of primary commodities for export, but the absence of massive land alienation on the Portuguese side of the region meant that there, the burden of rent was absent.[659] In addition, the existence of kinship relations across the border lessened the difficulties of integration for the emigrants. In fact, for some, it was an additional enticement to move. "As the people over the border are all the same tribe as on this side," wrote the Native Commissioner, Umtali, "it can easily be understood that there may be cases where the natives themselves do give no reason [for cross-border emigration] except that they wanted to."[660]

However, the option of migrating across the border was not available to every African living on alienated land in northeastern Zimbabwe. Consequently, many others agreed to pay rent and to remain on settler owned farms. However, as the Inyanga Native Commissioner reported in March 1905, the rents were "not however being paid all too well."[661] Africans perfected the art of passive resistance. Headman Muparutsa, wrote the Inyanga Native Commissioner in November 1909, "has been sued three years in succession by Bullock bros. for his private rental but still remains a staunch passive

---

[658] NUC 2/1/6, Native Commissioner, Inyanga: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 4th August 1916 from Native Commissioner, Inyanga, to Superintendent of Natives, Umtali.

[659] See the discussion of the Vhimba (in Chimanimani to the south of Mutare) and Gogoi borderlands of Southern Rhodesia and Portuguese East Africa by David M Hughes. Hughes shows that while land alienation on the Zimbabwean side occurred early in the colonial period, the threat of land dispossession in Gogoi emerged as a result of the actions of South African timber companies in the 1990s. David M Hughes, *From Enslavement to Environmentalism.*

[660] NUA 2/1/6, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 1 October 1906 from Native Commissioner Umtali to Chief Native Commissioner.

[661] NUC 2/1/3, Native Commissioner Inyanga: Out-Letters General, Monthly Report, March 1909.

www.manaraa.com

resister; he has no stock and a writ cannot be executed."[662] It was highly unlikely that headman Muparutsa did not have any livestock, but like many other Africans, he concealed his wealth.[663] Indeed, not only did Muparutsa occasionally pay his rent when seriously pressed to do so, but he also had five wives, a sign of wealth.[664]

As settler frustration with their failures to turn African tenants into disciplined subjects increased, they called for the passage of legislation which would protect the interests of landlords. Enacted in 1908, the Private Locations Ordinance (1908) regulated the conditions under which Africans would live on alienated land. The Ordinance was meant to tie Africans to settler farms as laborers. It discouraged the leasing of land to Africans by imposing a fee of 1/- per tenant for an 'occupied' farm and 5/- for absentee landlords.[665] Under the Ordinance, African tenants, whose number was not to exceed forty adult males per 1500 morgen (about 3000 acres) farm, had to sign an agreement with each landlord in the presence of their respective Native Commissioners. They could agree to become rent paying tenants, labor tenants or a combination of both.

The effects of the law were particularly felt in Umtali and Inyanga where the majority of Africans lived on alienated land. When the Ordinance took effect in 1910, the total number of agreements signed between settler landowners and African male adults in

---

[662] NUC 2/1/3, Native Commissioner Inyanga: Out-Letters General, Letter dated 12 November 1909 from Native Commissioner, Inyanga to Superintendent of Natives, Umtali.

[663] It is possible that many Africans exploited the practice of *kuronzera* to conceal their wealth. Under this practice, wealthy Africans distributed their cattle among poorer relatives and friends who benefited from certain use rights in return for looking after the animals. The Zimbabwean historian Ngwabi Bhebe states that his mother used this method to defeat colonial cattle culling, saving the cattle which she later sold to pay for his education. See Bhebe, *Burombo.*

[664] NUC 2/1/3, Native Commissioner Inyanga: Out-Letters General, Letter dated 12 November 1909 from Native Commissioner, Inyanga to Superintendent of Natives, Umtali.

[665] J K Rennie, White Farmers, Black Tenants, p 94.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Goromonzi was seventy five.[666] In Marandellas in that same year, the total number of agreements was two hundred and twenty four.[667] In Makoni district, seventy seven landholders entered into agreements with 1135 African adult males living on their land. All the agreements in Makoni were for three months labor in lieu of rent.[668] By this time, most of the Africans in Goromonzi and Marandellas had been pushed into reserves. A big number of Africans in Makoni were also resident in the reserve but some, particularly in the northern portions of the district, occupied land owned by large private companies who were exempted from this requirement of the law. In contrast to these three districts, the number of agreements between settler land owners and African tenants in Inyanga was much higher. In January of the same year, 1584 agreements were signed in Inyanga. Additional agreements involving 208 African male adults resident on Banockburn and Roddel Farms awaited the Native Commissioner's signature. An additional 400 adult residents of St Swithins' block and Chapadze were exempted because the landowners there did not impose any burdens on them.[669] In Umtali, 240 agreements were signed between landlords and their African tenants, a figure that was lower because the great majority of Africans at the time lived on land owned by large companies who imposed no burdens and were thus exempted from meeting this requirement.[670]

At face value, the evidence suggests that a great number of Africans were tied on the land by contracts that favored settler landowners. However, the intention of the law

---

[666] N9/1/13 Native Commissioners' Annual Reports, 1910, Native Commissioner Goromonzi's Report.

[667] N9/1/13 Native Commissioners' Annual Reports, 1910, Native Commissioner Marandellas' Report.

N9/1/13 Native Commissioners' Annual Reports, 1910, Native Commissioner Makoni's Report.

[669] N9/1/13 Native Commissioners' Annual Reports, 1910, Native Commissioner Inyanga's report.

[670] N9/1/13 Native Commissioners' Annual Reports, 1910, Native Commissioner Umtali's Report.

www.manaraa.com

was unevenly matched by the reality on the ground, for disputes between settlers and their African tenants continued. "A few natives have had to be given notice to leave farms in consequence on their failure to carry out the terms of their agreement," noted the Native Commissioner, Umtali in 1911. "In one or two instances," he continued, "complaints have been made by landowners of trouble in obtaining labor at current rates from natives residing on farms exempted under the above section."[671] The section referred to was Section 13 of the Private Locations Ordinance which allowed locations of more than 40 adult African males provided the landowner did not charge rent or labor in lieu of rent, but hired the tenants as laborers at the wage rates that were prevailing on the labor market at the time.

In contesting their exploitation, African tenants seized on gaps in the legislation and also exposed farmers' ignorance of the relevant landlord laws. This forced Native Department officials to intervene on their behalf. As Native Commissioner Hulley explained, many settlers were unaware that when disputes involving rent paying Africans living on exempted farms arose, the matter was one between a landlord and his tenant and the aid of the Native Affairs Department could not be invoked to turn Africans off the

[671] N9/1/13 Native Commissioners' Annual Reports, 1910, Native Commissioner Umtali's Report.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

farms.[672] Indeed, on numerous occasions, Native Department officials declined to evict Africans for this reason.[673]

But even in in cases where Africans agreed to provide labor in lieu of rent and were bound by the terms of the Private Locations Ordinance, the agreements were sometimes imprecise. In 1914, Superintendent of Natives Hulley declined to intervene on behalf of V.A. Gross, telling him that "your agreement is that natives on your farms shall work for two months each in every year without pay. Nothing," he continued, "is laid down in regard to what particular two months any individual native shall work….Obviously therefore there has up to present been no breach of the contract by the natives."[674]

African labor tenants often resisted settler efforts to specify the exact times that they would work on the farms in order to fulfill their end of the contract. "The one week-a-month system was extreme and objectionable," wrote one farmer. "The native, who in many instances occupied the present kraal site and garden plots before the advent of the Whiteman," he continued, "refused to understand that he is receiving any considerations in return for his services."[675] The farmer also highlighted the limited options that settlers

---

[672]N9/1/13 Native Commissioners' Annual Reports, 1910, Native Commissioner Umtali's Report., Under Section 13 of the Private Locations Ordinance, 1908, settler landowners could have more than 40 adult male Africans on their farms provided they did not demand rent or labor in lieu of rent from the tenants, but instead would employ them at prevailing wages on the market. Farms where such arrangements existed were the exempted farms.

[673] See, for example, NUA 2/1/10, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, general, Letter dated 1 April 1912 from Assistant Native Commissioner to J.W. Gray; Letter dated 3 April from Assistant Native Commissioner to J.W. Gray

[674] NUA 2/1/11, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, Letter dated 13 March 1914 from Superintendent of Natives, Umtali to V.A. Gross.

[675] S156/10/1, Chiefs and Headmen, Letter to Superintendent of Natives, Umtali (other details missing).

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

had in such situations. Eviction, the landlord's only practical remedy for non-compliance by the tenant, he noted, was not desirable as it increased the farmer's difficulties in acquiring labor.[676]

As African tenants negotiated for their continued stay on their ancestral lands, they deployed a variety of arguments. In 1912, the owner of farm Mbombo Flats demanded that chief Makoni and his subjects pay rent or move off the land. At the time, Chief Makoni himself and a large number of his followers lived on the neighboring farm Mbombovale but had fields on the neighboring farms including Mbombo Flats. Makoni appealed to the Native Commissioner, stating that "as he is old and infirm, he did not care to move but preferred to remain on the spot where he had lived all his life and to be buried near the graves of his forefathers."[677] He was supported by the Native Commissioner who suggested that the government should allow the Chief and his people to occupy the nearby farm Mt Zonga for the balance of his life. Thereafter, the Makoni people were to move into the south end of the Makoni reserve.[678] History also turned out to favor Chief Makoni. "Makoni," noted the Native Commissioner in support of the chief's request, "was loyal during the [1896-7] rebellion."[679]

Moreover, rather than moving into the reserve, in 1922, the chief and his headmen negotiated for the purchase of the farm, saying that Mbombovale "contains the ancestral

---

[676] S156/10/1, Chiefs and Headmen, Letter to Superintendent of Natives, Umtali (other details missing).

[677] N3/16/1, Lands: General, Volume II, Letter dated 21 May 1912 from Native Commissioner, Rusape to Superintendent of Natives, Umtali.

[678] N3/16/1, Lands: General, Volume II, Letter dated 21 May 1912 from Native Commissioner, Rusape to Superintendent of Natives, Umtali.

[679] N3/16/1, Lands: General, Volume II, Letter dated 21 May 1912 from Native Commissioner, Rusape to Superintendent of Natives, Umtali.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

hills and home of the Makoni family and tribe."[680] The argument found purchase with the government, which was keen to show up the authority of 'customary' leaders as part of its grand scheme of Indirect Rule. "The main object to be served is to retain this land as the ancestral home of the chief of the Makoni tribe, and as a point of cohesion to hold the tribe together as a tribe," wrote the Chief Native Commissioner.[681]

Makoni's case was one of many in which chiefs invoked the politics of graves to hang on to their ancestral lands.[682] Makoni's neighbor, Chief Chipunza, together with some 405 households under his authority also found their homes within the boundaries of land claimed by white settlers as farms.[683] In 1934, Chipunza petitioned the Chief Native Commissioner to be allowed to remain on his ancestral lands saying that his eviction would mean that nobody would tender his ancestors' graves. He explained that his father kept him away from the missionary schools because he wanted him to sweep the graves of his ancestors, a key ritual performed by chiefs to request rains—and ensure the fertility of the land—from the ancestors. He also expressed his wish to be buried alongside his ancestors, whose remains were interred on the hills near his homestead.[684] Whether driven by his concern for graves or by the fact that there was no land to

---

[680] N3/16/1, Lands: General, volume I, Letter dated 16 August 1922 from the Chief Native Commissioner to the Secretary, Department of the Administrator.

[681] N3/16/1, Lands General, volume 1, Letter dated 16 August 1922 from the Chief Native Commissioner to the Secretary, Department of the Administrator.

[682] For cases elsewhere in the colony, see L 2/2/5, Ancestral Graves for Natives.

[683] S1542/C16/2, Complaints by Africans from Various Areas to the Native Department, Letter dated 8 May 1934 from Native Commissioner, Makoni to the Chief Native Commissioner.

[684] S1542/C16/2, Complaints by Africans from Various Areas to the Native Department, Letter dated 8 April 1934 from Chief Chipunza to the Chief Native Commissioner. Chief Chipunza dictated the contents of the letter to an African Minister at St Faith Mission. For this detail, see Letter dated 8 May 1934 from Native Commissioner, Makoni to the Chief Native Commissioner in the same file.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

accommodate chief Chipunza and his people in the reserves, the Native Department officials intervened with the owners of the farm and Chipunza and his subjects remained on the land.[685]

'Land for Souls; Souls for Land?' Missionary Landlords, African Tenants

A significant number of Africans lived as tenants on farms owned by missionary societies. The mission farms included Chishawasha, owned by the Jesuits, Epworth and Nenguwo [Waddilove], owned by the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Benard Mizeki, St Faith and St Augustine's, owned by the Church of England, Triashill owned by the Trappist order of the Catholic church and Old Umtali which belonged to the American Methodist Episcopal Church. The tenants on these farms not only paid rent or offered themselves as laborers, but they also had to contend with missionaries' schemes of social control.

The circumstances of tenants differed from one mission farm to another, but the history of African settlement at Chishawasha reveals some of these experiences. Established on the heartland of Shawasha territory, the mission farm was sixteen miles outside Salisbury.[686] The BSAC granted the farm to Farther Hartmann at the end of 1890, but work on the mission began in 1892. Missionaries claimed that, at the time they

---

[685] S1542/C16/2, Complaints by Africans from Various Areas to the Native Department, Letter dated 8 April 1934 from Chief Chipunza to the Chief Native Commissioner, Letter dated 8 May 1934 from G C Hards, Local Secretary, The London and Rhodesia Mining & Land Company to G.A. Fitzpatrick, Lion's Head, Rusape; Letter dated 12 May 1934 from Native Commissioner, Makoni, to Chief Native Commissioner.

[686] The official history of the Mission is recorded in W J Rea, Loyola Mission, 1892-1962, Chishawasha Mission, 1982. I found a copy in Jesuit Archives Harare, Box 100A, Chishawasha. See also Jesuit Archives Harare, Box 356A Chishawasha, Father Richartz, History of Chishawasha by Father Richartz.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

pegged the farm, the area was unoccupied.[687] The *VaShawasha* contest this claim.[688] In the early years, the missionaries' strategy was to persuade Africans to reside on the farm so they could proselytize to them. A year after their settlement, they optimistically reported that they had made friends with many of the surrounding chiefs, some of whom expressed desire to settle on the farm.[689] However, they quickly realized that the optimism was misplaced. "Our Mashona," the missionaries reported, "are dispersed in small villages and neither desire or are able to send their children to school, so we have collected some 30 to 50 onto our property but even so they want to leave after a few months."[690]

Soon however, a combination of factors encouraged Africans to move onto the Chishawasha farm. Harassed by policemen for their refusal to provide *chibaro* (forced) laborers, Shawasha leaders complained to Father Richartz, the Mission's superior, who offered to protect them against future molestations if they moved to the Jesuits' farm.[691] In 1894 a number of *vaShawasha* moved within the boundaries of the farm. Most of these early tenants left the farm during the 1896-97 *Chimurenga* uprisings, only to return after the war. This time, famine, a result of the colonial army's scorched earth tactics, forced Africans from Shawasha and surrounding territories to move to the mission farm. "Natives," reported the missionaries in 1898,

---

[687] Jesuit Archives Harare, Box 98, Chishawasha, Document titled, 'About Starting and Consolidating a Mission Station, Exemplified in Chishawasha (Fr. Richartz).

[688] See the discussion in Joyce M Chadya, Missionary land Ownership, p 54.

[689] Jesuit Archives, Harare, Box 98, Chishawasha, Annual Letter from the Residence of the Sacred Heart in Loyola from 1st August 1892 to 1st August 1893.

[690] Jesuit Archives, Harare, Box 98, Chishawasha, Annual Letter from the Residence of the Sacred Heart in Loyola from 1st August 1892 to 1st August 1893.

[691] Joyce Chadya, Missionary Land Ownership, p 57.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

> have begun to return in the hope of finding pardon and are gradually coming back to us so that at the start of this year there were more natives at our farm than before the rebellion. Their huts now number 250….Families overcome by the calamities of war and the famine are only too ready to stay on the farm and even to come to the instructions.[692]

The tenants included the wives and sons of Kaguvi, one of the *mhondoro* credited with leading the 1896-97 uprisings. They were captured and left at the mission station by the colonial army.[693] Others were children orphaned during the 1896-7 uprisings. Nonetheless, the majority of the tenants were *vaShawasha* who had called the Shawasha area their home for generations before it was parceled to missionaries and white settlers.[694] By 1938, they were about two thousand Africans living on Chishawasha farm.[695]

For many tenants, however, the mission farm had its own burdens. The missionaries imposed a number of conditions which interfered with African social and religious practices. "When the various kraals came to settle on the present mission farm Chishawashsa, then under the management of Fr. J Richatz SJ.," Father Andrew Hartman wrote in 1907, "the heads of the families agreed to the following terms and conditions: 1). to send their children to the school of the fathers; 2). To supply the necessary labor for house and farm work at the usual wages; 3). To come on Sundays to church instruction in

[692] Jesuit Archives Harare, Box 98, Chishawasha, Annual Letter from the Residence of the Sacred Heart in Loyola from August 1897-August 1898.

[693] Father Richartz claimed that Kaguvi himself asked the missionary to look after his children on the eve of his execution in 1898. See Jesuit Archives Harare, Box 451, Chishawasha, Letter dated 28 January 1898 from Faher Richartz to Father Schmitz.

[694] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and Richard Muvirimi, 23 July 2013.

[695] Jesuit Archives Harare, Box 99, Chishawasha, Letter dated 13 July 1938 from Father Francis Retterus to Father Martindale.

www.manaraa.com

religion, men and women."[696] A proposed lease prepared by Father Schmitz, the Superior at Chishawasha, in 1926 further spelt out these conditions. "Native Christians settled on the mission farm shall live a life in accordance with Christian principles of morality and Christian practice," read the agreement. "They shall therefore," it stated:

> A. Attend morning service every Sunday and occasionally on such week days as shall have been announced to them the previous Sunday
> B. Abstain from such pagan practices as *kukandira [h]akata* [consulting African traditional healers known as *n'anga*], *kurova guva* [ritual perfomed to honor the dead], from indecent dances, drunken orgies and other practices repugnant to Christian standards of conduct
> C. They shall not pledge children in marriage and receive lobola for them, no compel children who have come of age, by threats of violence, or any other method, interfering with their liberty to marry anyone against their will.[697]

Missionaries not only prevented their African tenants from arranging marriages, but presided over African marriages and decided whom African Christian girls could marry. These were exactly the powers they were withdrawing from the girls' parents and guardians! Under the agreement, parents and guardians of a Christian girl were to consult the superior before they accepted *lobola* for her. All marriages of Christians were to take place in the church before the Superior or his deputy. The agreement prohibited polygamy among the tenants. Christian widows whose parents lived outside the mission farm were to live at the convent.[698] The agreements affected every African resident on Chishawasha. As residents later explained, it was impossible to be a tenant at Chishawasha if you were not a Catholic.[699]

---

[696] Jesuit Archives Harare, Box 452, Letters from BSAC & BSAP, Statement dated 25 October 1907, Signed by A.M. Hartman, SJ.

[697] Jesuit Archives Harare, Box 103, Chishawasha, Document titled, 'Corrections and Suggestions for Father Schimitz's draft (Father Johanny), c 1926, Agreement etc, as in printed form.

[698] Jesuit Archives Harare, Box 103, Chishawasha, Document titled, 'Corrections and Suggestions for Father Schimitz's draft (Father Johanny), c 1926, Agreement etc, as in printed form.

[699] Interviews between Joseph Jakarasi and Stanslaus Mandizvidza; Richard Muvirimi, John Mupfumi Tigere and Edmund Ndoro, 23 July 2013.

www.manaraa.com

The conditions meant to regulate the social and religious lives of Africans added to a host of others designed to regulate land use by tenants on mission farms. At Chishawasha, the tenants could not cut timber without the authority of the Superior. They also had to pay dipping fees and report any livestock diseases within the mission farm. In 1905, a meeting of the Epworth Circuit of the Wesleyan Methodist Church resolved that "people not in class be asked to subscribe 1/- per quarter towards the expenses of the work at Epworth."[700] The missionaries wanted their tenants to fund the missionary enterprise, including the building of houses for African teachers and evangelists both at Epworth and its out-stations. Africans also provided labor at most of these mission farms.

The agreements also reflected wider concerns within the colony. In the 1940s, missionaries imposed a maximum limit on the number of cattle that each tenant could graze on mission farms. No family was allowed to graze more than six head of cattle at Chishawasha.[701] Donkeys, sheep and goats were to be permitted on the farm only by special consent of the Superior. In the discourse of soil erosion in Southern Africa, these animals were particularly singled out as the chief culprits for the problem.[702] The tenants were also to cooperate with missionaries "in projects aiming at soil and water conservation and in forest development, also in the making and maintaining of roads and

---

[700] Wesleyan Methodist Papers, Epworth Circuit: Minutes of Quarterly Meetings, 1904-1920, Minutes of a Meeting of the Quarterly Board of the Epworth Circuit held March31, 1905.

[701] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and John Mupfumi Tigere and Edmund Ndoro, 23 July 2013.

[702] See for example the discussion in Nancy J Jacobs, *Environment, Power and Injustice*, especially chapter 8 and Nancy J Jacobs, The Great Bophuthatswana Donkey Massacre.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

paths upon the Mission farm." In this regard, the tenants were required to provide unpaid labor to perform anti-erosion work.[703]

Missionary landlords penalized those tenants who failed to adhere to their terms. In July 1905, the Board of the Epworth Circuit of the Wesleyan Methodist Church resolved that "Rabeka, alias Manditora be sent away from Epworth because of her prostitution."[704] The following year, the Circuit's Board reported that "Sekoti and the daughter of Dongo were dismissed from the kraal [at the mission farm] for immorality."[705] The Board also registered its displeasure with the actions of a tenant named Kudodyakwenzara (literally meaning eating just because you hungry and meant to convey a precarious existence). "[He] had paid no farm rent, unnecessarily went to town without a pass, sells firewood but never offers to diminish his liabilities," it noted, adding that "he should be reasoned with by the headman, but if he continues to go to town without a pass, the police are to be advised."[706] There were many similar cases of actions against African residents of Epworth whom missionaries accused of engaging in immoral acts.[707] African tenants who grew up at Chishawasha similarly stated that many families were evicted from the farm for performing the *kuruva guva* ceremony (ritual performed

---

[703] Jesuit Archives Harare, Box 103, Chishawasha, Agreement of Lease 2nd Draft, June 1949.

[704] Wesleyan Methodist Papers, Epworth Circuit: Minutes of Quarterly Meetings, 1904-1920, Minutes of a Meeting of the Quarterly Board of the Epworth Circuit held on 22 July 1905.

[705] Wesleyan Methodist Papers, Epworth Circuit: Minutes of Quarterly Meetings, 1904-1920, Minutes of a Meeting of the Quarterly Board of the Epworth Circuit held on 1 May 1906.

[706] Wesleyan Methodist Papers, Epworth Circuit: Minutes of Quarterly Meetings, 1904-1920, Minutes of a Meeting of the Quarterly Board of the Epworth Circuit held on 1 May 1906.

[707] See, for example, Wesleyan Methodist Papers, Epworth Circuit: Minutes of Quarterly Meetings, 1904-1920, Minutes of a Meeting of the Quarterly Board of the Epworth Circuit held on October 17, 1906; Minutes of Quarterly Meeting held at Epworth on January 1, 1914; Minutes of Quarterly Meeting Held at Epworth on December 19, 1914.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

to honor the dead) or for other cultural and religious practices condemned by missionaries as paganism.[708]

Male elders born at Chishawasha recount, with resentment, their experiences as tenants on the farm. As the following exchange with a researcher suggests, men especially resented missionary prohibition of their social and religious practices, particularly polygyny and *kurova guva* ceremonies:

> Jakarasi: *VaShawasha* are your maternal grandparents?
> John Mupfumi Tigere: Yes, they are our maternal grandparents.
> Jakarasi: So they (meaning Tigere's paternal ancestors) came here and got land….
> John Mupfumi Tigere: through (he uses the English word) their fathers-in-law. E-eh-eh-eh, I have a request.
> Jakarasi: e-eh.
> John Mupfumi Tigere: I may be wrong to move ahead of you but these are things that are painful to me; the issues concerning the priests. Do you have it with you (meaning are we going to discuss it?)
> Jakarasi: Yes
> John Mupfumi Tigere: That is the issue that I want us to discuss (he laughs).
> Jakarasi: I want to understand here. So after your grandparents began to stay with their fathers-in-law, the *VaShawasha*, what really happened?
> John Mupfumi Tigere: What really happened with regards to missionaries is that eh-eh-eh, I want to take it this way. The missionaries came in as crooks (he uses the English word). They were crooks in the sense that eh eh, I think it was in around 1940 or 1942 (he mixes the dates. By this time the mission was fifty years old). They came into our home (here meaning the Shawasha valley as a whole). This area was already inhabited. They came to our home with a request (*chikumbiro*), a request which is similar to the programs implemented by nongovernmental organizations like Christian Care and other similar organizations. So they came and said we want to help orphans. Myself I was very young. They would send sisters, those who have taken the oath. The sisters would come to our village and say we want to help orphans. They brought clothes and other goods, saying they were helping orphans. Do you understand this? After helping, at last (he uses the English phrase) they ended up eh-eh-eh, they were gathering intelligence about our ways of life, how we lived in our communities. In here (meaning on the mission farm), they (the missionaries) later said, eh we want to see those who are in agreement with us, those who are believers because they were saying it's a religion. Now they wanted to know who the believers with whom they are in agreement and to identify them. You understand this? After that, they established seven Christian villages (he actually counted six) within the farm….Now they requested the election of village heads. Each village head was asked to produce a register of his subjects. They chose the village heads from community leaders. At last (he uses the English phrase) they told the village heads that they wanted to know the numbers of people who were attending church services. It was now a register. Now those who were and were not attending the church services were being known. At last, the missionaries raised the issue of eh-eh-eh, many men were polygamous. So the missionaries said they no longer wanted polygamous men to reside on the farm. Do you understand that? So, in that way came the issue of discrimination. Many polygamous households were evicted from this farm. It was 1945, 46, 47, 48, all the polygamous

[708] Interviews between Joseph Jakarasi and Stanslaus Mandizvidza; Richard Muvirimi, John Mupfumi Tigere and Edmund Ndoro, 23 July 2013.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

households were evicted from the farm. So this was something that pained and bothered me a lot. I was by then a young boy who could understand what was going on.[709]

It should be pointed out that Tigere only made reference to developments that occurred during his lifetime. Many polygamous men were evicted before the 1940s. A notable case was that of Cyrol Kaodza, the son of Kaguvi who was not only evicted from the farm but was imprisoned for bigamy, after marrying a second wife before he completed divorce proceedings with his first wife.[710]

However, the missionary interventions resented by elderly male informants like Tigere and Tanyanyiwa made mission stations appealing to other members of the Shona society, especially women. Many of these voluntarily converted to Christianity. Elizabeth Schmidt discusses the experiences of women who ran away from their villages to mission centers in the early twentieth century.[711] She acknowledges that life at mission stations 'was not of ease and luxury" and for most of these women and girls, "mission life did not bring about female emancipation, but the exchange of African for European patriarchy."[712] "Nevertheless," Schmidt points out,

> many women preferred such a life to the one they had left. They could go to school; they would not be forced to marry against their will, and they could choose a husband without the consent of their guardians. Moreover, as educated Christian women, they had a good chance of marrying mission-educated teachers, evangelists, and artisans, joining the ranks of an emerging African elite. For many women, flight to a mission station was a vehicle of upward class mobility.[713]

Moreover, the missionaries were far from successful in forcing their tenants to abandon all aspects of their social and religious lives. It was especially difficulty to stop

---

[709] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi and John Mupfumi Tigere, 23 July 2014. See also interview between Joseph Jakarasi and Stanslaus Tanyanyiwa, 23 July 2014.

[710] Joyce M Chadya, Missionary Land Ownership, p 78.

[711] Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives,* pp 92-97.

[712] Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives,* pp 94-95.

[713] Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives*, p 95.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

religious practices which could be performed clandestinely. "You have mentioned the fact that we converted to Catholicism," remarked one elder? "We are Catholics, but" he continued,

> we should not abandon our cultural practices. You see those mountains (pointing)? There is a time when we go there to sweep the graves of our ancestors like Nzvere and Chinamhora. We go there and sweep the graves. We will not be talking about the fact that we have converted to Christianity. We will be focusing on our culture, respecting our traditions so that we can live well. When we go there to sweep, we will be supplicating the ancestors so that when the rain season arrives, we will receive good rains, with the ancestors knowing that we have families to look after.[714]

At this point his colleague interjected, stating that "when we go there (to supplicate the ancestors), we do not carry our Christian identity. We throw it away."[715] Interestingly, the two men were village heads who were expected to police their subjects to stick to the missionary religious and cultural script.

Segregation, Environmentalism and the Changing Fortunes of African Tenants: 1930s-1950s

From the 1930s onwards, the settler state intensified its efforts to remove Africans from alienated and Crown land into reserves. The Land Apportionment Act passed by the Southern Rhodesian legislature in 1930 had far reaching consequences for African access to land in the colony. Not only did it allocate the half of the country's land which was better suited for agriculture to European settlers, but it enshrined racial segregation as a principle of land allocation.[716] The law abolished rent agreements on white owned land, effectively making it illegal for Africans to reside in white areas except as laborers. In

---

[714] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi, John Mupfumi Tigere and Edmund Ndoro 23 July 2014.

[715] Interview between Joseph Jakarasi, John Mupfumi Tigere and Edmund Ndoro 23 July 2014.

[716] Robin Palmer and Henry V Moyana provide the most detailed studies of the impact of the Land Apportionment Act. See Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination* and Henry V Moyana, *The Political Economy of Land in Zimbabwe.* Till the passage of the Land Apportionment Act, Africans could theoretically purchase land wherever they wanted.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

this section, I explore the implications of this Act together with the other arguments that were used to push Africans into reserves.

The enactment of the Land Apportionment Act in 1930 was not immediately followed by the eviction of Africans resident on white owned land. In fact, in its 1930 form, the Act was almost impossible to implement, for there was inadequate land in the tiny reserves to accommodate the one hundred thousand or so Africans who, according to the stipulations of the Act, would be required to leave white areas.[717] However, its requirements caused anxieties among Native Affairs Department officials as well as Africans. They had to find land to accommodate thousands of evicted Africans.

The large number of evicted Africans particularly worried Native Department officials. "The application of the Land Apportionment Act will probably be more difficult in Umtali district than in any other, for there are 18, 000 natives living on alienated land, a huge proportion of whom will have to be moved," wrote the Chief Native Commissioner in March 1931. "The largest reserve in the District, the Maranke," he continued, "is said to be unsuitable for the bulk of people who will have to move. The remaining Reserves are small and, with the exception of Zimunya, thickly populated. The Native Purchase Area is not large."[718] The NAD officials requested that more land in the district should be set aside for African occupation.

In response, the administration set up a Special Native Land Committee later that year to explore the possibilities of acquiring additional land for Africans in Umtali. This

[717] See the discussion in Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination* especially chapters 7 and 8.

[718] S 1542/L4, Lands: Application for and Purchase of Land for African Occupations (Volume 1), Letter dated 26th March 1931 from the Chief Native Commissioner to the Secretary to the Premier (Native Affairs).

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Committee recommended that the Gilmerton farm, now the Rowa area in Zimunya, be set aside for Africans. The committee invoked the principles of segregation enshrined in the Land Apportionment Act to make their case. "To our mind," argued the committee, "it would be unthinkable that 'Stewarton North' and Dora Estate' (these two were earmarked for Native Purchase Areas) should be created Native Area, leaving 'Gilmerton' as European area." "Gilmerton," they continued, "would be in such circumstances an absolute island between the aforementioned two properties and the two native reserves Zimunya and Maranke and this would be the negation of the whole principle on which the policy of land segregation has hitherto been approached."[719]

The same committee pointed to the difficulties of finding land for Africans north of the city of Umtali, the historic territory of the Manyika kingdom, because of the scale of alienations there. It recommended that the administration should purchase privately held land, arguing that many of the farms were already occupied by rent paying Africans. In 1935, the Umtali Native Commissioner requested the acquisition of more settler owned land for African occupation in the historic portions of the Manyika kingdom.

W. Selwyn Bazely, the Umtali Native Commissioner, invoked the familiar arguments about the undesirability of mixing 'tribes', and the highlanders' reluctance to relocate to low-lying lands which were hot and malarial. He also invoked history to explain why the Manyika deserved to retain their ancestral lands. "Mutasa, chief of the Manyika tribe, voluntarily granted the use of his country to the BSA Company in

[719] S 1542/L4, Lands: Application for and Purchase of Land for African Occupations (Volume 1), Report of the Special land Committee, dated 28th August 1931, p2. The committee included A J Atherstone, W Edwards and A C Jennings.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

preference to the Portuguese in 1890," Bazely wrote in 1937.[720] "Mutasa and the Manyika," he elaborated a year later,

> were in no way subordinate to Lobengula but were entirely independent in 1890. If Mutasa had chosen the Portuguese in preference to the British, the River Odzi would now be the boundary of Southern Rhodesia as the Imperial British Government would have insisted on the Portuguese retaining Manicaland. As it was he made a voluntary treaty with the British South Africa Company. Mutasa steadily supported the British South Africa Company in 1893 and 1896 and never rebelled. As a reward for this he was deprived of all his land except Mt Bingaguru [elsewhere he describes this as one barren mountain] (the present tiny Mutasa South Reserve) and the small Manyika reserve in the Inyanga district. About 30,000 to 40, 000 Manyika Natives were left to pay rent to landowners who were mostly absentees, or to work in return for the right to live on the land of their ancestors. It is doubtful whether there was ever such another disgraceful breach of faith in the whole history of the British Empire.[721]

Bazely argued that the government could restore this faith by setting aside land for the Manyika. He added the benefits of keeping the Manyika contented. "As loyal subjects," he warned, "they can be most useful; as disaffected ones, they may cause considerable trouble."[722]

While members of the Department of Native Affairs pointed to the challenges of evicting Africans resident on alienated land and requested that more land be set aside for African occupation, a clique within the settler establishment that included individual settlers and Members of the Department of Lands relentlessly pushed for the removal of Africans from settler farms. From the late 1930s onwards, these opponents of African presence on alienated land raised concerns over land degradation to clamor for their

[720] S1542/L4, Lands: Application for and Purchase of Land for African Occupations (Volume 3), Memorandum dated 13 January 1937 from Native Commissioner Inyanga.

[721] S1542/L4, Lands: Application for and Purchase of Land for African Occupations (Volume 3), Letter dated 29 September 1938 from Native Commissioner, Umtali, to Chief Native Commissioner.

[722] S1542/L4, Lands: Application for and Purchase of Land for African Occupations (Volume 3), Memorandum dated 13 January 1937 from Native Commissioner Inyanga.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

evictions.[723] In December 1937, the Lands Department requested that African tenants on Yorkshire Estate in Makoni district be evicted, arguing that "cultivation by these natives is seriously damaging the farm."[724] A memorandum produced by the Natural Resources Board in 1943 decried what it considered to be severe land degradation caused by African 'squatters' on alienated land. "The evils described by the Natural resources Commission [of 1939] as attendant to so called 'kaffir' farming and squatters on Crown land cannot be strongly emphasized," wrote the Board's chairman, Robert McIlwaine.[725] He regretted the limitations imposed on the implementation of the Land Apportionment Act by wartime conditions, adding "in the meantime, unrestrained destruction of the land, so common among squatters, goes on apace by large numbers of natives who are in occupation contrary to the terms of the Act."[726]

The plight of Africans resident on alienated and Crown land was to worsen in the post-war period.[727] In 1951, the Priest-in-Charge at Bonda Mission gave nineteen tenants notice to leave the farm citing both their unwillingness to fulfil their part of the contract and the threat that their stock caused to the environment. "Yesterday," he wrote, "I counted the tenant's cattle & find that they have one hundred head of cattle more than the agreement allows. This," he continued, "is a very serious matter in view of the drought

---

[723] This was part of a much wider debate about African land use and holding practices. See for example the discussion in Pius Nyambara, The Place Was wonderful and Barry N Floyd, Changing Patterns of African Land use.

[724] S1542/R3, Removals, 1933-1939, (Volume) 2, Letter dated 4th December 1937 from Undersecretary, Department of Lands to chief Native Commissioner.

[725] S1188/3, Natural Resources Board: Memorandum on the Conservation of Natural Resources on the Land Occupied by Natives, p 4.

[726] [726] S1188/3, Natural Resources Board: Memorandum on the Conservation of Natural Resources on the Land Occupied by Natives, p 5.

[727] See the discussion in Pius Nyambara, The Place Was Wonderful.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

especially. Something will have to be done immediately to reduce the cattle & to get the tenants off….I really cannot allow them to remain here in view of the damage they are doing."[728] Thousands of Africans were forcibly evicted from their ancestral homes to give way to post War European immigrants, not only in Inyanga and Umtali but elsewhere in Southern Rhodesia.[729]

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the politics of tenancy in northeastern Zimbabwe from the 1890s to the early 1950s. As Africans who had the misfortune of finding their homes within land claimed by settlers, missionaries, and companies as farms and Europeans negotiated access to land, they bridged the racial dichotomy that pervades discussion of the land question in Zimbabwe. As colonial administrators performed the balancing act of satisfying their settler constituency and maintaining law and order, they made and broke alliances that breached the racial divide. Native Commissioners requested the acquisition of additional land for Africans and better treatment of tenants not because they were necessarily advocates of their African subjects, but because they shouldered the burden of finding land for the displaced Africans. This was a herculean task because of the scale of land alienation and legalized segregation which criminalized African settlement in areas assigned for whites. Thus, Africans are able to retain access to their ancestral lands because they skillfully exploited contradictions within the colonial establishment.

---

[728] S2588/1977, Land: 1931-1957, Inyanga, (Volume 2), Letter dated 4th April 1951 from the Priest-in-Charge, St David's Bonda Mission to the Chief Native Commissioner.

[729] For Inyanga and Umtali see the correspondence in S2588/1977, Land: 1931-1957, Inyanga, (Volume 2). The dozens of correspondence in this file relate to the eviction and resettlement of Africans in Inyanga from 1949-1957. For elsewhere in the country see Terence Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks*, Jocelyn Alexander, JoAnn McGregor and Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory*, Pius S Nyambara, The Place was Wonderful and Pius S Nyambara, A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

CONCLUSION

Racialized narratives of Zimbabwe's history make land scarcity and competition for the resource a colonial and racial problem. They emphasize that colonial land alienation deprived the indigenous populations of an abundant resource, leading to conflicts between settlers and Africans. However, from precolonial times, African farmers understood that arable land was scarce and subject to competition. Those who cultivated the terraced fields in Inyanga clearly preferred clay soils. These were inherently more fertile than sand soils. They invested their labor in terracing these fields. Everywhere, on the Zimbabwean plateau, precolonial farmers avoided marginal environments. They described them as threatening and uninhabitable. The farmers sought out good agricultural lands, putting up in temporary shelters in order to avoid marsh lands and poor localities. Preferences for particular localities created shortages, leading to competition for land that was suitable for an agricultural system that emphasized the cultivation of small grains such as *rukweza/njera* and *mhunga*. Competition for productive land led precolonial farmers to use kinship, gender, generation, seniority, and status to restrict others' access to the resource. Ideas of belonging which emphasized membership within patrilineages worked against women who, as wives, were not members of the patrilineages of their husbands. The ideas of belonging permitted incorporation of newcomers who were integrated into networks of kinship as sons-in-law and *vazukuru* (sisters'/daughter's children).s.

Stories of villagers describe conflicts over land that occurred long before the colonial period. These stories describe chiefs who took land of other people and who legitimized their actions by claiming that they introduced fire-making and cooking and by

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

feminizing conquered communities. These stories describe relations of power that were contested. For example, *VaShona* thought about autochthony and fertility provided subjects with ways of contesting chiefly control of land. They attribute fertility to the lineages that provide wives.[730] As providers of wives to the immigrant leaders of chiefly lineages, and by virtue of their relations with the land as first-comers, autochthons claimed ritual authority over land. It was their ancestors' sprits that were supplicated to ensure the fertility of the land. The ritual practices acknowledged the knowledge that first-comers had because of their lengthy interaction with the land. Autochthons used this knowledge to ensure that the chiefly lineages would not totally exclude them from accessing land, for the authority of the chiefs was secure when their subjects were able to overcome the threat of famines.

Colonial land alienation added race to the forms of social difference used to restrict access to land. However, gender, generation, seniority and status continued to affect patterns of access to land among Africans. Similarly, old forms of competition for power between chiefs and *mhondoro* persisted. Colonial legal innovations undermined the very chiefs that the colonial system of Indirect Rule propped up. However, *VaShona* participation in the colonial economy as wage laborers and traders contributed to new patterns of landholding. Some enterprising men and women used income generated from wage labor and trading to purchase farming implements and expand their landholdings.

Conflicts among colonial officials also affected African access to land. For colonial officials, race was not always a usable template in conflicts over land. In some

---

[730] David Lan, *Guns and Rains: Guerillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1985, pp 72-91.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

cases, the imperatives of maintaining law and order forced colonial officials to breach racial solidarity. The officials declined to intervene in favor of settlers in cases where they felt that such interventions compromised law and order. Moreover, because settler land owners depended on African labor, they allowed Africans to remain on alienated land in return for labor. However many Africans' continued access to alienated land did not depend on the economic interests of settlers. In some cases they resisted relocation.

By focusing on racialized land inequality, the political discourse of land ignored the extent to which social relations based on status, gender, generation, age and kinship structured access to land. I have documented how these forms of inequality shaped patterns of access to land from precolonial times to the mid twentieth century. I close the study by pointing to the costs of excluding these forms of inequality.

The fixation with race blinded policy makers to other causes of inequality. From 2000, the Zimbabwean government implemented the Fast Track Land Reform Programme to alleviate land inequality in the country. "The land reform exercise," noted Joseph Hanlon *et al*, "focused on racialized imbalances of highly skewed landholdings and discriminatory land tenure systems rather than addressing gender disparities."[731] "Women," Prosper Matondi observed of the post-2000 land reform, "were the last beneficiaries after men were satisfied with their choice of plots…'Ordinary' women were always at the end of the queue in the allocations and other benefits." Thus, "a radical land reform programme did not contribute meaningfully to women's benefit in accessing state

[731] Joseph Hanlon, Jeanette Manjengwa and Teresa Smart, *Zimbabwe Takes Back Its Land,* p 160.

www.manaraa.com

land."[732] The land reform exercise also excluded farm workers, many of whom were immigrants[733].

A racialized understanding of land inequality not only ignored women and migrant laborers, but also led to exclusionary conceptions of national belonging and citizenship. As President Mugabe claimed, land was central to the Zimbabwean people's sense of being.[734] The question is: who were these Zimbabweans that he referred to? When President Mugabe himself answered this question, he revealed the exclusionary impulses of framing land inequality in terms of colonially created disparities. He maintained that the black majority were "the right-holders and, therefore, primary stakeholders to our land against an obdurate and internationally well-connected minority, largely of British descent."[735] In this narrative, those of British descent do not have a stake in the land. They also do not belong to the nation. "This country is our country and this land is our land… They think because they are white they have a divine right to our resources. Not here," President Mugabe explained, adding: "the white man is not indigenous to Africa. Africa is for Africans. Zimbabwe is for Zimbabweans."[736]

In the history of conflicts over land in Zimbabwe, narratives of indigeneity are not new, but their use has changed over time. Since precolonial times, *VaShona* men and women invoked ideas of autochthony to contest the power of new comers. Nevertheless,

---

[732] Prosper B Matondi, *Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform*, p 185.

[733] Lloyd M. Sachikonye The Situation of Commercial Farm Workers; Lloyd M. Sachikonye, Land Reform for Poverty Reduction?; Blair Rutherford, Conditional Belonging.

[734] Tinashe Nyamunda, Did Zimbabweans take their land back.

[735] Statement by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe Comrade R.G. Mugabe.

[736] Quoted in Sabelo J Ndlovu Gatsheni, *Do 'Zimbabweans' Exist*? *Trajectories of Nationalism, National Identity Formation and Crisis in a Postcolonial State*, New York, Peter Lang, 2009, p 264.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

indigenous land tenure and processes of social formation accommodated claims to land by late-comers. For example, we learn from the traditions of Manyika settlement in northeastern Zimbabwe that *Nyamubvambire* (literally one who came from Mbire) was an immigrant. However, his story is told in the idiom of power and love.[737] Because *Nyamubvambire* possessed power and love, he was accepted by the immigrants who gave him land. In emphasizing these qualities, Zimbabweans not only distinguish precolonial rulers from their colonial successors, but also underscore the flexibility of precolonial systems of social relations and land tenure which integrated late-comers and acknowledged their claims.[738] This flexibility is absent in the President's narrative of indigeneity because it draws exclusively from the colonial experience of dispossession.[739] It may be argued that the European immigrants of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries held power without love; hence, they alienated the country's post-colonial rulers. Nonetheless, it is clear that both colonial and postcolonial states used categories such as 'settler' and 'native' to justify expropriation, exclusion, racial and ethnic spatial fixing and never to accommodate others' claims as had been the case in the precolonial period.[740]

The colonial and post-colonial nativist narrative excluded not only non-African races, but other 'subject minorities' who were "the main victims of this…conception of

---

[737] See the epigraph at the beginning of Chapter Two.

[738] See Chapter Two.

[739] Sabelo J Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist?,* pp 264-276.

[740] See the discussions in Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject and* Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims became Killers.*

www.manaraa.com

citizenship."[741] These include descendants of Malawian, Mozambican and Zambian immigrants, Coloureds (those of mixed racial parentage) and urbanites, some of whom the President infamously disparaged as "undisciplined, totemless elements of alien origin."[742] The idea that such urbanites are non-native drew from the fact that they did not have a rural home associated with one's totem. This idea is, ironically, based partly on the colonial method of demarcating land for specific "tribes."[743] "[A]n indigenous person," Phineas Chihota, a Deputy Minister, told Parliament in 2005, "is one who has a rural home allocated to him by virtue of being indigenous."[744]

Such conceptions of nativity are a recipe for racial and ethnic exclusions and conflicts.[745] Indeed, in 2002, a Zimbabwean newspaper carried "reports that Nobbie Dzinzi, the Zanu PF MP for Muzarabani, ordered all people originally from Masvingo and Buhera districts now living in his constituency to move out….Dzinzi," it was reported, "allegedly ordered all people of the Karanga tribe to move from his constituency without delay."[746] Muzarabani, a district in the Zambezi Valley, is mostly inhabited by people who speak the dialect of *Chishona* called *Chikorekore*, but after independence witnessed the influx of immigrants from south-central Zimbabwe where

---

[741] James Muzondidya, quoted in Sabelo J Ndlovu Gatsheni, *Do 'Zimbabweans' Exist*? p 178. See also the discussion in James Muzondidya, "'Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans': Invisible Subject Minorities and the Quest for Justice and Reconciliation in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe," in Brian Raftopoulos and Tyrone Savage (eds), *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconcilliation*, Cape Town, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004.

[742] Staff Reporter, "Zanu PF Accused of Trbalism." *Daily News*, 14 October 2002, http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/old/oct15_2002.html, Downloaded on 29 January, 2015.

[743]Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizens and Subjects*, Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Became Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001.*

[744] Quoted in Sabelo J Ndlovu Gatsheni, *Do 'Zimbabweans' Exist*? p 277.

[745] Mahmood Mamdani, *When victims became Killers.*

[746] Staff Reporter, "Zanu PF Accused of Tribalism." *Daily News*, 14 October 2002, http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/old/oct15_2002.html, Downloaded on 29 January, 2015.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

C*hikaranga* is mostly spoken. This triggered simmering tensions over land and belonging.[747]

Although racialized histories of Zimbabwe make conflicts over land a colonial and racial problem, the postcolonial confiscation of land concerned not just the settler community, but the nation as a whole. Continued conflicts over land fifteen years after the fast-track land-reform that dismantled colonially inherited patterns of land allocation testify to this point. As Zimbabweans began the new year in 2015, they woke up to newspaper headlines that poor rural farmers who occupied Manzou farm in Mazowe district were evicted, allegedly at the instigation of the country's First Lady. Ignoring a High Court order against the evictions of these families, the police burned down the farmers' residences and ordered them to go back to where they came from, even though they had called this place home for fifteen years. Because this happened in the middle of the rainy season, the farmers were forced to leave their crops in the fields.[748] Another case involved conflicts over the acquisition of a farm in Chipinge in the eastern highlands by Joseph Chinotimba, a ZANU PF parliamentarian. He faced resistance from members of his own party. "The Zanu PF youths and war veterans" it was reported in one of the daily newspapers, "claimed that Chinotimba had several other farms in Buhera South and did not hail from Chipinge and therefore could not be given priority ahead of them to

---

[747] Marja J. Spierenburg, *Strangers, Spirits and Land Reforms: Conflicts about Land in Dande, Northern Zimbabwe,* Leiden, Brill, 2005.

[748] Lloyd Mbiba, "Police boot out villagers to make way for Grace," Daily News, 8 January 2015; "Churches investigate "unholy" Grace evictions," http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-20042-Churches+on+%E2%80%9Cunholy%E2%80%9D+Grace+evictions/news.aspx, Accessed, 21/01/2015, Blessing Zulu, "High Court Orders First Family to Stop Farm Evictions." http://www.voazimbabwe.com/content/zimbabwe-first-family-eviction-mazowe/1883995.html, Accessed 21/01/2015. Hazel Ndebele, "Manzou evictions: State to move in wildlife," Zimbabwe Independent, 16 January, 2015. http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2015/01/16/manzou-evictions-state-move-wildlife/ Accessed on 21 January 2016.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

occupy the 175 hectare farm with Macadamia nuts ready for harvest."[749] Again, the state intervened in his favor and his opponents were evicted from the farm by baton-wielding anti-riot police.[750]

These conflicts reveal connections between power, belonging and access to land that the racialized rhetoric employed by President Mugabe and other politicians threatens to render invisible. The nexus between power and access to land knows no race. The seizure of white land by the post-colonial state, like appropriation of land by the colonial state, was based on access to power and provided a precedent for the conflicts that have since continued.[751] One perceptive but somewhat unsympathetic reader's comments on the Manzou families' predicament eloquently made the point. "Ironically," he said, "the same people whose land is being grabbed are the ones who grabbed the same land from its former occupiers."[752] Another added: "it was *jambanja* going in; its *jambanja* going out."[753] *Jambanja*, which literally means violence or angry argument, became the buzz word during the Fast Track Land Reform exercise led by the veterans of Zimbabwe's war of liberation, some of whom are now opposing politicians' seizure of farms in areas like Chipinge. Many people used the word *jambanja* to describe farm invasions, the invaders,

---

[749] Clayton Masekesa, "Riot Police, Soldiers Attack Zanu PF Land Invaders," *Newsday*, 5 January 2015. invadershttps://www.newsday.co.zw/2015/01/05/riot-police-soldiers-attack-zanu-pf-land-invaders/ Accessed 6 January 2015. See also Staff Writer, "Chinotimba invades 300ha farm," Daily News, 8 January 2015.

[750] Clayton Masekesa, "Riot Police, Soldiers Attack Zanu PF Land Invaders," *Newsday*, 5 January 2015.

[751] Robin Palmer, "History Repeating itself in Zimbabwe? Evictions in 2002 and 1948." Undated manuscript available at http://www.mokoro.co.uk/other-resources/southern-africa/zimbabwe, Downloaded on 29 January 2015.

[752] Lloyd Mbiba, "Police boot out villagers to make way for Grace," Daily News, 8 January 2015, comment by Zombostyle.

[753] Lloyd Mbiba, "Police boot out villagers to make way for Grace," Daily News, 8 January 2015, Comment by *X-MAN IV*.

www.manaraa.com

political violence and the general chaos that characterized the FTLRP.[754] However, such violence mirrored the one that accompanied the evictions of Africans in the 1940s, for both the colonial and post-colonial dispossessions were predicated on force and are also unraveling through the use of force.[755]

Yet, respect for the property rights of both Africans and white commercial landowners are essential if the property rights of all citizens are to be respected. The seizure of large scale commercial farms by powerful politicians not only ignores the property rights of whites, but also ignores the whole web of claims to such land, including those claims that are based on locality or place. As the villagers in Chipinge contested the parliamentarian's claim to the farm, they invoked the two concepts of locality and place over national belonging.

By highlighting the role of gender, generation, status, belonging, national origin and status in determining access to land, this dissertation has described forms of inequality that persist to this day. It may serve to remind Zimbabweans and others concerned with questions of access to land that, if the quest for equity envisioned in land reforms is to be meaningful, old forms of exclusion also need to be overcome. At the same time, older forms of inclusion ought to be made precedents or models for new ways of incorporating marginalized groups. This is as true for other parts of Africa as for

---

[754] Ian Scoones *etal*, *Zimbabwe's Land Reform,* p 190. See also J Chaumba, I Scoones and W Wolmer, "From jambanja to planning: The Reassertion of Technocracy in Land Reform in South-eastern Zimbabwe." *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 4, 2003.

[755] Robin Palmer, "History Repeating itself in Zimbabwe? Evictions in 2002 and 1948." Undated manuscript available at http://www.mokoro.co.uk/other-resources/southern-africa/zimbabwe, Downloaded on 29 January 2015; For the violence of the 1940s see Pius S Nyambara, 'That Place was Wonderful' Alexander Jocelyn, JoAnn McGregor and Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory*.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Zimbabwe, for, land scarcity and the forms of difference it engenders are found everywhere on the continent.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archival Sources

National Archives of Zimbabwe

Correspondence and Reports

A1/6/1, Administrator's In-Letters: Manica Reports, 1890 October 19-December 3.

D/3/5/1 Criminal Cases, Salisbury 1891-1898

DT 6/1/4 Civil Commissioner and Resident Magistrate, Umtali: Registers, Surveyed Farms, Umtali and Makoni districts c.1901.

N 3/1/3, Native Cases Tried by Chiefs

N3/1/10, Native Commissioner Rusape.

N3/3/4, Male Adult Natives Resident in Mashonaland: 1912 January 4-May 3.

N3/6/3, South African Native Affairs Commission, 1903

N3/16/1, Native Affairs Correspondence, Land: General, 1910 October 17-1923 August 17 (two volumes).

N 3/16/6, Land: Native Rent on Unalienated Land: 1912 May 7-1923 June 13 (two Volumes).

N3/23/1, Native Laws and Customs: General:1907 December 11-1921 November 18.

N3/33/8, History of the Mashona Tribes: 1903 December 3-1904 January 21 (two volumes).

N9/1/3, Native Commissioners' Annual Reports, 1897.

N9/1/4, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, 1898.

N9/1/5, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, 1899.

N9/1/6, Annual Reports, Native commissioners, 1900.

N9/1/7, Native Commissioners' Annual Reports, 1901.

N9/1/8, Annual reports, Native Commissioners, 1902-1903.

N9/1/12, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, 1909.

N9/1/13, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, 1910

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

N9/1/14, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, 1911

N9/1/15, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, 1912

N9/1/16, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, 1913

N9/1/17, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, 1914.

N9/1/18, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, 1915.

N9/1/19 Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, 1916.

N19/1/20, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners, 1917

N9/1/21, Annual Reports, Native commissioners, 1918

N9/1/22, Native Commissioner Annual Reports, 1919

N9/1/23, Annual Reports, Native Commissioners. 1920.

N9/1/24, Native Commissioners, Annual reports, 1921.

N9/1/25, Native Commissioners Annual Reports, 1922

NSG 1/1/2, Native Commissioner, Marandellas, Out-Letters: General, 1907 March 18-1908 June 2.

NUA 1/1/1, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: In-Letters, General, 1897 April 27-1901 December 2.

NUA 1/1/2, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: In-Letters, General, 1902 January-1908 April 23.

NUA 2/1/1 Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali, Out-Letters, General, 1896 October 21-1897 January 5.

NUA 2/1/2, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, 1897 April 1-1899 May 4.

NUA 2/1/3, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umatali: Out-Letters, General, 1898 March 25-1900 November 29.

NUA 2/1/4, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters General, 1900 November 29-1903 September 15 (two volumes).

NUA 2/1/5, Native commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters General, 1903 September 16-1905 December 13.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

NUA 2/1/6, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters General, 1905 October 13-1907 June 4.

NUA2/1/8, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives Umtali: Out-Letters, General, 1908 March 20-1910 February 18.

NUA 2/1/10, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters General, 1911 May 16—1913 January 28.

NUA 2/1/11, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, 1913 January 28-1914 June 20.

NUA 2/1/12, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters, General, 1916 June 17-1919 September 3.

NUA 2/2/1, Native Commissioner and Superintendent of Natives, Umtali: Out-Letters Confidential, 1899 September 4-1919 April 4.

NUC 1/4/1, Native Commissioner and Assistant Magistrate, Inyanga, In-Letters: Miscellaneous, 1904 May 16-1919 October 16.

NUC 2/1/2, Native Commissioner and Assistant Magistrate, Inyanga, Out-Letters: General, 1907 January 8-1908 January 2.

NUC 2/1/3, Native Commissioner and Assistant Magistrate, Inyanga, Out-Letters: General, 1908 January 15-1909 November 18.

NUC 2/1/4, Native Commissioner and Assistant Magistrate, Inyanga, Out-Letters: General, 1909 November 20-1911 October 28.

NUC 2/1/6, Native commissioner and Assistant Magistrate, Inyanga, Out-Letters: General, 1915 November5-1916 October 23.

NUC 2/2/1, Native Commissioner and Assistant Magistrate, Inyanga: Out-letters, Law Department and Civil Commissioner Umtali, 1904 July 22-1906 December 6.

NUC 2/3/1 Native Commissioner and Assistant Magistrate Inyanga, Out Letters: Native Department Officials, 1904 July 22-1906 December 18.

S138/41, Native Complaints and Problem: Reports of Exploitation, Assumption of Chiefs of Non Existent Authority, Masters and Servants Ordinance, Fraud.

S156/10/1, Chiefs and Headmen

S235/501, Native Commissioners, Annual Reports, 1923.

المنارة للاستشارات

www.manaraa.com

S1188/3, Memoranda, Conservation of Natural Resources on Land Occupied by Natives, 1943.

S 1542/C16/1, Complaints by Africans from Various Areas to the Native Department, 1933 May 29-1935 February 5.

S1542/C16/2, Complaints by Africans from Various Areas to the Native Department, 1934 February 2-December 1.

S 1542/L4, Lands: Application for and Purchase of Land for African Occupation, Proposed Amendments to the Land Apportionment Act, 1930, Native Purchase Areas, Tribal Land (three volumes).

S1542/R3, Removals, 1933-1939, Removal of Africans from Alienated Land, Purchase of Land to Adjoin Reserves, Squatters (two volumes).

S1561/33, Land and Native Reserves: 1924-1925.

S1561/59, Native Courts Bill. Native Law and Courts Bill, Native Law and Courts Bill, 1937, Draft Bills, Notes and Correspondence: 1934-1937.

S2384./K5843/3236, Native Township, Chiota Reserve, Master-builder certificates, Chihota Agricultural Census, Marandellas; Svosve Reserve; Soil Erosion e.t.c.

S2588/1977, Correspondence, Land: 1931-1957, Inyanga, 1948 March 24-1953 January 23.

S 2985/LAN/1, Native Commissioner Umtali, Maps, Permits for Whites Wishing to Enter Reserves, Agreements, Labour and Land, 1950 December 22-1953 November 21.

S3276/1, Spirit Mediums, Healers, Churches and Cult Places, Manicaland.

S3357/2, Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Alleged Discontent in the Mangwende Reserve (Mangwende Reserve Commission), 1961.

ZAH 1/1/1 Land (Morris Carter) Commission, Final Report.

ZAH1/1/3, Land (Morris Carter) Commission, Oral Evidence.

Historical Manuscripts

MA14/1/1, Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika (English Translation by Musewe).

MA14/1/2, Machiwenyika, History and Customs of the Manyika (Handwritten Draft in *Chishona/Chimanyika*).

المنارة للاستشارات

www.manaraa.com

SE1/1/1 Frederick Courteney Selous, 1851-1917, Papers.

Jesuit Archives Harare

Box 98, Chishawasha

Box 99, Chishawasha.

Box 100A, Chishawasha

Box 103, Chishawasha

Box 196, St Triashill

Box 356A Chishawasha, Father Richartz

Box 451, Chishawasha, Taxation and Marriage

Box 452, Letters from BSAC & BSAP

Makoni District Archives

Makoni District Council Files, PER/Chiduku,

Microfilms

Papers of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Salisbury, Rhodesia. Microfilm. Film Ms40. Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library; Epworth Circuit: Minutes of Quarterly Meetings, 1904-1920.

Papers of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Salisbury, Rhodesia. Microfilm. Film Ms40. Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, Reverend W. T. Grantham's Private Diaries, Vols. 1-4, 1903-1925.

Oral Interviews

By Admire Mseba

Interview with SaMuponda, 24/06/2013 and 01/07/2013

Interview with Mbuya Shava, 26 June 2013

Interview with Mbuya Mashizha, 26 June 2013

Interview with Songore, 28 June 2013

Interview with Mutsago, 28 June 2013

Interview with Charova, 28 June 2013

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Group discussion with Songore Brothers, 28 June 2012

Discussion with Mathew Ruguva, 28 June 2013

Interview with Makanya, 29 June 2013.

Interview with Mbuya Gededza, 29 June 2013

Discussions with Mafukashe and Oscar Mafukashe , 29 June 2013.

Discussion with SaMuponda, 30 June 2013.

Interview with *Ambuya* Chikonzo, 25 April, 2014

By Joseph Jakarasi

Mbuya Chikonzo 19 April 2014.

Trymore Jena 20 April 2014

George Mavhiringidze, 23 April 2014.

John Mupfumi Tigere and Edmund Ndoro, 23 July 2014.

Richard Muvirimi, 23 July 2013.

Stanslaus Mandizvidza, 23 April 2013.

By George Bishi

Audio Record of a possessed Mutsago *Svikiro* (Spirit Medium), 29 June 2013.

Group Interview with Mutsago clan elders, 29 June 2013.

In the National Archives of Zimbabwe's Oral History Collection

AOH 14, Aaron Jacha.

AOH 26, Makuvire Chigonero

AOH 31, Kapiro Chisvo

AOH 34, Chikwaka Chief Marufu

AOH 37, Rwambiwa Chari

AOH 38, Mamire Randazha

AOH 39, Nhira Nzvere Chinhoyi

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

AOH 42, Neguwo, Chief Mutambirwa.

AOH 70, Mbofana Philip Willie George. Mbofana

AOH 73, Chief Chinhamora, Muchenje

AOH 79, Kamusoko

AOH 80, Makutu Taonezvi

AOH 81, Madzivanyika Bvudzijena, Taonezvi Mazivei and Simon Zhuwarara

AOH 84, Jera Chanji

AOH 89, Gwatidzo Panyanyiwa

Online Newspaper Articles and Papers.

Staff Reporter, "Zanu PF Accused of Trbalism." *Daily News*, 14 October 2002, http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/old/oct15_2002.html, Downloaded on 29 January, 2015.

"Churches investigate "unholy" Grace evictions," http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-20042-Churches+on+%E2%80%9Cunholy%E2%80%9D+Grace+evictions/news.aspx, Accessed, 21/01/2015

Masekesa Clayton, "Riot Police, Soldiers Attack Zanu PF Land Invaders," *Newsday*, 5 January 2015. invadershttps://www.newsday.co.zw/2015/01/05/riot-police-soldiers-attack-zanu-pf-land-invaders/ Accessed 6 January 2015.

Mbiba Lloyd, "Police boot out villagers to make way for Grace," Daily News, 8 January 2015. http://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2015/01/08/police-boot-out-villagers-to-make-way-for-grace. Downloaded on 21 January 2015.

Ndebele Hazel, "Manzou evictions: State to move in wildlife," Zimbabwe Independent, 16 January, 2015. http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2015/01/16/manzou-evictions-state-move-wildlife/ Accessed on 21 January 2015.

Richardson Craig J, "The Visual Evidence of the Cost of Destroying Property Rights," p.1. http://www.cgdev.org/section/initiatives/archives/zimbabwe/land/costofdevelopment (Accessed on 21 March 2010).

Staff Writer, "Chinotimba invades 300ha farm," Daily News, 8 January 2015; Staff Reporter, "Chiefs join Zanu PF fight, target Kaukonde farm" http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-19812-

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Chiefs+join+squabbles,+target+Kaukonde+farm/news.aspx, Accessed on 6 January 2015.

Statement by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe Comrade R.G. Mugabe, on the Occasion of the World summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Johannesburg, 2 September 2002, http://www.un.org/events/wssd/statements/zimbabweE.htm, Accessed on 7 January 2015.

Zulu Blessing, "High Court Orders First Family to Stop Farm Evictions." http://www.voazimbabwe.com/content/zimbabwe-first-family-eviction-mazowe/1883995.html, Accessed 21/01/2015.

Theses, Reports, Unpublished Papers

Beach David N., "Oral Tradition in Eastern Zimbabwe: The work of Jason Takafa Machiwenyika, c1889-1924." Paper Presented to *Words and Voices: Critical Practices of Orality in Africa and African Studies*, Bellagio, February 24-28, 1997.

Beach David N., "The Origins of Mozambique and Zimbabwe: Paiva De Andrada, The Compnanhia de Moçambique and African Diplomacy, 1881," History Seminar Paper No. 89, 1992

Börjeson Lowe, A History Under Siege: Intensive Agriculture in the Mbulu Highlands, Tanzania, 19th Century to the Present, Ph.D. Thesis, Stockholm University, 2004.

British South Africa Company, Reports on the Native Disturbances in Rhodesia, 1896-7, March 1898.

Chadya Joyce M., Chadya, Missionary Land Ownership: The Case of Catholics at Chishawasha," Unpublished MA Dissertation, Department of Economic History, University of Zimbabwe.

Chanaiwa David, "A History of Nhowe Before 1900," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1971.

Chirawu Stephen "The Archaeology of the Ancient Agricultural and Settlement Systems in Nyanga Lowland." Unpublished M.Phil. Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1999.

Dube Francis, "Colonialism, Cross-Border Movements and Epidemiology: A History of Public Health in the Manyika Region of Central Mozambique and Eastern Zimbabwe and the African Response, 1890-1980," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Iowa, 2009.

Elliot Jennifer A., "Soil Erosion and Conservation in Zimbabwe: Political Economy and the Environment." Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Loughborough University of Technology, 1989.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Floyd Barry N., “Changing Patterns of African Land use in Southern Rhodesia,” Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, Syracuse University, 1959.

Gann Louis H., “The Southern Rhodesia Land Apportionment Act, 1930: An Essay in Trusteeship.” National Archives of Rhodesian and Nyasaland, *Occasional Paper* 1, 1963.

Katsamudanga Seke, “Environment and Culture: A Study of Prehistoric Settlement Patterns in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe,” Unpublished D.Phil. Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 2007.

Machingaidze Victor E.M., The Development of Settler Capitalist Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia with Particular Reference to the Role of the State, 1908-1939,” Unpublished DPhil Thesis, University of London, 1980.

Manungo Kenneth D., “The Role Peasants Played in the Zimbabwe War of Liberation with Special Emphasis on Chiweshe,” Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Ohio University, 1991.

Mashingaidze Terence Motida, “‘Living and Struggling on the Margins.’ A Post-Relocation History of the Zimbabwean Tonga’s Livelihoods in Binga District, 1950s-2009,” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2012.

Mazarire Gerald Chikozho, “A Social and Political History of Chishanga: South-Central Zimbabwe, *c*.1750-2000,” Unpublished D.Phil. Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 2009.

McKenzie John Alistair, “Commercial Farmers in the Governmental System of Colonial Zimbabwe,” DPhil Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1989.

Mujere Joseph, “The Marumbi Rain Cult: Gender and the Interface between Rain Making and the Politics of Water in Gutu.” Paper Presented at the ‘The Power of Water: Landscape, Water and the State in Southern and Eastern Africa’ Conference, CAS, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, 28-29 March 2007.

Nyamatore A.S., “Mutasa, The British South Africa Company and the African Portuguese Syndicate: The Fight for Manyika in the 1890s,” Henderson Seminar Paper No.41, Department of History, University of Zimbabwe, 1978.

Nyambara Pius Shungudzapera, “A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe, Northwestern Zimbabwe, 1945-1997,” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Northwestern University, Evanston: Illinois, 1999.

Robin Palmer, “History Repeating itself in Zimbabwe? Evictions in 2002 and 1948.” Undated manuscript available at http://www.mokoro.co.uk/other-resources/southern-africa/zimbabwe, Downloaded on 29 January 2015.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Rennie John K., "Christianity, Colonialism and the Origins of Nationalism among the Ndau of Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1935," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Northwestern University, Evanston: Illinois, 1973.

Sachikonye Lloyd M., "The Situation of Commercial Farm Workers in Zimbabwe after Land Reform." A Report Prepared for the Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe (FCTZ), Harare, 2003.

Sachikonye Lloyd M., "Land Reform for Poverty Reduction? Social Exclusion and Farm Workers in Zimbabwe," Paper Prepared For a Conference on ''Staying Poor: Chronic Poverty and Development Policy'' Organized By the IDMP, Manchester University, April 2003.

Shutt Alison K., "'We are the Best Poor Farmers:' Purchase Area farmers and Economic Differentiation in Southern Rhodesia, 1925-1980." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1995.

Books, Book Chapters and Journal Articles

Abraham D.P., "The Principality of Maungwe: Its History and Traditions." In *NADA* No. 28, 1951.

Alexander Jocelyn, "The Historiography of Land in Zimbabwe: Strengths, Silences and Questions." *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies,* Vol.8, No. 2, 2007, p 183.

Alexander Jocelyn, *The Unsettled Land*: *State-Making and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe, 1893-2003*, Oxford, James Currey, 2006.

Alexander Jocelyn, JoAnn McGregor and Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the Dark Forests of Matebeleland*, Portsmouth: NH, Heinemann, 2000.

Anderson David, "Depression, Dust Bowl, Demography and Drought: The Colonial State and Conservation in East Africa in the 1930s." *African Affairs*, Vol. 83, No. 332, 1984.

Arrighi Giovanni, 'Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: A Study of the Proletarianization of the African Peasantry." *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol.6, No. 3, 1970.

Arrighi Giovani, *The Political Economy of Rhodesia*, The Hague, Mouton, 1967
Baker Robert H., "The Mutupo among the Wamanyika." *NADA*, No.3, 1925,

Baker Robert H., "The Mutasa and Makoni Dynasties." *NADA* No. 2, 1924.

Barbosa Duarte, "Extracts from a book written by Duarte Barbosa, 1516." In G.M. Theal, *Records of South East Africa,* Vol. 1, Capet Town, C Struik, 1964.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Bazely W.S., "Manyika Headwomen." *NADA*, No 17, 1940.

Bazely W.S., "Manyika Law and Custom Regarding Inheritance of Wives and Property and the Guardianship of Children." *NADA*, No. 7, 1929

W.S. Bazely, "A Manyika Marriage Custom." *NADA*, No. 4, 1926.

Beach David N, "History and Archaeology in Nyanga." Annex in Robert C Soper, *Nyanga: Ancient Fields, Settlements and Agricultural History in Zimbabwe*, London, The British Insitute in East Africa, 2002.

Beach David N., "An Innocent Woman Unjustly Accused? Charwe, Medium of the Nehanda Mhondoro Spirit and the 1896-97 Central Shona Rising in Zimbabwe." *History in Africa*, Vol. 25, 1998.

Beach, David N., *A Zimbabwean Past: Shona Dynastic Histories and Oral Traditions*, Gweru, Mambo Press, 1994.

Beach David N., *The Shona and their Neighbours*, Cambridge, Blackwell, 1994.

Beach David N., "Zimbabwean Demography: Early Colonial Data." In *Zambezia*, Vol. xvii, No, 1, 1990.

Beach David N., *The Shona and Zimbabwe: An Outline of Shona History*, Gweru, Mambo Press, 1980.

Beach David N., "The Shona Economy: Branches of Production," in Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons (eds), *Roots of Rural Poverty in Southern and Central Africa*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1977.

Beinart William, "Soil Erosion, Conservationism and Ideas about Development: A Southern African Exploration, 1900-1960." In *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 11, No.1 1984

Berry Sara, *Chiefs Know their Boundaries: Essays on Property, Power and the Past in Asante*, Portsmouth: NH, Heinemann, 2001

Berry Sara, *No Condition is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1993.

Bhebe Ngwabi, *Benjamin Burombo: African Politics in Zimbabwe*, Harare, The College Press, 1989.

Bhila H.H.K., *Trade and Politics in a Shona Kingdom: The Manyika and their Portuguese and African Neighbours*, London, Longman, 1983.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Bocarro Antonio, "Decade of the Performances of the Portuguese in the East." In, G.M Theal, Records of South East Africa (Vol. 3), Cape Town, G Struik, 1964.

Bohannan Paul "'Land', 'Tenure' and Land Tenure," in Daniel Biebuyck, (ed), *African Agrarian Systems*, Oxford University Press, 1963.

Bourdillon Michael F.C., *The Shona Peoples: An Ethnography of the Contemporary Shona, with Special Reference to their Religion*, Gweru, Mambo Press, 1987.

Bourdillon Michael F.C., "Spirit Mediums and in Shona Belief and Practice." *NADA*, Vol.XI, No.1, 1974.

Bullock Charles, "Can a Native Make a Will? Concepts of Testate Succession in Native Law." *NADA,* No. 7, 1929.

Chanock Martin, "Paradigms, Policies, and Property: A review of the customary Law of Land Tenure," in Kristin Mann and Richard Roberts (eds), *Law in Colonial Africa*, Portsmouth: NH, Heinemann, 1991

Chanock Martin, *Law Custom and Social Order*: *The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Charumbira Ruramisai "Nehanda and Gender Victimhood in the Central Mashonaland 1896-97 Rebellions: Revisiting the Evidence." *History in Africa*, Vol. 35, 2008.

Chaumba J, I Scoones and W Wolmer, "From jambanja to planning: The Reassertion of Technocracy in Land Reform in South-eastern Zimbabwe." *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 4, 2003.

Cheater Angela, "The Ideology of 'Communal' Land Tenure in Zimbabwe: Mythogenesis Enacted?" in *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, vol.60. No 2, 1990.

Chimhundu Hebert, "*Tiri Vanhu*: The Creation of Chishona in Zimbabwe," in Hebert Chimhundu, Wiseman Magwa and Andy Chebanne (eds), *Harmonization of Shona-Nyai Varieties*, Cape Town, Center for Advanced Studies of African Studies (Casas Book Series No. 72), 2010.

Chimhundu Hebert, "Documenting the Shona-Nyai Cluster as a Cross Border Language," ," in Hebert Chimhundu, Wiseman Magwa and Andy Chebanne (eds), *Harmonization of Shona-Nyai Varieties*, Cape Town, Center for Advanced Studies of African Studies (Casas Book Series No. 72), 2010.

Chitepo Hebert W., "Soko Risina Musoro" in H Chitepo, S Mutsvairo, J Kumbirai and A Hodza, *Nduri DzeZimbabwe,* Harare, Longman Zimbabwe, 1983.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Cobbing Julian, “The Absent Priesthood: Another Look at the Rhodesian Risings of 1896-1897.” *Journal of African History*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1977.

Colson Elizabeth, “The Impact of the Colonial Period on the Definition of Land Rights,” in Victor Turner (ed), *colonialism in Africa: Vol.3. Profiles of Change: African Society and Colonial Rule,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1971.

Colson Elizabeth, “Land Rights and Land Use Among the Valley Tonga of the Rhodesian Federation: The Background to the Kariba Resettlement Scheme,” in Daniel Biebuyck, (ed), *African Agrarian Systems*, Oxford University Press, 1963.

Colson Elizabeth, *Marriage and Family Among the Plateau Tonga*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1958.

Cripps Arthur S., “African Land Tenure. (A Plea for Tolerance).” In *NADA*, No 4, 1926.

De Rezende Pedro Baretto, “Of the State of India.” In G.M. Theal, Records of South East Africa, (Vol.) 2, Cape Town, C Stuick, 1964.

Peter. Delius, *A Lion among the Cattle: Reconstruction and Resistance in the Northern Transvaal*, Portsmouth, NH, Heinemann, 1996.

Dos Santos Joao, “Eastern Ethiopia,” in G.M. Theal, *Records of South-Eastern Africa*, (Vol. 7). Cape Town, C Stuick, 1964.

Drinkwater Michael, *The State and Agrarian Change in Zimbabwe's Communal Areas*, Houndsmills, Macmillan, 1991.

E.T., “The Origin of the Name ‘Makoni.’” In *NADA* No. 14, 1937.

Falk Moore Sally, *Social Facts and Fabrication*: *‘Customary’ Law on Kilimanjaro, 1880-1980*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Feierman Steven, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania*, Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990.

Feierman Steven, *The Shambaa Kingdom: A History,* Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1974.

Finch E.M., “Pit People of the Inyanga Downs.” In *Proceedings of the Rhodesia Scientific Association* Vol. XLII, 1949.

Floyd Barry, “Land Apportionment in Southern Rhodesia.” *Geographical Review*, Vol. 52, 1962

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Fontein Joost, "We Want to Belong to Our Roots and We Want to Be Modern People: New Farmers, Old Claims Around Lake Mutirikwi, Southern Zimbabwe." *African Studies Quarterly* Vol. 10. No.4, 2009.

Fontein Joost, *The silence of Great Zimbabwe: Contested Landscapes and the Power of Heritage*, New York, UCL Press, 2006.

Ford John, *The Role of Trypanosomiases in African Ecology: A Study of the Tsetse Fly Problem,* Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971.

Franklin H, "'The War of the Tell-Tale' Between Chiefs Makoni and Mtasa." *NADA* No. 15, 1938.

Gelfand Michael, "The Mhondoro Cult among the Manyika Peoples of the Eastern Region of Mashonaland." *NADA*, Vol. XI, No.1, 1974

Gelfand Michael, "The Mhondoro—Chiminuku." *NADA*, No36, 1959.

Giblin James L., *A History of the Excluded: Making Family a Refuge from the State in Twentieth Century Tanzania*, Athens: OH, Ohio University Press, 2005.

Giblin James, "Land Tenure, Traditions of Thought about Land, and Their Environmental Implications in Tanzania," in John F Richards (ed), *Land, Property and the Environment*, Oakland, California, Institute for Contemporary Studies Press, 2002.

Giblin, James L., *The Politics of Environmental Control in Northeastern Tanzania*, 1840-1940, Philadelphia, The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.

Glazier Jack, *Land and the Uses of Tradition among the Mbeere of Kenya*, Lanham, The University Press of America, 1985.

Hall Martin, *The Changing Past: Farmers, Kings and Traders in Southern Africa, 200-1860,* Cape Town, David Philip, 1987.

Hanlon Joseph, Jenneatte Manjengwa and Teresa Smart, *Zimbabwe Takes Back its Land*, Boulder and London, Kumarian Press, 2013.

Hodder-Williams Richard, *White Farmers in Rhodesia, 1890-1965: A History of Marandellas District*, London, The Macmillan Press, 1983.

Holleman J.F., *Chief, Council and Commissioner: Some Problems of Government in Rhodesia, Assen:* Royal VanGorcum, 1969.

Holleman J.F., *Shona Customary Law With Particular Reference to Kinship, Marriage and the Estate*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1952.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Holleman J.F., “Some Shona Tribes of Southern Rhodesia” in Elizabeth Colson and Max Gluckman Eds), *Seven Tribes of Central Africa,* Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1951.

Hughes David McDermott, *From Enslavement to Environmentalism: Politics on a Southern African Frontier*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2006.

Iliffe John, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Jacobs Nancy J., *Environment, Power and Injustice: A South African History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Jacobs Nancy J., “The Great Bophuthatswana Donkey Massacre: Discourse on the Ass and the Politics of Class and Grass.” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 106, No. 2, 2001

Jenkinson J.N., “Installation of Chief Maranke.” *NADA*, No.36, 1959.

Jowett L.V., “The Hungwe People of the Makoni District.” *NADA* Vol 11, No.5, 1968.

Kanogo Thabitha, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, *1905-1963,* Athens: OH, Ohio University Press, 1987.

Kay George, *Rhodesia: A Human Geography*, New York, African Publishing Corporation, 1970.

Kopytoff Igor, “The Internal African Frontier: The Making of African Political Culture,” in Igor Kopytoff (ed), *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1987.

Kopytoff Igor and Suzzaine Miers “Introduction: African Slavery as an Institution of Marginality,” in Suzzaine Miers and Igor Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1977.

Kramer Eira, “The Clash of Economies: Early Centralization Efforts in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1929-1935.” *Zambezia*, Vol. XXV, No. 1, 1998.

Lan David, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe*, London James Curray, 1985.

Lentz Carola, *Land, Mobility, and Belonging in West Africa*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2013.

Lloyd Ellaine M., “In the Early Days,” *NADA*, No.4, 1926.

المنارة للاستشارات

www.manaraa.com

Lloyd Elaine M., "Mbava." In *NADA*, No. 3, 1925.

Lovejoy Paul E., *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Machingaidze Victor E.M., "Agrarian Change from Above: The Southern Rhodesia Native Land Husbandry Act and African Response." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 1991.

Mackenzie John M., "Red Soils in Mashonaland: A Reassessment." In *Rhodesian History*, Vol. 5, 1974.

Mamdani Mahmood, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Princeton: NJ, Princeton University Press, 1996.

Mamdani Mahmood, *When victims became Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001.*

Mandala Elias C., *Work and Control in a Peasant Economy: A History of the Lower Tchiri Valley in Malawi, 1859-1960,* Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990.

Matondi Prosper B, *Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform*, London, Zed Books, 2012.

Maxwell David, *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe: A Social History of the Hwesa People*, Westport, Pareger, 1999.

Mazarire Gerald Chikozho, "Reflections on Precolonial Zimbabwe, *c.* 850-1880s," in Brian Raftopoulos and Alois S Mlambo (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Precolonial Period to 2008*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2009.

Mazarire Gerald Chikozho, "'The Chishanga Waters have their Owners': Water Politics and Development in Southern Zimbabwe." *Journal of Southern African Studies,* Vol. 34, No. 4, 2008.

Mazarire Gerald Chikozho, "Changing Landscapes and Oral memory in South Central Zimbabwe. Towards a Historical Geography of Chishanga, c1850-1990," in *Journal of Southern African Studies* vol 29, No 3, 2003.

McCann James, *Maize and Grace: Africa's Encounter with a New World Crop, 1500-2000*, Cambridge: MA, Harvard University Press, 2005

McGregor JoAnn, *Crossing the Zambezi: The politics of landscape on a Central African frontier*, London, James Currey, 2009.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

McGregor JoAnn, "Conservation, Control and Ecological Change: The Politics and Ecology of Colonial Conservation in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe." *Environment and History* No. 1, 1995.

Miller Joseph, "Introduction: Listening for the African Past." In Joseph Miller (ed), *The African Past Speaks: Essays on Oral Tradtion and History*, Kent, W.M. Dawson and Sons, 1980.

Monclaro (Father), Account of the Journey made by Fathers of the Company of Jesus with Francisco Barreto in the Conquest of Monomotapa in the Year 1569," in George M. Theal, *Records of South Eastern Africa* (Vol. III), Cape Town, C. Struik, 1964.

Montagu-Kerr Walter, *The Far Interior: A Narrative of Travel and Adventure from the Cape of Good Hope Across the Zambezi to the Lakes Region of Central Africa*, London, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1887.

Moore Donald S., *Suffering For Territory: Race Place and Power in Zimbabwe*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2006.

Moore Henrietta L. and Meghan Vaughan, *Cutting Down Trees: Gender, Nutrition and Agricultural Change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890-1990*, Portsmouth: NH, Heinemann, 1994.

Morris E.W., "Marondella's District"-History of Native Tribes and Chiefs: Information Supplied to the South African Native Affairs Commission, 1903." *NADA*, Vol. XI, No. 4, 1977

Moyana Henry V, *The Political Economy of Land in Zimbabwe* Gweru: Mambo Press, 2002

Moyo Sam and Walter Chambati, "Introduction: The Roots of the Fast Track Land Reform," in Moyo Sam and Walter Chambati (eds), *Land and Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe: Beyond White-Settler Capitalism*, Dakar, CODESRIA, 2013.

Moyo Sam and Walter Chambati (eds), *Land and Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe: Beyond White-Settler Capitalism*, Dakar, CODESRIA, 2013.

Mtetwa Richard M.G., "'Red Soils in Mashonaland: A Reassessment': Contrary Evidence." In *Rhodesian History*, Vol.6, 1975.

Mudenge S.I.G., *A Political History of Munhumutapa, c1400-1902*, Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Mujere Joseph, “Land, Graves and Belonging: Land Reform and the Politics of Belonging in Newly Resettled Farms in Gutu, 2000-2009.” *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 5, 2011.

Mukamuri Billy, “Local Environmental Conservation Strategies: Karanga Religion, Politics and Environmental Control.” *Environment and History*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1995.

Mulhanga Samuel and Elaine M Lloyd, “Mbava and Others,” *NADA,* 4, 1926

Munro William, *The Moral Economy of the State: Conservation, Community Development and State-making in* Zimbabwe, Athens: OH, Ohio University Press, 1998.

Muzondidya James, “‘Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans’: Invisible Subject Minorities and the Quest for Justice and Reconciliation in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe,” in Brian Raftopoulos and Tyrone Savage (eds), *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconcilliation*, Cape Town, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004.

Ncube Godfrey T., *A History of Northwestern Zimbabwe, 1850-1960*, Kadoma, Mond Books, 2004.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni Sabelo J., *Do ‘Zimbabweans’ Exist*? *Trajectories of Nationalism, National Identity Formation and Crisis in a Postcolonial State*, New York, Peter Lang, 2009.

Pius S Nyambabra, “‘That Place was Wonderful!” African Tenants on Rhodesdale Estate, Colonial Zimbabwe, *c*.1900 to 1952.” *The International Journal of African historical Studies*, vol.38, No.2, 2005.

Nyambara Pius S., “*Madheruka* and *Shangwe:* Ethnic Identity and the Culture of Modernity in Gokwe, Northwestern Zimbabwe, 1963-1979.” *Journal of Africa History*, Vol. 43, No.2, 2002.

Nyamunda Tinashe, “Did Zimbabweans Take Their Land Back? *Journal of Southern African Studies* Vol. 40, No. 4, 2014.

Packard Randall, *Chiefship and Cosmology: An Historical Study of Political Competition*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1981.

Palmer Robin, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977.

Palmer Robin, “The Agricultural History of Rhodesia.” In Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons, *Roots of Rural Poverty*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1977.

Palmer Robin, “Red Soils in Rhodesia.” *African Social Research*, Vol. 1, 1970.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Phillipson David, *African Archaeology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Phimister Ian, "Rethinking the Reserves: Southern Rhodesia's Land Husbandry Act Reviewed." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1993.

Phimister Ian, *A Social and Economic History of Zimbabwe, 1890-1958: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle,* London: Longman, 1988.

Phimister Ian, "Discourse and the Discipline of Historical Context: Conservationism and Ideas about Development in Southern Rhodesia 1930-1950." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 12, No.2, 1986.

Phimister Ian, "Peasant Production and Underdevelopment in Southern Rhodesia, 1894-1914, with Particular Reference to the Victoria District." In Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons (eds), *Roots of Rural Poverty in central and Southern Africa*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1977.

Pikirayi Innocent, *the Zimbabwe Culture: The Origins and Decline in Southern Zambezian States*, Walnut Creek, AltaMira Press, 2001.

Posselt F.W.T., "Chaminuka the Wizzard." *NADA* No.4, 1936

Posselt F.W.T., "Marondera." *NADA*, No.5, 1927.

Posselt F.W.T., "The Banyemba Legend and Ceremony." *NADA* No.2, 1924.

Pwiti Gilbert, *Continuity and Change: An Archaeological Study of Farming Communities in Northern Zimbabwe AD 500-1700*, Studies in African Archaeology 13, Uppsala, Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University, 1996.

Ranger Terence, *Writing Revolt: An Engagement with African Nationalism, 1957-1967*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2013.

Ranger Terence, "Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: The Struggles over the Past in Zimbabwe." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, No.30, Vol. 2, 2004.

Ranger Terence, *Voices from the Rocks: Nature, Culture and History in the Matopos Hills of Zimbabwe*, Oxford: James Currey, 1999.

Ranger Terence, " The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa," in," in Terence Ranger and O Vaughan, (eds) *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth Century Africa*, Houndmills: Macmillan, 1993.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Ranger Terence, “The Communal Areas of Zimbabwe.” In *Land in African Agrarian Systems*, edited by Thomas J Bassett and Donald E Crummey, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1993.

Ranger Terence, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla Warfare: A Comparative Study,* London: James Currey, 1985.

Ranger Terence, “Invention of tradition in Colonial Africa,” in Eric J Hobsbawm and Terence O Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Ranger Terrence O., *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 1896-7: A Study in African Resistance*, London, Heinemann, 1967.

Rennie John Keith, “White Farmers, Black Tenants and Landlord Legislation: Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1930.” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1978.

Roder Wolf, “The Division of Land Resources in Southern Rhodesia.” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 54, 1964

Rubert Steven C., *A Most Promising Weed: A History of Tobacco Farming and Labor in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890-1945*, Athens: OH, Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1998.

Rutherford Blair, “Conditional Belonging: Farm Workers and the Cultural Politics of Recognition in Zimbabwe,” *Development and Change*, Vol. 39, No. 1, 2008.

Schmidt Elizabeth, *Peasants, Traders and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939,* Portsmouth: NH, Heinemann, 1992.

Schmidt Heike, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe: A History of Suffering,* Suffolk, Boydell & Brewer, 2013

Schoenbrun David L., *A Green Place, A Good Place: Agrarian Change, Gender and Social Identity in the Great Lakes Region to the 15th Century*, Heinemann: NH, Portsmouth, 1998.

Scott James C., *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed*, New Heaven, Yale University Press, 1998.

Scott James C., *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*, New Heaven, Yale University Press, 1976.

Scoones Ian *etal*, *Zimbabwe’s Land Reform: Myths and Realities*, Suffolk, James Currey, 2010.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Selous Frederick Courtney, *Travel and Adventure in Southeast Africa*, New York, Arno Press, 1967.

Shetler Jan Bender, *Imagining Serengeti: A History of Landscape and Memory in Tanzania from Earliest Times to the Present*, Athens: OH, Ohio University Press, 2007.

Shetler Jan Bender, "The Gendered Space of historical Knowledge: Women's Knowledge and Extraordinary Women in Serengeti District, Tanzania." *The International Journal of African historical Studies* Vol 36, No 2, 2003.

Shipton Parker, *Mortgaging the Ancestors: Ideologies of Attachment in Africa*, New Heaven, Yale University Press, 2009.

Shropshire Dennys,"The Crocodile Ceremony of the Mutasa Dynasty." In *Man* Vol. 30, 1930.

Shropshire Dennys, "The Mifananidzo of the Mutasa Dynasty." In *Man* Vol. 30, 1930.

Shutt Allison, "The Natives are Getting Out of Hand: Legislating Manners, Insolence and Contemptuous Behaviour in Southern Rhodesia, 1910-1963." *Journal of Southern African Studies* Vol. 33, No. 3, 2007

Soper Robert, *Nyanga: Ancient Fields, Settlements and Agricultural History in Zimbabwe*, London, The British Institute in Eastern Africa, 2002.

Spear Thomas T., Neo-traditionalism and the Limits if Invention in British Colonial Africa." *Journal of African History* Vol. 44, No. 1, 2003

Spear Thomas T., *Mountain Farmers: Moral Economies of Land and Agricultural Development in Arusha and Meru*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997.

Spierenburg Marja J., *Strangers, Spirits and Land Reforms: Conflicts about Land in Dande, Northern Zimbabwe,* Leiden, Brill, 2005.

Stead W.H., "Concepts and Control in Native Life: Elements of a Sociological Analysis." *NADA*, No 13, 1935.

Sutton John E.G., "Engaruka: The Success and Abandonment of an Integrated Irrigation System in an Arid Part of the Rift Valley, *c.* Fifteenth to Sixteenth Centuries," in Mats Widgren and John E.G. Sutton (eds), *Islands of Intensive Agriculture in Eastern Africa*, Oxford, James Currey, 2004

Tendi Blessing Miles, *Making History in Mugabe's Zimbabwe: Politics, Intellectuals and the Media*, Oxford, Peter Lang, 2010.

Thokozane John, "A Short History of Chipunza." In *NADA*, ix, 2, 1965.

المنارة للاستشارات

www.manaraa.com

Thompson E.P., “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century.” *Past and Present*, Vol. 50, 1971.

Tonkin Elizabeth, *Narrating our Past: The Social Construction of Oral History*: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

van Onselen Charles, *The Seed Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper, 1894-1985*, New York, Hill and Wang, 1996.

Vansina Jan, *How Societies are Born: Governance in West Central Africa Before 1600*, Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2004.

Vansina Jan, *Paths in the Rain Forest: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa*, Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990.

Vansina Jan, *Oral Tradition as History*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.

Walker Nicholas J., *Late Pleistocene and Holocene Hunter-gatherers of the Matopos: An Archaeological Study of Change and Continuity in Zimbabwe*, Uppsala, Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Societas Archaeologica Uppsaliensis, 1995.

Weinrich A. K. H., *Chiefs and Councils in Rhodesia: Transition from Patriarchal to Bureaucratic Power*, London, Heinemann, 1971.

Widgren Mats, “Towards a Historical Geography of Intensive Farming in Eastern Africa.” In Mats Widgren and John E. G. Sutton (eds), *Islands of Intensive Agriculture in Eastern Africa: Past and Present*, Oxford, James Currey, 2004.

Woollacott R.C., “Pasipamire—Spirit Medium of Chaminuka, the “Wizard” of Chitungwiza.” *NADA* Vol. XI, NO. 2, 1975.

Worby Eric, “Maps, Names and Ethnic Games: The Iconography and Epistemology of Colonial Power in Northwestern Zimbabwe.’ *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 1994.

Zvarevashe I.M. *Dzinza RaVagovera VaChirumhanzu NaMutasa*, Gweru, Mambo Press, 1998.

Zvarevashe I.M., *Kurauone*, Salisbury, College Press, 1976.

المنارة للاستشارات

www.manaraa.com