

**A SOCIAL AND POLITICAL HISTORY OF CHISHANGA: SOUTH-CENTRAL
ZIMBABWE c.1750-2000**

By

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Abstract

This thesis is about a 'place' that effectively no longer exists-in the sense of being a recognisable unit of territory. 'Chishanga' has always been a term of contestation, referring more or less tenuously to a stretch of ground across which struggles for authority power and identity have taken place. In tracking and examining these struggles using various oral as well as archival sources, this thesis documents the process through which Chishanga was transformed from being a satellite province of the Rozvi state in the 18th century to become a part of a Karanga polity under the vaHera dynasty of Mapanzure that subsequently disintegrated due to colonial administrative and land use policies. Central to the discussion is also the reclamation of 'Chishanga' in the late 1990s through a process initiated by its people in the 1960s.

The thesis employs centre-periphery models and various concepts of ethnogenesis to argue that the idea of Chishanga as a collective metaphor of belonging was sustained by the fact that the Chishanga territorial centre has always remained at one place although its periphery shifted constantly throughout the period under study. This centre or *gadzingo* became the point over which all contestations to Chishanga were articulated by various groups who laid claim to this territory. The *gadzingo* thus gained universal appeal and became the rallying point accommodating all the different identities shaping Chishanga and those shaped by it. It naturally became the basis over which a reclamation process was launched in the late colonial period.

This study challenges the notion that African societies were made up of neatly bound and delineated political units waiting for colonial rule. It uses the territorial fluidity of the Chishanga periphery to explore other variables shaping this society while at the same time interrogating some of the stereotypes inherent in the sources generated on Africa especially in the colonial period.

Key words:

Centre-periphery, territory, *gadzingo*, tradition, chieftainship, 'houses', Chishanga, reclamation, state, development.

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Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Contents	viii
List of Figures.....	xiii
List of Plates	xiv
List of Tables	xv
Abbreviations	xvi
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1	16
Reading Chishanga: Literature Review and Methodology.....	16
<i>1.1 Introduction.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>1.2 Literature Review.....</i>	<i>19</i>
1.2.1 Archival Sources.....	19
1.2.2 Secondary Material	29
<i>1.3 Theoretical Orientation</i>	<i>36</i>
1.3.1 The Centre-Periphery Theory	36
1.3.2. The ‘Frontier Process’ of Ethnogenesis.....	38
<i>1.4. The ‘Rozvi System’ and Macro Level Centre-Periphery Dynamics Shaping Chishanga</i>	<i>41</i>
1.4.1 The ‘Mwari’ Cult within the ‘Rozvi System’	43
1.4.2 The Tributary Network	44
<i>1.5 Karanga Adaptation to the ‘Rozvi System’ and the New Micro-Level Concepts of Territory in Chishanga Under the vaHera</i>	<i>46</i>
1.5.1 The Gadzingo.....	48
1.5.2 Defence	51
1.5.3 Environment.....	53
<i>1.6 Conclusion</i>	<i>55</i>
Chapter 2	58
Chishanga and the Autochthons c. 1750-1830.....	58

2.1 Introduction.....	58
2.2 The ‘Rozvi System’ in Chishanga	58
2.3 The VaShawasha.....	63
2.4 The Shava-Nhire/Gwizhu-Matutu/ Mafusire.....	66
2.5 The Rombo and Gwadzi.....	68
2.6 The Mamwa.....	70
2.7 The Zhou-Mhizha/Murimigwa: An Ethnography.....	71
2.8 Conclusion	87
Chapter 3	88
Chishanga as a Hera Frontier and the Politics of Emplacement.....	88
3.1 Introduction: Hera Expansionism.....	88
3.2 The Hera Southern Frontier	89
3.3 The Hera in Chishanga.....	95
3.3.1 The Chishanga-Hera War of Dispossession	98
3.4 The Hera Political Geography.....	99
3.5 Hera Houses and the Battle for Political Supremacy in Chishanga	106
3.5.1 The Muchenugwa House	106
3.5.2 The Muravu House	109
3.5.2.1 Muravu’s Sons	109
3.5.2.2 The Mapanzure House	110
3.5.2.3 The Mazorodze House	110
3.5.2.4 The Chatikobo House	112
3.5.3 The Mukapare/Gapare House	113
3.5.4 The Muchibwa House	114
3.5.5 The ‘Lost Houses’ of MuMbijo and Chitekedza	117
3.6 Accounting For the Dominance of the Mazorodze House in Chishanga.....	119
3.7 Conclusion	122
Chapter 4	124
The Forces of Change in Chishanga 1819-1890s.....	124
4.1 The Hera Neighbours and the New Dispensation.....	124
4.1.1 The Duma under Shumba-Chekai and the VaRemba Problem	125
4.1.2 Charumbira	132
4.2 The Nguni in Chishanga c.1819-1888	134
4.3 Europeans ‘See’ Chishanga.....	143
4.3.1 Carl Mauch: 1871-72	143
4.3.2 The Posselt Brothers: 1889	148

4.3.3 Frederick Courtney Selous and Theodore Bent: 1890-1891.....	149
4.4 Conclusion	152
Chapter 5	156
A ‘Little England’ In Chishanga: The Fate of a British Empire Leprosarium at Ngomahuru 1925 -1946.....	156
5.1 Introduction:	156
5.2 Pioneering Work in Leprosy	159
5.3 The Leper Colony Moves to Chishanga.....	162
5.3.1 The Ngomahuru Leper Settlement.....	167
5.3.2 ‘Nyasha’: The Meaning of Ngomahuru in Chishanga	175
5.4 The Ngomahuru Hospital Inquiry Commission of 1945.....	183
5.5 Conclusion	188
Chapter 6	191
‘At Home’ in Mshawasha [West] Native Purchase Area and the Moulding of A ‘Chishanga Consciousness’ Among Farmowners 1931-1945.....	191
6.1 Introduction.....	191
6.2 The Place of Native Purchase Areas in Zimbabwean Historiography.....	192
6.3 ‘Self-Peasantisation’ and The ‘Men of Cattle’ in Chishanga.....	196
6.4 ‘Pointing Homes’ in Mshawasha West Native Purchase Area.....	200
6.5 ‘Squatting Relatives’ and Dispersal in the Purchase Area in Chishanga.....	212
6.6 The Southern Rhodesia Native Association: Mshawasha Branch and The Growth of a ‘Chishanga Consciousness’	221
6.7 Conclusion	226
Chapter 7	228
Compulsive State Interventionism in Chishanga and Threats to the Rambotemwa Sacred Forest 1943-1962.....	228
7.1 Introduction.....	228
7.2 Centralisation and Conservation Work in Chishanga 1929-1947	229
7.3 The Land Husbandry Act In Chishanga.....	236
7.4 Conclusion	253

Chapter 8	255
The Retreat of the State and ‘The Return to Tradition’: Community Development and the Reclamation of the Mapanzure Ancestral <i>Gadzingo</i> 1969-1976	255
8.1 <i>Introduction</i>	255
8.2 <i>Community Development in Practice in Chishanga</i>	257
8.2.1 The Politics of Mapanzure Council	257
8.2.2 The Victoria Young Farmers Club and Mshawasha West African Farmers Cooperative ‘Kopa’	261
8.3 ‘Primary Development’ and The Shumbayaonda/Mapanzure Irrigation Scheme	266
8.4 <i>The Return of the Ancestral Gadzingo 1969-1976</i>	272
8.5 <i>Re-tribalising Purchase Area Farmers 1976-80</i>	287
8.6 <i>Conclusion</i>	292
Chapter 9	294
‘Liberating’ Chishanga: The War and Its Local Meanings	294
9.1 <i>Introduction</i>	294
9.2 <i>The Contradictions of Chishanga in a War Situation</i>	295
9.3 <i>Accessing Chishanga in the ‘Nyajena Detachment’</i>	299
9.4 <i>Some Early War Experiences near Chishanga</i>	301
9.5 <i>Memories of the War in Chishanga</i>	304
9.5.1 ‘Bases’ as Sites of Memory for the War in Chishanga.....	309
9.6 <i>Some Chishanga War Stories</i>	312
9.6.1 First Encounters and Gun Justice.....	312
9.6.2 Mujibha Agency.....	313
9.6.3 Memories of the Rhodesian Forces.....	319
9.7 <i>Nylon Masambaasiyana: ‘The Legend of Nyajena’ or is it of Chishanga?</i>	325
9.8 <i>The Final Northerly Advance</i>	329
9.9 <i>Conclusion</i>	330
Chapter 10	332
Dis-Continuity in ‘Independent’ Chishanga 1980-2000	332
10.1 <i>Introduction</i>	332
10.2 <i>Re-negotiating Power in Newly Independent Chishanga:</i>	334
10.3 <i>Land Disputes, Political Re-Deployment and Declining Chiefly Power in Chishanga</i>	340

<i>10.4 The Competition for 'Home': Conflict, Sub-division and Dispersal in the Mshawasha Purchase Area.....</i>	<i>346</i>
10.4.1 Equal Access to The Farm: The Gapare and Matewe Farms.....	349
10.4.2 Brother Takes All: The 'Dombodema' and 'Chemudekunya' Cases	350
10.4.3 'Let us all live Together': The 'Mafurinye' Case.....	351
10.4.4 The Abandoned Farm: The 'Chamapete' Case.....	352
10.4.5 Buying Our Way Back To Chishanga: The Manenji Farm	353
<i>10.5 The Ngomahuru/Mukosi Resettlement Scheme and the 1982-84 Drought</i>	<i>355</i>
<i>10.6 Squatters, Politicians and Occupation of the Gadzingo 1985-1997.....</i>	<i>358</i>
<i>10.7 Conclusion</i>	<i>368</i>
Conclusion	370
References	384
Glossary of Terms	406
Appendices.....	407

List of Figures

<i>Fig. i) Map Showing Location Of Masvingo District In Zimbabwe</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Fig. ii): Map Showing Topography And Approximate Extent Of Chishanga.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Fig. 1. 1 Karanga Migrations During The Rozvi Period C. 1750.....</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>Fig. 2. 1 Chishanga And Contemporary Autochthonous Polities C. 1750.....</i>	<i>62</i>
<i>Fig. 3. 1: Mountains In Chishanga.....</i>	<i>105</i>
<i>Fig. 3. 2: The Hera Political Geography In Chishanga Incorporating The Gadzingo And The Rambotemwa Sacred Forest C. 1850-1901</i>	<i>118</i>
<i>Fig. 4. 1: Chishanga After The Hera-Mapanzure Conquest C. 1830.....</i>	<i>126</i>
<i>Fig. 6. 1: Farm Holdings In Chishanga</i>	<i>211</i>
<i>Fig. 7. 1: Victoria Reserve Centralisation Survey And Landuse Plan 1943-1951</i>	<i>242</i>
<i>Fig. 8. 1: Mapanzure Irrigation Scheme Plan [Map Not Drawn To Scale].....</i>	<i>271</i>
<i>Fig. 8. 2: Gadzingo Area Transferred To Mapanzure Ttl</i>	<i>286</i>
<i>Fig. 9. 1: Zanla Operational Areas Incoperating The Nyajena Detachment</i>	<i>303</i>
<i>Fig. 9. 2: Zanla Bases In Chishanga's Gadzingo Area</i>	<i>310</i>
<i>Fig. 10. 1: Present Land Use Patterns In Chishanga.....</i>	<i>335</i>

List of Plates

<i>Plate 1: Marungudzi Mountain Southern Elevation.....</i>	<i>81</i>
<i>Plate 2: Marungudzi Mountain From Chen'ombe Hill.....</i>	<i>82</i>
<i>Plate 3: Mhizha Elders At The Three Sacred Pools Or 'Zvitoravadzimu'</i>	<i>85</i>
<i>Plate 4: The Chomukamba Court.....</i>	<i>86</i>
<i>Plate 5: The Zhou Zone From Inside The Gadzingo</i>	<i>101</i>
<i>Plate 6: The Gadzingo Viewed From The Direction That Carl Mauch Saw It.</i>	<i>144</i>
<i>Plate 7: One Of The Waterfalls On Musogwezi River Towards Its Confluence With The Musuka And Right At The Point That Carl Mauch Saw And Admired It.</i>	<i>148</i>
<i>Plate 8: Chiefs And Headman Of The Victoria District Soon After The Demarcation Of The Reserves.</i>	<i>155</i>

List of Tables

<i>Table 1: Names Of Applicants For Land In The Mshawasha Division [Adapted From S1044/10 Asst. Director Of Native Lands To Govt. Land Surveyor 18th April 1936.]</i>	
.....	206
<i>Table 2: List Of ‘Approved Squatters’ With Permits In Chishanga.....</i>	214

Abbreviations

AGRITEX	Department of Agricultural Extension Services
APA	African Purchase Area
APL	African Purchase Lands
BELRA	British Empire Leprosy Relief Association
BSAC	British South Africa Company
CADEC	Catholic Development Commission
CNC	Chief Native Commissioner
CONEX	Department of Conservation and Extension
DC	District Commissioner
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
DERUDE	Department of Rural Development
ICA	Intensive Conservation Area
LAA	Land Apportionment Act
LDO	Land Development Officer
MLG DDA	Ministry of Local Government Division of District Administration
NADA	Native Affairs Department Annual
NAZ	National Archives of Zimbabwe
NC	Native Commissioner
NDP	National Democratic Party
NLB	Native Land Board

NLHA	Native Land Husbandry Act
NPA	Native Purchase Area
NRB	Natural Resources Board
PC	Provincial Commissioner
PF	Patriotic Front
PNC	Provincial Native Commissioner
RAR	Rhodesian African Rifles
RF	Rhodesian Front
RLI	Rhodesian Light Infantry
RNLB	Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau
RSF	Rhodesian Security Forces
SON	Superintendent of Natives
SRNA	Southern Rhodesia Native Association
TLA	Tribal Land Authorities
TTL	Tribal Trust Land
TV	Teach and Visit
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
VIDCO	Village Development Committee
YFC	Young Farmers' Club
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZIPA	Zimbabwe People's Army

ZIPRA

Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army

ZUM

Zimbabwe Unity Movement

Introduction

Chishanga was once a political territory. Today it is a collective idea referring to many parts of this historic territory with no agreed definition. The term 'Chishanga' has consequently assumed multiple meanings. It has been used in many instances to refer to a geographical area lying about forty kilometres south of the present day city of Masvingo. One can easily trace important dynamics associated with Chishanga to a zone roughly between the Musogwezi, Musuka, Govogwe, Ngondo and Tugwi rivers. The land lying between these rivers is marked by immovable physical attributes which define it as a landscape. But when this landscape is called 'Chishanga' the name also conjures up complex historical associations, some describing its peoples while others describe the land and yet others explain shared contextual legacies. Understanding the interplay between this geography and the people's history, it will be argued, goes a long way towards revealing the various meanings of 'Chishanga'.

The area has had a contested political history which can be briefly summarised. The first known polity in the area was a tributary chieftancy of the Rozvi confederacy. The chieftancy was established by the NeChishanga dynasty of the *Shoko* (monkey) totem, after whom the area came to be called Chishanga. In the late 18th to early 19th centuries, as the Rozvi confederacy disintegrated, the area was taken over by the Shava-Hera people of the *Mhofu* (eland) totem led by Mutunhakuwenda (shortened to Mutunha) and his brother Mutizira. A section of Mutunha's descendants established the Mapunzure chiefdom which dominated the area until the late 19th century. The Mapunzure dynasty

replaced the NeChishanga chiefs as the effective political power but it never controlled the whole of Chishanga territory. The name 'Chishanga' continued to be used to describe their territory but it became ambiguous, referring to parts that the Mapanzure rulers were not necessarily in control of.

Following the establishment of colonial rule, however, the political and social landscape was more fundamentally changed. The 'Chishanga' territory was broken apart into the Mshwawasha Native Purchase Area, the Ngomahuru Leprosy Hospital and the Mapanzure Reserve. After Zimbabwe's Independence in 1980 the Ngomahuru/Mukosi resettlement scheme was also established. The Mapanzure chieftancy throughout the colonial period was recognised only in the Reserve although it continued to refer to 'Chishanga' as its traditional territory or *nyika*.

This thesis seeks to fulfil two broad objectives, the first an empirical one seeking to use available evidence to account for the hidden meanings of Chishanga and its subsequent disintegration over time. This will be done through the analysis of change and the impact such change had on the ways in which the people of Chishanga perceive their past. The second is a theoretical contribution seeking to demonstrate that the history of Chishanga lies embedded in the relationship between its landscape and its people. For the entire period under study, the centre of Chishanga has remained at one place around Zhou mountain which formed the political, economic and religious core for both the NeChishanga and Mapanzure administrations. Its periphery constantly shifted over time and due to various forces. An understanding of the relationship between this centre and

its fluid periphery is an important concern of this study. Appreciating changes in Chishanga's physical geography and how they were interpreted by the Chishanga people helps us understand the interplay between history, geography, place and memory in this dynamic African society.

This thesis also seeks to contribute towards filling an important gap in the documentation of the history of southern Zimbabwe. 'Chishanga' has been a significant omission in local history especially given that its neighbours and contemporaries – Charumbira, Nemamwa, Chivi and the Duma chieftaincies of Mugabe and Shumba-Chekai- have all received substantial academic attention by contrast to the mystery that still surrounds 'Chishanga'. This is because all these names can be identified much more clearly with continuous 'chiefdom' units of the type which early ethnographers and colonial officials sought to define. Once defined, such 'chiefdoms' were believed to offer more or less straightforward political histories. Academic historians have continued to take these chiefdoms as historical givens and have continued to seek to write political histories of them.¹ This has not happened with 'Chishanga'. By the time local oral traditions began to receive systematic administrative and scholarly attention from the early twentieth century onwards, the name 'Chishanga' had long since ceased to correlate with a continuing traditional polity. It was therefore overlooked by early colonial 'experts' on Africans.²

¹ See for example R.M.G.Mtewa, 'The Political and Economic History of the Duma People of South Eastern Rhodesia from the early 19th century to 1945', Unpublished DPhil. Thesis, University of Rhodesia, 1976.

² 'History of Native Tribes', 1904, N3/33/38, National Archives of Zimbabwe.

This way it has continued to receive only passing reference and its history has continually been misrepresented.³

Unlike the mentioned chieftaincies, Chishanga defies the standard dynastic political model and its history is not found 'cut and dried' in the predominantly colonial archive such as the one historians have relied on to reconstruct Zimbabwe's pre-colonial past. Chishanga is a territorial study that has to be pieced together from memories and the changing perceptions of people who interacted in a theatre they all identified as Chishanga. More often, their experiences gather around issues of belonging and the competition to control this territory. It easily becomes a story of power and how it is negotiated over the land by its people.

Colonial authorities found it difficult to comprehend the dynamics that Chishanga exhibited, as they were pre-occupied with identifying the area controlled by the Mapanzure chiefs and were content to call it 'Mapanzure' reserve. At the same time the ruling vaHera continued to take pride in being addressed as VaChishanga and their Mapanzure chiefs continued to speak of their territory as 'Chishanga'. This was an ideological rather than a historical assertion. It laid a claim to an ideal identity and territory rather than offering an accurate description of the actual extent of the territory that they controlled. The Hera certainly did not take over a 'geo-political' entity from the NeChishanga and they never succeeded in constructing one. No matter how much the Hera tried to keep their borders elastic, the size and extent of Chishanga began to shrink

³ D.N. Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past: Shona Dynastic Histories and Oral Traditions*, Mambo, Gweru, 1994, p.175.

at the very point that it fell into their hands. But by virtue of being the only ones left to tell the story, the Hera continue to regard Chishanga territory and its history as their own.

For the historian, the problem is to understand why the concept of 'Chishanga' continued to have such power that it over-rode dynastic identity. For the colonial administrator, the problem was to work out how the name related to 'traditional' land claims on the ground. Faced with this dilemma in the early 1910s, the Native Reserves Commission, decided to ignore the notion of 'Chishanga' altogether and to create instead a construct called 'Old Mapanzure Reserve', whose area they estimated at 94,904 acres.⁴

What did it mean, though, when the Hera people and their chiefs continued to use the term 'Chishanga' instead of this colonial nomenclature? Chishanga, which had once been a political fact, had now become an imagined geography. But even when the name 'Chishanga' really meant something politically, it did not mean 'territory' in the European sense. The geography of the NeChishanga dynasty was not a mapped, delineated and bounded one. It consisted rather of a number of points in interaction with each other but administered from a political centre, the core. Politics were more about people – inhabitants and followers – than about territory. Here we are therefore confronted with a different kind of 'geography' as well as a different kind of 'history'; different senses of place as well as time. The continued claim to a Chishanga identity is not, then, merely a claim to a *bigger* territory. It is a claim to a different sort of prestige and hegemony, not bounded by frontiers laid down by Reserves Commissions or limited by colonial recognition of chiefly status. It is a repudiation, moreover, not only of the

⁴ Report of the Natives Reserves Commission, A3/3/20/5, National Archives of Zimbabwe.

purely dynastic basis of local history but also of colonial assumptions about ethnicity. In their quest to identify different 'tribes' in Southern Rhodesia, colonial officials not only sought to name them but to place these named entities within larger ethnic maps.⁵ However, as Eric Worby's work on the 'Shangwe' of Northwestern Zimbabwe shows, there were often problems. Some peoples failed to fit into cartographic enclaves. Still worse, the new ethnic maps deleted existing identities. Chishanga defied ethnic mapping, being claimed both by *shoko* and by *mhofu* peoples as well as by so many others with the passage of time.

This study is motivated by the fact that the context of all these claims has always remained focused at the same place; a central location now known as the *gadzingo* of the Mapanzure people. It is a concentration of mountains and thick forests which has been their central administrative area, burial ground for chiefs and place of refuge in the event of enemy attacks. A special forest has been created around it for the Hera's supplications to their ancestral spirits and that of the Karanga High God *Mwari*. Yet this has only been the case for as long as the Hera have remained the traditional rulers of Chishanga. Before them, the same zone was the centre of the Chishanga polity although none of the NeChishanga people have lived to lay their claims. Their clients however, the Mhizha, contest the power and presence of the Hera in this sacred zone which they have also appropriated in their own ways. This thesis documents the interplay of these claims and struggles before the advent of colonialism and how they were neutralised by colonial displacements which, above all, removed all the claimants from this centre. This was

⁵ E. Worby, 'Maps, Names and Ethnic Games: The Epistemology and Iconography of Colonial Power in Northwestern Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 20, 3, 1994, p.384.

never able to silence these discourses which, instead, continued and nurtured a consciousness of belonging to Chishanga however contested.

The thesis ends with an anti-climax where this *gadzingo* is returned by the colonial government in 1976 and discusses the process of its reclamation and spontaneous occupation by all the forces competing to own Chishanga which reaches fever pitch in 1997. This process is testimony to the underlying dynamics that shaped the idea of Chishanga over time and the extent to which it is home to many other people apart from the Hera alone. The phrase ‘Chishanga people’ shall be consistently used in this thesis not in reference to NeChishanga’s *shoko* people but to all these people who lay claims Chishanga in their various ways.

The first chapter details the methodological framework informing the study. It is an appreciation of the fact that Chishanga as a political and social phenomenon has no place in the ‘Colonial Archive’ i.e. a repository made up of mostly documents reflecting colonial ideas of African social and political culture. Informed by notions of ‘cut and dried’ chieftaincies which could be distinctly mapped, none of the archival documents used here captured the physicality of Chishanga, instead they referred to its discourses and consciousness which these early ‘experts’ were not concerned about. This becomes the focus of analysis in this thesis which inspires the method it employs; that of understanding the importance of political and social cores in shaping the destinies of their ever-changing peripheries. This is the fountainhead of local concepts of ethnogenesis and forms the basis for a better understanding of Karanga society. It is argued in this chapter

that Chishanga has its origins in the 'Rozvi System' and its transformation represents all the changes resulting in the Karanga adapting and modifying this system to suit the changing demands of the 19th Century. It is a model which can be used to understand the function and purpose of all the contestations of Chishanga and finds universal application in other contemporary and neighbouring Karanga polities.

Chapter 2 traces the various groups of people within and around Chishanga before the coming of the vaHera. Using their oral traditions as far as they can apply it attempts to map out the rough extent of their territories relative to Chishanga. In all, three main territories are identified including Chishanga itself and each of these seemed to have a political centre controlled by the dominant lineage as well as peripheral provinces entrusted to agnates and important clients. An attempt is made to piece this together concentrating on both the 'big' and 'small' territorial units as well as their spatial distribution to form the background on which the vaHera polity establishes itself when it takes over Chishanga.

Chapter 3 traces the origins of the vaHera, the process of their conquest of Chishanga and the political geography they introduced thereafter. It views Chishanga as a Hera frontier which is subdivided amongst several lineage heads who lead 'houses' *dzimba* or family groups. The intricate relationship linking kinship and territory is explored using traditions collected from each 'house' *imba* and, while these traditions talk of distribution of mountains and rivers, the chapter attempts to map out the rough extent of Hera power in Chishanga. It demonstrates that from the time of the conquest of Chishanga, the Hera

political centre has always been at one place i.e. Zhou mountain which was surrounded by a cluster of mountains forming the *gadzingo* (political and social headquarters). The distribution of territory was always conducted from the point of view of this centre where a collective Hera identity was constructed. An analysis of 'house' politics amongst the vaHera highlights the internal power dynamics shaped by the desire to control this centre which resulted in some 'houses' being more dominant than others. The chapter attempts to explain why the Mapanzure/Mazorodze house achieved this dominant status and the process through which it shaped a new territorial configuration of Chishanga that accommodated rival houses as well as the subdued autochthonous groups.

In Chapter 4 we locate each of the neighbours of the vaHera and their territories relative to the new Chishanga. Most such groups, for instance Charumbira's Nhinhi and the Duma under Shumba-Chekai, arrive at the same time as the vaHera and contest their territorial boundaries. An attempt is made to document how the vaHera kept afloat their claims to such a fluid concept as Chishanga even under serious aggression by their neighbours as well as other incoming groups such as the Muslim VaRemba who came and settled amongst them at the behest of their erstwhile rival Shumba-Chekai. Although the vaHera became tributary to the Ndebele state, the nearly half a century of Nguni presence in this region had a profound effect on the politics of Chishanga and signified a period of change that preceded European conquest in the 1890s. The chapter concludes with European impressions of Chishanga as they began passing through it in the 1870s. Instead of simply viewing it as a territory, they were all struck by its spectacle and aesthetics, setting the stage for the drama of subsequent struggles between already

existing local interpretations of this landscape and its uses and what the European colonial government felt it should be. Chapter 5 documents the first such instance of a clash of interpretations when the colonial government decided to establish a Leprosy colony in the sacred environs of Ngomahuru long considered by the autochthonous vaMhizha to be the abode of their spirits. This was a desecration as Leprosy was believed to be an evil disease in local Karanga cosmology and the problems that bedevilled the institution, from its inception right up to its dissolution in 1946, were interpreted as a local curse. In a physical sense Ngomahuru became an island of British imperial civilisation, a 'Little England' in the sea of a Karanga landscape that was Chishanga.

In Chapter 6 the colonial land legislation is analysed from the point of view of its effect in transforming a tribal population with a clear sense of its territory into a peasant society that found itself being herded into the Mapanzure reserve after their land was taken over by the Leper colony at Ngomahuru and part of it transformed into farms for purchase by progressive Africans. It is argued that most local people who did not go into the reserve chose to buy their ancestral lands in the Native Purchase Area (NPA) scheme that was established in Chishanga from the 1930s onwards. This way, they were able to maintain a strong degree of continuity with their territory and safeguarded family ties which transformed most of their farms into 'homes' in the nostalgic sense of old Chishanga. A significant percentage of farms in Mshawasha West NPA was bought by local families, which helped nurture a consciousness of belonging to Chishanga that was always evoked by the people each time that change was imposed on them.

This process of imposition and state compulsion intensified in the period after the Second World War where significant changes were made to the physical state of what used to be Chishanga in order to transform it, and the rest of the African areas, into self contained productive units. Under this process, the idea of Chishanga as a political territory was completely dismantled and it reached its climax with the abolishing of the Mapanzure chieftainship which was collapsed together with that of Charumbira into a headmanship falling under Shumba-Chekai in 1948. Further losses to the idea of Chishanga were curtailed by the diplomacy of Chief Manyoka Mapanzure and his *dare* (council of elders) in their continuous engagement with the state. Although this forms the greater content of Chapter 7 this chapter's main contribution to the thesis is documenting the failure of all compulsive state policies and how, instead, they resulted in the increasing tendency by the government to rely on the very chiefs that it sought to undermine. This way Chief Mapanzure was able, from a point of vantage, to restore his chieftainship and begin to lobby for the return of 'his' (pre-colonial) territory lost under the era of these policies.

In the 1960s the new Rhodesian Front government desperately needed chiefs to implement its policy of Community Development as well as the Land Tenure Act of 1969. Chapter 8 describes how this was undertaken in Chishanga but details the manner in which, Chief Mapanzure and his *dare*, piled pressure on the Rhodesian government to return their ancestral lands and the *gadzingo*, which was successfully achieved in 1976. This process of reclamation was inspired by the very idea that informs this study, that of Chishanga as a territorial phenomenon imagined in the minds of its people from the point of view of a political centre. What was reclaimed was the *gadzingo* because it embodied

the political centre of Chishanga and formed the basis over which any other claim to the Chishanga territory, however fluid or relative, could be made. This chapter represents the anti-climax of the process of disaggregating Chishanga which the previous chapters document, it marks the turning point to a new era of reclamation and reconstituting Chishanga according to contemporary ideals but appealing to core-periphery concepts that made up Chishanga in the first instance.

Chapter 9 is a discontinuity in the rhythm of the previous chapters for a reason. It is a chapter on the local meanings of the liberation war to the people of Chishanga. It submits that the Chishanga landscape was interpreted differently by the ZANLA and Rhodesian Forces fighting each other there. Yet for the people of Chishanga, the theatres of this war were principally the 'bases' where they gathered for political meetings or organised logistical 'support' for the ZANLA guerrillas. The bulk of the chapter discusses the narratives from these theatres but, more importantly, it stresses the point that the war overally froze all efforts that were being made by the people of Chishanga through especially the Mapanzure chiefs to reclaim Chishanga from the colonial government. It diverted people's attention to the more pressing issue of survival in the highly militarised environment that Chishanga turned out to be after 1977. This was an environment governed by armed guerrillas and their young collaborators who were committed to eliminate anyone they considered to be a 'sell-out'. When the war ended however, it did not leave the people without their own aspirations, the most important being the return of their lost lands.

The final chapter discusses the frustrations of the people of Chishanga in the failure or delayed realisation of the struggles they had fought to reclaim their territory before the war. Instead of re-occupying their ancestral lands almost immediately, as independence seemed to imply, they were confronted with the technocracy of the new ZANU PF government which insisted on orderly resettlement through a process that largely undermined the role of their chiefs. This resettlement benefitted few local families and slowly, incidents of spontaneous occupation of state land started to surface in Chishanga until they became rampant in the late 1990s. Under pressure, the government allowed Chief Mapanzure to settle his people in the *gadzingo* in 1997 in the context of an emergent land occupation movement that was spreading across the entire country. For the people, this settlement of the *gadzingo* meant that the restitution of Chishanga was complete, having been delayed for a further 21 years after it was granted by the Rhodesian government in 1976. This is the irony on which the thesis ends with an added dimension that the people were not after repossessing productive land as such, but their ancestral lands with mountains and graves such as the *gadzingo* was a century or so back. To them reclaiming this centre was reclaiming the true meaning of Chishanga.

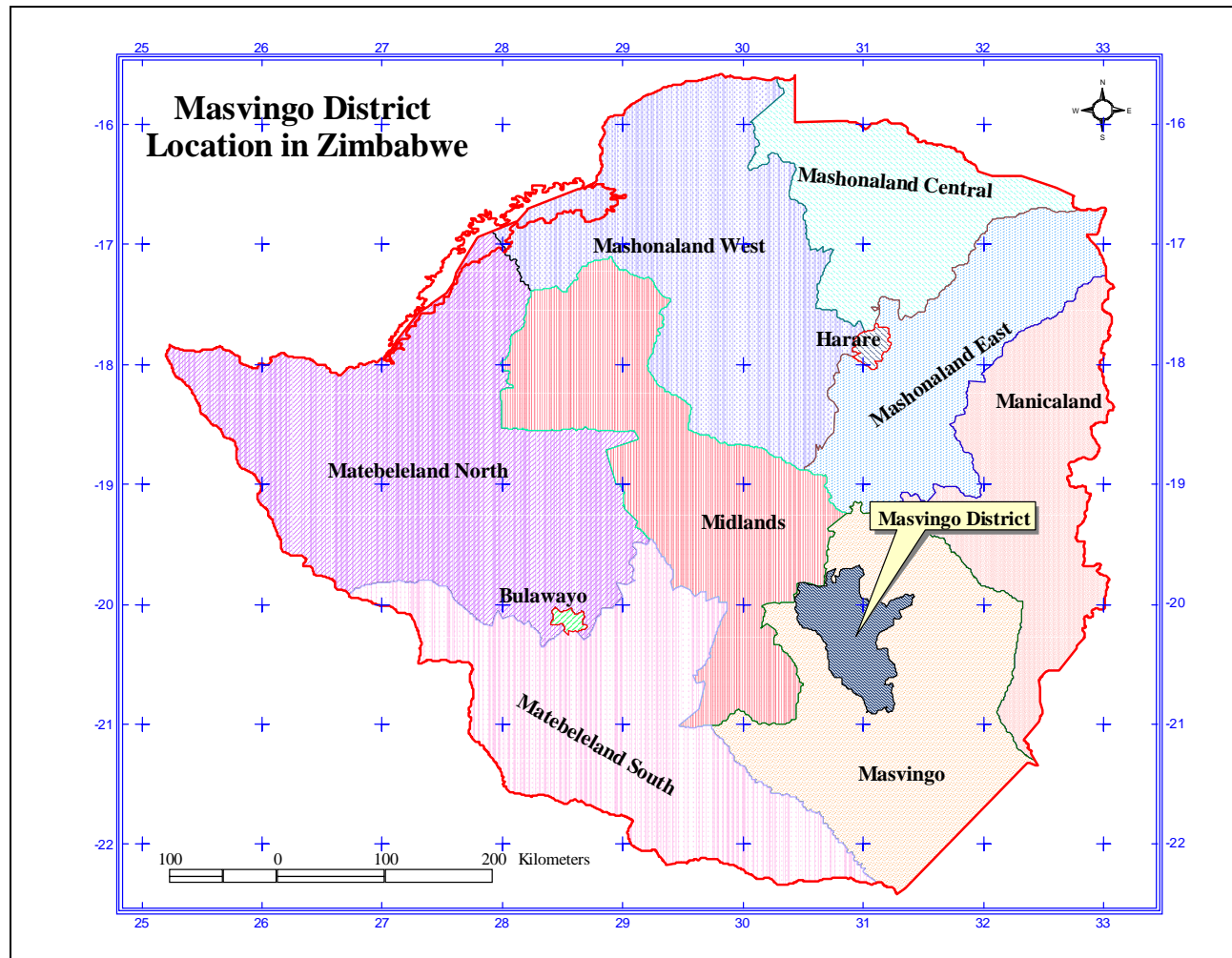


Fig. i) Map Showing Location of Masvingo District in Zimbabwe

Chishanga Topography

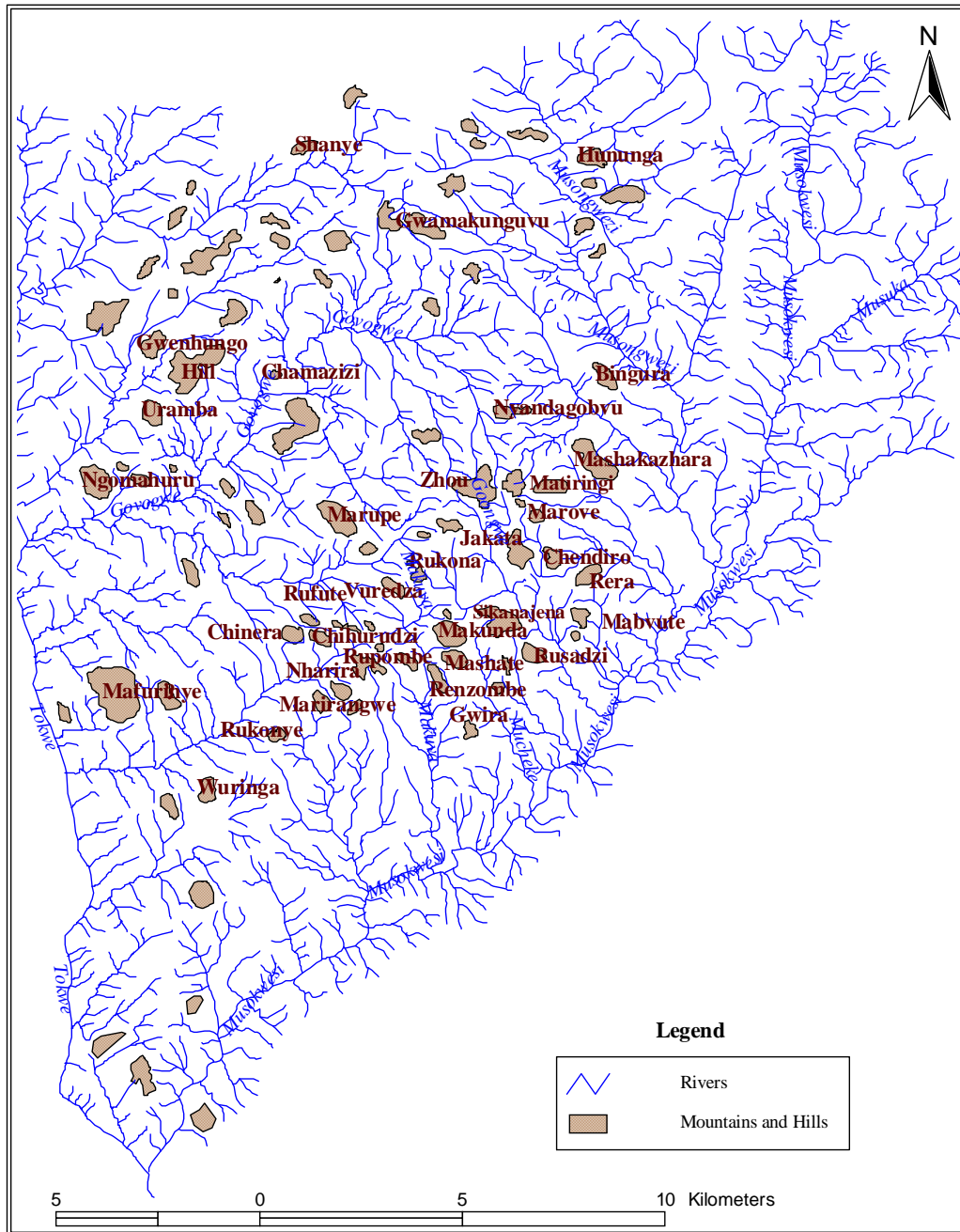


Fig. ii): Map Showing Topography and Approximate Extent of Chishanga

Chapter 1

Reading Chishanga: Literature Review and Methodology

1.1 Introduction

‘Chishanga’ has been distinguished by its inhabitants and their neighbours as their home for many years. The name evokes a historic and expansive stretch of territory which covers what is today the Mapanzure Communal Lands, the Mshawasha West Small Scale Commercial Farming Area (formerly Native Purchase Area) and the Ngomahuru Hospital complex and farm. Chief Mapanzure claims Chishanga as his traditional territory on the basis of being heir to a Hera dynasty that has ruled this place for more than a century since taking it over from the original rulers under NeChishanga. These claims are contested locally by other groups of people, both new and old, although co-existence has been achieved amongst them through kinship networks that are now very well established. All of these people however, have only a general idea of the nature and extent of the territory they all call Chishanga. To them, although the boundaries can never be precise, there are points however, where Chishanga seems to end or begin. Yet the same people making the distinction between those spaces that are not Chishanga and those that are, seem so certain. A common song sung at traditional gatherings in the adjacent Chivi communal lands illustrates this certainty:

Dzokera kwako kuChishanga...Dzokera kwawakabva!
Return to your Chishanga....Return where you came from!

This song ridicules a specifically Chishanga diasporic community displaced in various phases of dispersal into nearby areas in the pre-colonial and colonial periods. Some of these communities have also captured their memories in nostalgic songs about Chishanga such as the one below:

<i>Rumbo:</i>	<i>Chemutengure</i>
<i>Chorus:</i>	<i>Chemutengure</i>
<i>Nheketero:</i>	<i>Marunjeya hande Chishanga</i>
<i>Song:</i>	Marunjeya lets go back to Chishanga
<i>Rumbo:</i>	<i>Chemutengure</i>
<i>Chorus:</i>	<i>Chemutengure</i>
<i>Nheketero:</i>	<i>Ndinokurakidza guva ramai</i>
<i>Song:</i>	And I will show you our mother's grave
<i>Rumbo:</i>	<i>Chemutengure</i>
<i>Chorus:</i>	<i>Chemutengure</i>
<i>Nheketero:</i>	<i>Ndinokurakidza guva rababa</i>
<i>Song:</i>	And I will show you our father's grave
<i>Rumbo:</i>	<i>Chemutengure</i> ⁶

From this, it appears Chishanga has also been transformed from simply being a territory in the political sense into a social concept, a community. Such a community has emerged from a shared sense of belonging to a contiguous space of territory. Naturally this has engendered conflict and displacement over time to the extent that it has been possible for Chishanga identity to be shaped both within and outside its specific physical context. Everyone in this community owns Chishanga and has their own individual meanings of it. By using Chishanga as both a place and a metaphor, this study seeks to demonstrate how these multiple meanings made and transformed this community over time. It is an

⁶ A. M. Munjanja, *Nheketero, Tsumo Nefananidzo* (Write and Read Publishers, Harare, 1990), p.iv.

irony that none of the people discussed here are themselves the original 'VaChishanga' who ruled the ancient Shoko polity in the 18th century, but their eagerness all to appropriate Chishanga in various ways is interesting to the student of history. There are also some striking consistencies which make Chishanga a unique study in Shona history, for instance, there has been the tendency for the centre of this territory to remain at one place for the entire period of its existence despite successive rulers. This is at Zhou mountain, the highest peak in the region. Second, is the unwillingness by all the competing and successive forces to discard the name Chishanga in rendering their experiences in this social and physical space. This is a highly uncommon feature for most Karanga polities of the time who attached great value to identity acquired through the names they gave themselves, others or the territories they settled. Naturally, after the displacements of the colonial period, it has been easy for all these people to use the idea of Chishanga as a legitimate and convenient means through which to lobby for the reclamation of their lost lands.

The dominant narratives of Chishanga history prefer to continue projecting it as a political concept rather than a social one. They are associated with the Hera or Mapanzure people who have been ruling the greater part of Chishanga since the early 19th Century and who still control its secular structures to this day. These are privileged narratives that have been sustained by the socio-political environment obtaining in most Shona chieftaincies over the past century i.e. they have all been administrative units adapted by the colonial government and inherited by its post-colonial successor with very little modification. In response to a question on the identity of the Chishanga people,

Chief Vhuramayi Vushangwe (Mapanzure IX) quipped; ‘We are the Chishanga people!’ He was correct in the social sense of belonging to a territory once described as Chishanga but not in the political context that he was talking as Chief Mapanzure. This study seeks to listen to other voices in the Chishanga narrative and situate them within the larger context of these dominant and totalising political discourses. The assumption is that they reveal a lot more about Chishanga society than can be gathered when we see it simply as a cut and dried political establishment. To do this, it has been important to first understand what people mean when they talk of Chishanga before exploring their experiences in it. It is certain the idea of Chishanga has also changed over time in the minds of people such that any such attempt to unpack Chishanga should be sensitive to these changes.

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Archival Sources

The Chishanga idea as described so far has hardly any place in the archive, at least not the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) in its institutional make up. Formed by an act of the then Southern Rhodesian parliament [The Archives Act of 1935], the National Archives was designed principally as a repository of documents generated by various government departments which made up the ‘public archive’. Individual deposits by persons or private companies are held under ‘historical manuscripts’, while the ‘oral history’ section is only a recent addition to the main archives composed mainly of interviews conducted by archivists and independent researchers on various subjects.

Invariably, the search for a pre-colonial society such as 'Chishanga' is not an easy one in a largely colonial archive such as this. However early colonial administrators and some missionaries gathered tremendous amounts of local histories in the course of their work amongst the local population.⁷ Some of them became specialists on specific 'peoples' and 'tribes' and frequently published their work.⁸ Historians and anthropologists have used these collections to reconstruct the histories of many pre-colonial peoples and societies of Zimbabwe.⁹ 'Chishanga' was neither a straightforward case nor did it fit specific descriptions that these early administrators considered to be 'states' 'tribes' or 'chieftaincies'. It therefore escaped their attention and was not readily available in this 'public record' which, by virtue of being continuously used, it became gradually acceptable also as an 'authentic' record. It is one thing to find Chishanga and yet another to transcend the accepted and hegemonic discourse of this public record.

The name Chishanga was encountered on only a few occasions in the Archives and hidden in very obscure files. In 1942 indirect references to Chishanga appeared in the correspondence of the Rhodesian Native Land Board (NLB), a body established to oversee the sale of farms to Africans in the Native Purchase Areas (NPAs). In these files the term 'Chishanga' was widely used by Mshawasha NPA farm owners, most of whom had become active members of the Southern Rhodesian Native Association (SRNA). This moderate semi-political movement had established a branch in Mshawasha NPA whose

⁷ National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) File N3/33/8 'History of Native Tribes' and its companion volume A3/18/28

⁸ F.W.T. Posselt, *Fact and Fiction* (1928), Charles Bullock, *The Mashona* (Juta, Cape Town, 1927)

⁹ Especially David N. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe* (Mambo, Gweru 1980), Julian R. D. Cobbing, 'The Ndebele Under the Khumalos' Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Lancaster, 1976., R.M.G. Mtetwa, 'The "Political" and Economic history of the Duma People of South-Eastern Rhodesia From the Early Eighteenth Century to 1945', Unpublished DPhil. Thesis, University of Rhodesia, 1976, J.D. White, 'Esitshebani' Unpublished Manuscript, (Shabani, 1974).

executive was composed of a number of people with links to the pre-colonial families of Chishanga. Although it was very vocal in expressing local grievances, one interesting demand the Mshawasha branch repeatedly made in its letters to the NLB and the local Native Commissioner (NC) was a boarding school for 'the Chishanga section of Mshawasha Purchase Area'.¹⁰

Most of the historic Chishanga falls under what is today Mshawasha West Small Scale Commercial Farming Area which as will be shown in Chapter 6 was wrongly named by the NLB when it established the Mshawasha Native Purchase Area in 1931. This scheme converted land formerly under four Karanga chiefs, Charumbira, Mapanzure, Shumba-Chekai and Nyajena into farms for purchase by Africans. Mushawasha was the name of the territory ruled by the vaShawasha people before they migrated to Chinamhora in the 1830s. It was taken over by the Duma under Shumba-Chekai immediately thereafter. The first farms of the NPA were pegged in Shumba-Chekai's Mushawasha territory after which it was named (and misspelt as Mshawasha) although it covered the territories of the other three chiefs.

We know more about Shawasha history in their new territory of Chinamhora because the colonial and administrative capital, Salisbury, was established very close to them in 1890. They enjoyed literary coverage by the administration due to this proximity. They were not only covered in the 1904 countrywide 'Survey of Native Tribes' but several articles on their history were featured in the Native Affairs Department Annual (NADA), the journal of the government department directly responsible for the administration of

¹⁰ S1044/11E. J. Mboweni, Mshawasha to J.W. Mossop, Mshagashe 26 June 1942

Africans. In all these articles, the VaShawasha traced their ancestry to Tingini, their powerful leader who led them from their country Mushawasha ‘near Great Zimbabwe’ to Chinamhora.¹¹ They feature this way as the immediate neighbours and contemporaries of Chishanga. To this extent, the new Mshawasha NPA farmers were evoking historic territorial claims to Chishanga in order to make good their demands for modernisation such as the need for a boarding school. Although their correspondence does not detail the boundaries of the section they were referring to, it displays that great sense of belonging to Chishanga common amongst most local people that this study seeks to explore.

Although not falling directly under the category of official administrative literature, it must be mentioned that from his local research in Belingwe in the 1940s and 50s, the Swedish Missionary Harald von Sicard published an interview with an old MuRemba elder, Solomon Hamandishe, which appeared in *African Studies*. It made a fleeting reference to ‘Chishanga’ as a place of refuge for Venda migrants fleeing the wrath of Shaka’s armies in the Limpopo region during the *mfecane* disturbances in the early 19th century.¹² Apart from mentioning Chishanga, this article said little about the location of this place. Its value however, was the confirmation of a link by migration between the Venda and the people of Chishanga. Chapter 2 of this study discusses the VaMhizha, a group of Venda immigrants who reached Chishanga at the beginning of the 19th century

¹¹ J.H. Seed, ‘A Glimpse of Native History: The VaShawasha’, *NADA* 1936-7, pp. 8-9, J. Chidziwa, ‘History of the Vashawasha’, *NADA* vol. IX, no. 1. 1964, p. 17.

¹² Harald von Sicard, ‘Shaka and the North’, *African Studies* vol. 14, no. 4, 1955, p.148, There were two other Chishangas familiar to me in the Zimbabwean historical record both featured in Portuguese records of the 15th and 16th Centuries, the one a province of the Munhumutapa kingdom, the other a region in Uteve in the east. They had no relation whatsoever to the Chishanga under study and von Sicard’s was the first published reference to the Chishanga we are discussing.

and explores their claims to territory within Chishanga which escaped the attention of the colonial administrators.

The closest description of the territorial configurations of Chishanga and its neighbours came from another obscure administrative file. This was an agricultural report by a Land Development Officer R. Sheppy, writing for the Land Husbandry Act Assessment Committee in 1956 which was prefaced with a 'historical background'.¹³ It stated;

...the present Victoria South Reserve area was known to Africans in three sections, such as 1a) MUSHAWASHA-lying east of the Reserve and comes under Chief Shumba-Chekai. 2a) CHISHANGA-which lies in the centre of the Reserve and today comes under Chief Mapanzure. 3a) NHINHI lying north west of the Reserve under Chief Charumbira. [Emphasis in original]¹⁴

It became the first official written acknowledgement of 'Chishanga' gathered from local people in the 1950s and giving an approximation of its neighbours.

Between 1962 and 1964 an anthropologist-cum-Catholic nun, Sister Mary Aquina (AKH Weinrich), carried out extensive research amongst tribal groups in the Victoria district, interviewing mostly chiefs and male elders. This was during the time that the Rhodesian government was shifting its administrative policy from paternalist government control, spearheaded by the Native Commissioners, to 'community development' with community elders assuming a central role. Under this policy, these elders were being reconstituted as Tribal Land Authorities who would be the highest court of appeal on all matters of local administration with a view to make these communities self-sufficient. Sr. Aquina's very valuable anthropological study not only confirmed that Chief Mapanzure's

S2808/2/4 R. Sheppy, 'Historical Background' in the Report of the Land Husbandry Assessment Committee, Victoria South, March 1956.

¹⁴ Ibid.

people-the vaHera-ruled the former Chishanga, but that it was his ancestors who ousted the ruler of 'Chishanga', the NeChishanga in a war of dispossession.¹⁵ She also confirmed that one of the Duma chiefs that settled around Great Zimbabwe in the early 19th Century, Shumba-Chekai, took over Mushawasha country when the vaShawasha migrated to Chinamhora.¹⁶ Apart from these two points, she locates the other neighbours in Sheppy's note, the Nhinhi of Charumbira, other Duma groups; Mugabe and Murinye as well as another important autochthonous group, the Mamwa.¹⁷

Another official account making direct reference to Chishanga is the 'Delineation Report' for Victoria district compiled by the Victoria District Commissioner (DC), one Barend Kaschula, for the 'community development' exercise in Mapanzure reserve. The format of the presentation of all the reports was uniform all over the districts of Rhodesia, starting with the name of the chief, totem *mutupo*, laudatory name *chidawo*, his tribe and his territory *nyika*. For the *nyika* of Chief Mapanzure, Kaschula entered 'Chishanga'!¹⁸ His report was fairly shallow on local history and relies heavily on Aquina's article cited above which had been published in the same year as his report.

Other, more technical sections of Kaschula's report are however important to Chishanga's history in other respects. Under the heading, 'Villages Comprising the Community' the report offers interesting pointers to the identity of people in the 'kraals'

¹⁵ Sr. Mary Aquina, 'The Tribes of Victoria Reserve', *NADA* ix, 12, 1965, p. 12.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p.13.

¹⁷ For a fuller discussion of these see Mtetwa, 'A Political and Social History of the Duma', for a more recent engaging treatment in their relation to Great Zimbabwe see J. Fontein, *The Silence of Great Zimbabwe* (UCL Press, London, 2006).

¹⁸ S2929/8/5 Delineation of Communities: Mapanzure Chieftainship and Community, Victoria Tribal Trust Land and District, 11 June 1965.

(villages), their totems and number of taxpayers. Sometimes their location was placed in brackets or an elaboration of where they ‘split’ from was added, e.g. ‘Dimayiro (On Markosi River Ranch)’ or ‘Chindanya (split from Jongomani kraal)’¹⁹ These villages were predominantly of the totemic group of the Mapanzure chieftainship (*shava/mhofu-vaHera*) but plenty more villages display the totemic pattern in Sheppy’s 1956 agricultural report. It shows more totemic clusters that proved to be even much older than the Mapanzure-vaHera during fieldwork. These are the Nhire-*shava/gwizhu-matutu* (spring-hare), the Mhizha-*zhou/murimigwa* (Elephant) and several other *shoko* (monkey) totem ‘kraals’ that are too many to escape any alert reader’s notice. To Kaschula, these clusters represented nothing more than ‘kraals’ of taxpayers whose history was not as important as that of the ruling Mapanzure people. This study considers them inhabitants of Chishanga who featured as neighbours and contemporaries of the dominant vaHera. Without them, the history of Chishanga is far from complete. This way, the Mapanzure Delineation Report was not useful for the history it provided but for pointers it gave, though unintended, to the history of Chishanga.

The limitations of these official administrative accounts can be explained. In 1979, Terence Ranger warned scholars of the legacy of the ‘Antiquarian Tradition’ in Zimbabwean history. These ‘Antiquarians’ were a group of European men in Southern Rhodesia, amongst them Native Administrators, medical officers and some missionaries who had embarked on the business of producing local ‘native histories’. These people, he argued, were concerned more with taxation and labour mobilisation and their descriptions of African identity served this purpose, yet invariably, they produced the authorised

¹⁹ S2929/8/5 Delineation Report Mapanzure.

versions of the African past.²⁰ An analysis of the work of F.W.T. Posselt, one of these antiquarians by David Beach reveals some of the shortcomings and prejudices inherent in these works. Chief among them were the writers' obsession with a 'grand history' in which all Africans would fit, if not, they had to be confined to specific socio-geographic spaces which made perfectly straightforward description possible.²¹

A new generation of historians and anthropologists have been sensitive to this politics of knowledge production of pre-colonial African societies and in Zimbabwe. Eric Worby has drawn our attention not only to the discourse of these antiquarians but to the mapping tradition that went with it. Frequently, antiquarians made an effort to fit their subjects into discrete tribal maps in some form of 'ethnocartography' that gave the administrators a sense of authority over their subjects in clearly defined spaces.²² This process not only invented some tribal groups and their areas but actually deleted others. The practice was widespread in British colonial Africa as Kate Crehan notes in Zambia where she saw not only the administrators, but some anthropologists from the Rhodes Livingstone Institute, embracing the discourse of the 'tribe' and found maps playing a significant part in entrenching settler hegemony. These maps, she argues, were useful in confining African challenges to the colonial system in a terrain that was 'mapped out'. Thus Africans were

²⁰ T.O. Ranger; 'The Mobilisation for Labour and the Production of Knowledge: The Antiquarian Tradition in Rhodesia', *Journal of African History*, 20. (1979), p. 507.

²¹ D.N. Beach; 'NADA and Mafohla: Antiquarianism in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe with Special Reference to the Work of F. W. T. Posselt, *History in Africa*, 13, (1986).

²² E. Worby; 'Maps, Names, and Ethnic Games: The Epistemology and Iconography of Colonial Power in Northwestern Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 20, 3, (1994).

unable to articulate any challenge to the colonial system outside the discourse of the tribe or the tribal areas defined for them.²³

Chishanga did not fit these orthodox descriptions of a tribe that could be mapped and by extension, it could never be encountered as such in the colonial archive. A few points could illustrate this; first, all the Native Department annual reports from 1898 to the mid-1930s make no direct reference to the area that once was Chishanga. Successive Native Commissioners confined their observations to areas accessible by road-which ruled out Mapanzure 'reserve' entirely, until about 1929. Some scandalously reproduced their reports changing a few figures here and making casual racist remarks about African behaviour there. Again, the rigid reporting procedure suffocated most reports, their verbosity speaks a lot about the authors' attempts to escape this monotony year by year. It had to follow strict headings such as 'population' 'tax', 'health', 'attitude of natives' and often, 'chiefs'. Repetitive remarks about 'the filth of native kraals', 'the lazy native' who will not go to work and contented chiefs featured prominently. So far as Victoria district (which covered most of the study area) was concerned, these reports are useful mostly for the Zimuto Reserve which was well covered by most NCs for its proximity to the NC's office in Fort Victoria town, and from 1914 onwards, for its accessibility by railway.²⁴ The only direct attention Mapanzure (and by extension Chishanga) received before 1929 was in 1901 and the 1911-14 period of delimiting reserves, and only then, to describe its physical boundaries relative to other reserves in the Victoria district.²⁵ It would emerge

²³ K. Crehan; "Tribes and The People Who read Books: Managing History in Colonial Zambia", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 23, 2, (1997), p.285.

²⁴ N9/1/4 -25 Native Commissioner Victoria Annual Reports 1898-1923.

²⁵ N3/24/34 Native Reserves Victoria, NC Drew to CNC Salisbury, March 4 1901.

here and there when an incumbent chief died or when covering the activities of European traders.

Native Administration never mentioned 'Chishanga' again until the 1950s when the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) Assessment Committees generated a lot of literature about African areas in preparation for the application of 'scientific' methods of agriculture and conservation. Although the Department of Health established a huge Leper Settlement at Ngomahuru amongst the Mhizha people in 1929, no mention was made of local people and all official correspondence about the Settlement referred to it by its name misspelt as 'Gomohuru' for the first 8 years of its existence. When Chief Mapanzure had occasion to complain about the siting of the Settlement, he was referred to simply as 'a chief'. No doubt, going through all these files tells us more about the colonial 'psyche' and the manner in which Chishanga was partitioned in the colonial period rather than its history.

Lastly, late in 2006, the NAZ released a series of files from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (the former Native Affairs Department) into the public domain. This series contains specific files on various aspects of the Mapanzure community including an intriguing set of correspondence detailing the process of the return of Chief Mapanzure's ancestral burial grounds to his authority in 1976. In them, the local District Commissioner, WEJ Henson, teamed up with acting chief Manyoka Gwenhamo Mapanzure and successfully obtained their ancestral burial ground *mapa* in a sacred zone or *gadzingo* that the Mapanzure people had been evicted from in 1901. In carefully

crafted memoranda, supported by the Provincial Administrator of Victoria, H.E. Sumner, Chief Mapanzure and his *dare* (council of elders) made a bold claim to ancestral ownership of this sacred zone within a context of their triumphant right over their country, Chishanga. This was a rare coincidence because Mapanzure and Jiri were perhaps the only chiefs who happened to receive any attention from the Rhodesian Front (RF) government in their claims to regain lost lands under the Tribal Trust Lands Act of 1969. This correspondence confirmed the intricacy of the Chishanga puzzle and gave leads to how it could fit together.

Like all the other aspects already discussed about the colonial archive, official documentation has not been useful in providing the history of Chishanga or helping to explain its configuration. Instead, it is valuable for confirming the territorial idea of Chishanga and accounting for how it was disaggregated. To appreciate the value of such an archive to less straightforward territorial studies like Chishanga, which did not fit the colonial ideas of chieftaincies, historians need to transcend the limitations of administrative sources and identify those aspects about them pointing to actual local history.

1.2.2 Secondary Material

There is really not much specific secondary literature on Chishanga. What little there is prefers to project it simply as the chieftainship of Mapanzure which, as we have shown already, is a misrepresentation. The main reason for this is that nearly all this literature

relies on one source; the article by Sr. Mary Aquina already cited above.²⁶ This was indeed a groundbreaking study of the Karanga chieftaincies south of Great Zimbabwe which covers six chieftaincies in all, including Mapanzure. It confirms that the latter took over the territory of Chishanga under the leadership of two Hera brothers Mutunhakuwenda and Mutizira and goes so far as to mention the names of their sons, i.e. the second generation of the vaHera in Chishanga. Beyond this, it concentrates on the history of the descendants of Mapanzure because Aquina's key informant was Kunyanhu Gwenhamo Mapanzure, who was then chief when she was doing her research in the 1960s. This study goes beyond this generation and discusses nearly all the descendants of Mutunhakuwenda and Mutizira classifying them into 'houses' *dzimba* and how they constituted part of a larger Hera genealogy. It accounts for how each 'house' was allocated territory and how the vaHera created a new political geography in Chishanga based on these 'houses'. Unlike Aquina's study, this does not become a study of chieftainship but of how the hierarchies of dominance amongst the vaHera created a complex political culture that assumed particular territorial meanings in Chishanga. Chieftainship and the struggle to control it was just but one of the many facets of this political culture.

Richard Mtetwa's study of the Duma confederacy was an important guide to the study of Chishanga.²⁷ It is a comprehensive and able analysis of the political and social systems of the Karanga chieftaincies around Chishanga based on a variety of sources. It is well researched and most of its findings will continue to stand the test of time. Yet Mtetwa

²⁶ Aquina, 'The Tribes of Victoria Reserve', pp. 4-8.

²⁷ R.M.G. Mtetwa, 'The "Political" and Economic history of the Duma'

appears to also have been a Duma ‘imperialist’ in his writing, who believed that nearly every Karanga polity south of Great Zimbabwe-including Chishanga-was part of the Duma confederacy. This thinking is challenged in this study which demonstrates for Chishanga the importance of a more powerful ‘Rozvi System’ that operated even in some of the major Duma groups. The study does not totally subscribe to Mtetwa’s thinking that it is ‘impossible’ to study pre-Karanga autochthonous groups that were either assimilated or displaced by the incoming Karanga.²⁸ This can only happen when one confines their search to people and people alone instead of seeking to understand their concepts of space, territory and their varying interpretations of the same. Although this study does not discuss the original *shoko* vaChishanga people, it uses traditions from people considered their descendants. Indeed a significant section of the study is dedicated to the traditions of the Chishanga people’s contemporaries, the vaMhizha and vaNhire. Their histories are inextricably linked to their associations with the Chishanga landscape.

David Beach’s studies of pre-colonial Zimbabwe rely heavily on Mtetwa for this region because, in his fieldwork in the 1970s, Beach did not venture across the Tugwi river beyond Chivi, into what is now the Masvingo district. Both his companion volumes on the dynastic histories of the Shona mention Chishanga simply as the territory that was taken over by the Mapanzure ‘dynasty’ and lapse into the narrative of its chieftainship.²⁹ In *A Zimbabwean Past*, Beach’s sweeping analysis is based on a misreading of Mapanzure politics that assumes that Mazorodze’s grip on the chieftainship was a

²⁸ Ibid., p. 21.

²⁹ D.N. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe 900-1850 : An Outline of Shona History* (Mambo Press, Gwelo 1980), p. 206, *A Zimbabwean Past: Shona Dynastic Histories and Oral Traditions* (Mambo Press, Gweru, 1994), p.175.

colonial eventuality.³⁰ In this study it is qualified as a pre-colonial development, a product of the deep-seated power rivalries among several ‘houses’ of the vaHera. The chieftainship did not translate to a collective concept of the vaHera, it ceased to do so the moment Mazorodze monopolised power in the middle of the 19th century. The territorial idea of Chishanga became the unifying force which made it possible for weaker houses of the vaHera and several other lesser groups to lay claim to other non-secular sectors of this emergent society. Studying Chishanga as if it were synonymous with the Mapanzure chieftainship completely misses the point that this study seeks to emphasise.

Considering that the pre-colonial section of this study is based largely on the analysis of oral traditions, this study moves away from the empiricist view that considers oral traditions to be repositories of historical facts about Chishanga. Such an approach has been challenged by scholars from other disciplines that deal with oral sources such as literature, who blame African historians for undermining the role of other forms of orality. Historians have tended to concentrate on the ‘oral historical narrative’, or only those aspects of traditions with historical value, which are clearly associated with events and time. Writing in the 1970s, Ruth Finnegan long argued that, because it was often solicited, oral historical narrative was not a spontaneous rendition of the past, but like all oral forms, it was performed.³¹ This thesis goes along with such thinking and supports the view further elaborated by Isabel Hofmeyr, that history does not exist ‘out there’ simply as history, that some small scale societies do not even have a special word for historical

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ R. Finnegan, *Oral Literature in Africa* (OUP, Nairobi, 1970).

narration, it could occur as ‘affairs’, ‘happenings’ or ‘stories’.³² This way one could encounter narratives that do not exhibit the characteristics of the oral historical narrative but that cannot also, just be dismissed simply as oral literature. The Chishanga study has had to transcend the oral historical narrative in the way it transcended the colonial archive. It had to listen to other oral forms such as poetry, songs and folklore that all held symbolic meanings to the history of Chishanga. A fictional novel by Maxwell Musingafi *Rwizi Pakati Ko!* (The River of Love’s Divide) is a case in point. This novel is set in Chishanga and figuratively details the struggle between the vaHera and the VaRemba over control of territory divided by the river Musuka. The main character of the plot is a young muRemba man involved in a love triangle with two girls from the feuding factions. Not only does the novel make reference to real-life landscapes and names, but it is also a satire of the age-old rivalry between the Mapanzure people and the VaRemba of Tadzembwa, which is a historical fact for Chishanga. This study submits that it is reductionist to study Shona dynastic histories in the fashion of David Beach’s approach, without analysing the accompanying praise poetry. Such an endeavour lacks context and becomes above all a political analysis that reduces the history of the Shona, and by extension, that of the Karanga to a history of a few dominant families.³³ Chishanga does not make sense as a political study but as a composite social concept made and interpreted by its people. It is these people’s narratives and their perceptions of Chishanga over time that is the object of focus here.

³² Isabel Hofmeyr, *We Spend Our years as a Tale that isTold: Oral Historical Narrative in a South African Chieftdom*, (Heinemann, Portsmouth NH, 1993), pp. 4, 6.

³³ See. A.V. Dhliwayo: ‘Studying the Pre-Colonial History of the Shona of Zimbabwe: Preliminary Reflections on Some Methodological Conceptual and Professional Issues and Problems,’ Unpublished Seminar Paper No. 80, Department of History, University of Zimbabwe, 1991.

In the colonial and post-colonial period the Chishanga study appeals to more general literature. The transformation of Chishanga into a peasant society in the early years of colonial rule is a direct product of the processes affecting other Africans in Victoria province as depicted in Ian Phimister's pioneering study of the area.³⁴

Terence Ranger's theory of 'self-peasantisation' involving deliberate attempts by Africans to avoid confrontation with the colonial government and maximise their options of peasant production easily explains what also transpired in Chishanga. However, unlike in Makoni where this was a more viable option, a specific class of cattle owning elites emerged amongst some Chishanga families who were able to dispose of this wealth and raise money to buy their ancestral lands in the newly established Mshawasha Native Purchase Area scheme after 1930. Part of this scheme (Mshawasha West) became a new Chishanga, exhibiting all new forms of agrarian tenure, but still owned by old and established Chishanga families.

Far from arguing that colonial rule did not bring any loss of land to Chishanga, this thesis argues that a strong degree of continuity was achieved under new terms of land ownership by the same people. This way Chishanga's Mshawasha Native Purchase Area is different from other NPA schemes like Msengezi and Marirangwe as studied by Angela Cheater and Allison Shutt respectively.³⁵ It was settled after 1937, a point when

³⁴ Ian Phimister, 'Peasant Production and Underdevelopment in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1914, with Particular Reference to the Victoria District', in R. Palmer and N. Parsons (eds.) *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1977), pp. 262-263.

³⁵ A. Cheater, *Idioms of Accumulation* (Mambo Press, Gweru, 1984), A. Shutt, "We are the Best Poor Farmers': Purchase Area Farmers and Economic Differentiation in Southern Rhodesia", Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1995.

the Native Land Board decided to change its terms of allocating land to promote settlement in the purchase areas by rural, rather than by urban African applicants. This invariably made it easy for local people to buy land and it is argued here that when this happened in Chishanga, it engendered a 'Chishanga Consciousness' amongst the farm owners who saw these farms first and foremost, as 'homes' rather than as productive economic units. This way, the idea of Chishanga never disappeared.

The rest of the period after the 1930s has a variety of literature which is analysed individually in the text. This thesis finds common ground with Jocelyn Alexander's approach in her well researched and articulated text *The Unsettled Land* which depicts a compulsive colonial state which seeks, in the 1940s and 50s, to intervene directly in the affairs of Africans forcing them to conserve what little resources were availed to them under the repressive laws following the passing of the Land Apportionment Act in 1931.³⁶ The dramatic failure of the (1951) Native Land Husbandry Act and the consequent African agitation that it provoked did not augur well with the coming to power of the right wing Rhodesia Front party in 1962. This brought in a period of state disengagement facilitated through the policy of Community Development where the state abdicated power to rural Tribal Land Authorities dominated by chiefs with a view to reduce the fiscal burden of administering Africans. Like Alexander's, this study sees this as an important turning point in the relations of the state and traditional authorities and considers the agency of chiefs to be a key determinant factor in gaining concessions for their people. It details the role of Chief Mapanzure in lobbying for the return of

³⁶ J. Alexander, *The Unsettled Land Statemaking and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe 1893-2003*, (James Currey, Oxford, 2007).

Chishanga ancestral lands under these new powers. This was achieved through diplomacy rather than by confrontation as was the case with one of the ‘heroes’ of Alexander’s work, Chief Shumba-Chekai. In the final analysis, the process of disaggregating and re-constituting African communities in the colonial and postcolonial contexts using detailed case studies as Alexander did for Chimaniami and Insiza is a complete revolution from the era when such *longue duree* studies were discouraged for fear of historical teleology. Historical process should be studied regardless of time markers as ‘pre-colonial’, ‘colonial’ and ‘post-colonial’ contexts which are in themselves reductionist. This is a study of Chishanga over more than two centuries which seeks to explain that certain processes can only make historical sense when they are explored in full rather than according to the limits of epochs defined by one phenomenon such as the ‘colonial encounter’. Chishanga as will be shown, is by and large, a timeless concept.

1.3 Theoretical Orientation

This study works from the assumption that Chishanga once existed as a polity at some point and that it is now an imagined phenomenon that can be explained through a coherent set of concepts that fit within the theories of centre-periphery relations and ethnogenesis. It equally seeks to show that there is empirical evidence to account for these processes.

1.3.1 The Centre-Periphery Theory

Centre-Periphery theories have widespread application in disciplines concerned with spatial relations such as geography, archaeology, anthropology and history itself. They

have a particular appeal to this study because of the universal explanations they offer to the changing spatial nature of Chishanga which over the years always maintained a stationary political centre around Zhou mountain. Any idea of Chishanga as a territory was defined from this centre on its own and in relation to other centres.

Archaeologists have tried to define the territorial ideas of prehistoric communities and have worked from the presumption that all humans are territorial in nature. They keep to a particular area for the greater part of their lives. This area consists of the dwelling zone or the 'home range' at its core, and the maximum exploitable area around it.³⁷ In the 1970s centre-periphery theories assumed a new shape and became fashionable when they were used to explain contemporary political patterns such as colonialism and neo-colonialism and the historical processes through which they had arisen.³⁸ Immanuel Wallerstein's theory of the 'world systems' was firmly couched in the relationship between economic centres and their dependent peripheries. The core in this context exhibited economic and technological sophistication which enabled it to extract surplus and other benefits from the periphery where these structures were weak and made it a net supplier of raw materials.³⁹

This economic view has, however, been revised and complicated. Archaeologists have shown that relationships between prehistoric communities and their environments were more interactive than dependent and that there were social, cultural, and political factors

³⁷ E.S.Higgs and C.Vita-Finzi, 'Prehistoric Communities: A Territorial Approach', in E.S.Higgs,ed. *Papers in Economic Geography*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1972), p.30.

³⁸ T.C. Champion, 'Introduction' in T.C. Champion (ed.) *Centre and Periphery: Comparative Studies in Archaeology* (Unwin Hyman, London, 1989), p. 2.

³⁹ Ibid. p.6, I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System, vol 1*(Academic Press, New York, 1974).

operating in the various definitions of territory.⁴⁰ While spatial studies in Zimbabwe have made important strides towards understanding prehistoric concepts of territoriality there is still a huge gap between this archaeological work and our ability to reconstruct the specific historical processes at play in the construction of particular African political and social relations. To this extent, the concern with spatial patterning should give way to the analysis of social and cultural realities.⁴¹ In the same vein it is possible to consider centre-periphery relations from the point of non-market forces such as kinship and patron-client relations. Anthropologists have led the way in finding more grounded analysis of African political and social culture built around centre-periphery dynamics which account for the development of societies in the fashion that this study appreciates. One such concept is that of ethnogenesis through the 'Frontier Process'.

1.3.2. The 'Frontier Process' of Ethnogenesis

Anthropologists have long debated the notion of the 'tribe' and its use in analysing past African societies. It has been seen as a colonial invention which sought to impose uniformity and boundedness on African identities that European colonists were interested in simply as administrative units. As we have shown already in the literature review, such 'tribes' also made easy and straightforward official histories. In the quest to move away

⁴⁰ G.Pwiti, 'Aspects of Spatial Studies in Zimbabwe', in G.Pwiti, ed., *Caves, Monuments and Texts*, Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University, Uppsala, 1997, p.57.

⁴¹ One very ambitious theory of Shona settlement patterns, derived from earlier spatial studies, is David Beach's 'Great Crescent' hypothesis. But more recent archaeological studies have undermined Beach's theory, see for instance I Pikirayi, 'David Beach, Shona History and the Archaeology of Zimbabwe', *Zambezia*, xxvi, (ii), pp.135-144.

from this colonial discourse, alternative explanations for ethnogenesis have been offered and this study subscribes to Igor Kopytoff's 'African Frontier' thesis.⁴²

Kopytoff depicts a frontier as a turbulent zone exhibiting repeated political and social tendencies made possible by migration, conquests, competition and fragmentation by African groups. It is 'no man's land' on the fringes of mature or established regional 'metropolises' where small scale social formations emerge to become full-fledged societies. Usually, individuals, or groups of disgruntled individuals, leave these 'metropolises' to form their own establishments 'out there'-in the frontier. At a local level, such movements may result in the extension of the parent group's territory or in the formation of a diaspora. When this process is repeated on a larger scale, it may result in the formation of much solid societies with hegemony over a wider area. Kopytoff submits that this 'Frontier Process' started with an initial 'core-group' that expanded into local frontiers and that the repetition of this process lead to the continuous reproduction of new frontier polities at the peripheries of mature African societies.⁴³ We will not go into the eleven stages of the 'Frontier Process' that Kopytoff details but emphasise that this is also a historical process which continuously replicates itself creating new metropolises and their peripheries. For this reason, this theory has been criticised for being a story with no beginning or end yet this is actually its appeal in the Chishanga case which can never be

⁴² I. Kopytoff, 'The Internal African Frontier: The Making of An African Political Culture', in I Kopytoff (ed.), *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1987).

⁴³ Ibid. p.7.

frozen in time and has a dominant core which controlled an ever-changing periphery over time.⁴⁴

Chishanga was in itself a peripheral province of the Rozvi which was governed from the Rozvi centre at Danamombe and exhibited Rozvi political culture on a smaller scale with an administrative centre and a federation of client polities. When it was taken over by the vaHera who had in turn broken away from their Nyashanu parent group in Vuhera (corrupted to Buhera), it was in their view a frontier, vulnerable for intrusion. Yet as Kopytoff shows in the development of the 'frontier process', the Hera also had to build a new society based on the 'pre-existing social model' of Vuhera. Secondly, this group of kinsmen needed to establish a *modus operandi*, defining amongst themselves the rulers and the ruled. Frequently these arrangements had a 'patrimonial' basis in the person of the founder which translated to a 'constitutional ideology' that governed the way the new polity was run.⁴⁵ The vaHera established in Chishanga a patrimonial structure based on Mutunhakuwenda, the founder. His other kinsmen were converted to subjects and excluded from the 'sacred chieftainship', yet this chieftainship resembled everything in the Nyashanu chieftainship in particular and those of other Rozvi tributaries in general. This study attempts to unpack the processes resulting from the interaction between the pre-existing Rozvi centre-periphery model and the new social ideology constructed at the micro-level by the vaHera when they entered Chishanga.

⁴⁴ For these and other interesting critiques to the Kopytoff model see, Wyatt MacGaffey, 'Changing Representations in Central African History', *Journal of African History*, 46 (2005), pp. 192-193.

⁴⁵ Kopytoff, 'The Internal African Frontier', p.17.

1.4. The 'Rozvi System' and Macro Level Centre-Periphery Dynamics Shaping Chishanga

Although in the historical record there were indeed a people who came to be known or described as the vaRozvi, they were not [and are still not] an ethnic group. They can best be described as a political class composed of four main totemic groups; the *Moyo* - Moyondizvo, the Tumbare- Bepe *Moyo*, the Mavhudzi-*Shava* and the *Shoko*-Nerwande who constituted the ruling elite.⁴⁶ There were several other peripheral totemic groups that did not necessarily belong to the main four but still consider themselves vaRozvi to this day.⁴⁷ The Rozvi identity emerged chiefly from a warrior/client class known as the *Nyai*, a term initially used to refer to soldiers of the Mutapa army but that was gradually used interchangeably with the term Rozvi itself.⁴⁸ 'For the Rozvis are Nyais...', wrote Fr. Francisque Marconnes;

...the partially Tebeleized Nyais of Empanjeni, in the Mangwe district of Matabeleland, positively assert that the (Ama) Lozwi are identical with the Aba (Nyai). Their own tradition is that the (Ama) Lozwi and the (Ma) Karanga were long ago one people under a great chief who was called Mambo or Monomotapa *sic*⁴⁹

Changamire Dombo, the founder of the Rozvi dynasty, certainly had a military background, being one of the commanders of the Mutapa army. He was therefore a muNyai. In his conquest of Butwa, he is remembered in the oral traditions of the Kalanga as 'Nechasike' the leader of the VaNyai who conquered the powerful magician chief of

⁴⁶ S.I.G. Mudenge, *A History of the Rozvi Empire*, forthcoming; see also Mudenge, 'An Identification of the Rozvi', *Rhodesian History* vol.5, (1974), p.29. I am grateful to Dr. Mudenge for sharing his vast knowledge on the subject and discussing with me his work in progress.

⁴⁷ Rozvi dynasties of various *Shoko* totems dominate northwestern Zimbabwe in the Deka, Gwai and Zambezi areas, a significant number of them forming the Nambya speaking groups, the Mafungafutsi area of Gokwe is dominated by Rozvi groups of varying *shava* totems such as Chireya. More groups identifying themselves as Rozvi can be found further south between the Tugwi and Runde rivers.

⁴⁸ Posselt, *Fact and Fiction*, (Books of Rhodesia, Bulawayo, 1935), p.135

⁴⁹ F. Marconnes, 'The Rozvis or Destroyers' *NADA* (1933), p.73.

the Kalanga, Chibundule.⁵⁰ Although he successfully generated the new Rozvi identity under his Changamire dynasty, the Nyai identity was never totally supplanted.

Anthropological studies of the vaNyai locate the origins of Nyai identity in cliental relationships fomented by 'big men' and dependent young men through uxori-local marriage arrangements. Under the arrangements such wealthy men were able to offer their sisters and daughters as wives to young men in exchange for labour. The young men, in turn, established a dependent relationship with their hosts, expanding their activities to become henchmen, guards, errand runners, spies; and as the sphere of influence of their hosts expand, councillors.⁵¹ They in turn became 'big men' with their own vaNyai and, with an enlargement of scale, this process gave rise to a universal identity of bondsmen and their families that translated to being a Nyai.

After Dombo's triumph it was also necessary for him and his ruling clique to shed off the Nyai identity and assume a new one, that of 'Rozvi', a fluid identity that could be achieved by anyone regardless of their totem as long as they had achieved the requisite social status. Rozviness was an enlargement of scale of the Nyai identity and it was more elaborate because it now dealt with an empire level administration which appealed to more sophistication. This was achieved through two main strategies; appropriating an already existing religious cult and establishing an elaborate tributary network.

⁵⁰ P.J. Wentzel, *Nau Dzabakalanga: A History of the Kalanga vol. 1* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 1983), pp. 11-16.

⁵¹ C.S. Lancaster, 'Ethnic Identity, History and "Tribe" in the Middle-Zambezi Valley', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 1 no. 4, 1975, p.718.

1.4.1 The 'Mwari' Cult within the 'Rozvi System'

There exists no formal knowledge of the functions of the Mwari cult prior to the coming of the Ndebele in the 1830s. Its origins are debated with some scholars believing that it may have originated at Great Zimbabwe together with the Mhondoro (ancestral spirit) cult but became dominant in the southern parts of the country as an oracular movement that had also incorporated ancestral elements after it moved to the Matopos shrines. The Mhondoro cult achieved more influence in the northern areas of the Zimbabwean plateau. Ngwabi Bhebe's work details the relationship of the Mwari cult with the Ndebele and Terence Ranger's concentrates on its role in the 1896/7 Ndebele/Shona risings.⁵² Daneel attempted to use its contemporary structure to extrapolate its functions in the pre-Nguni period, but relied principally on the functions of one shrine (Wirirani) out of nearly twelve of them both within, and outside the Matopos cult centre. In his analysis however, Daneel explains the centralised nature of the cult as being the main attraction of the cult to the Rozvi kings who exploited and elaborated this for political purposes.⁵³ To him, the cult operated like a 'secret service' through its offices of the 'Eye' *ziso*, the 'Ear' *zheve* and the 'Mouth' *muromo*. The 'Eye' was the most important office controlling the external organisation of the cult and it was an office reserved for one of the Rozvi kinsmen. Indeed when the Rozvi empire was at its peak...

...the cult, then in possession of several major shrines in the Matopos, consolidated its wide influence. Its political significance, too, grew as it became increasingly important for affiliated Shona chiefs to demonstrate their loyalty to the

⁵² N.M.B. Bhebe, 'The Ndebele and Mwari Before 1893: A Religious Conquest of the Conquerors by the Vanguished' in J. M. Schoffeleers (ed.) *The Guardians of the Land: Essays on Central African Territorial Cults* (Mambo Press, Gweru, 1979), T. O. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia* (Heinemann, London, 1967).

⁵³ M. L. Daneel, *The God of the Matopo Hills: An Essay on the Mwari Cult of Rhodesia* (Mouton, The Hague, 1970), p. 24.

Rozvi kings. One of the ways of doing so was by regularly sending messengers *vanyai* to Matonjeni (Matopos) with pleas for rain, to consult *Mwari* on successions to chieftainship and to dedicate *mbongas* [female messengers] and *hossanahs* [male messengers] from the far off districts to the service of this God. In a sense, Mwari now became the *God of the priests and chiefs*. [emphasis in original]⁵⁴

The Mwari cult, as a High God cult worked through, but subordinated, the tribal spirits of the tributary chieftaincies though not completely silencing them.⁵⁵ The collapse of the Rozvi state under pressures from various Nguni groups did not have a similar effect on the Mwari cult system because the Ndebele, who eventually conquered the Rozvi state, preserved the cult intact and adapted its provincial networks and that of the Rozvi state to their own tributary system.⁵⁶ The Mwari cult complimented the patron-client arrangements already in-built in the Rozvi/Nyai dichotomy which were further cemented by centre-periphery relations inherent in the tributary network set up by the Rozvi.

1.4.2 The Tributary Network

The Rozvi are famed for having masterminded a sophisticated tributary system that was adapted by all their successors including the Ndebele and the British South Africa Company. Again, most scholars believe it was linked to their religious mysticism. 'I am inclined to think...' wrote Charles Bullock, an early colonial administrator,

...that this strong influence [of the Rozvi] had a supernatural origin, and that the WaRozwi (sic) dominance with its privileges of appointing the Chiefs of other tribes came not so much from any superiority, military or otherwise, as from their organized institution of the Mwari cult'.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 26.

⁵⁵ M.L. Daneel, *African Earthkeepers Vol. 1 Interfaith Mission in Earth-Care* (Unisa Press, Pretoria 1998), p. 30.

⁵⁶ Bhebe, 'The Ndebele and Mwari before 1893'.

⁵⁷ Bullock, *The Mashona*, (Juta, Cape Town 1928) p.41.

Posselt's ideas paid particular emphasis to the manner in which this Rozvi empire was managed, which was principally by way of appointments through the ceremony of *kugadza ushe* (installing chiefs).⁵⁸ He also elaborated the administrative system of the Rozvi including the nature of tribute and its collection. Later historians such as Mudenge, writing in the 1970s found much of the picture painted by Posselt to be plausible and he was able to show that the Rozvi did actually appoint regional 'governors or representatives' and that Rozvi soldiers 'visited' any vassal chief who did not pay his tribute.⁵⁹

Mudenge also expands on Bullock's picture of the Rozvi's ability to control vassal chiefs through their religious power. He confirms the cohesive role of religion in the Rozvi empire and the superior position of the priesthood in the *Mambo* (king)'s council as well as its active involvement in the investiture of vassal chiefs.⁶⁰ The Rozvi did not only have the final say on the appointment of a tributary chief, the chief had to literally travel to the Rozvi capital for official appointment. Each of the chieftaincies had to follow the Rozvi 'adelphic collateral' succession system which served as a model for all tributary chiefs. This involved a system where the eldest son succeeded the father after which all the brothers succeeded in a row until the first son of the eldest brother succeeded and the system was repeated over generations. This system never worked within the Rozvi state itself as evidenced by the number of succession disputes that ripped apart the state, but it was a principle to be followed in the vassal chieftaincies. Rozvi officers participated

⁵⁸ Posselt, *Fact and Fiction*, p.140.

⁵⁹ S.I. Mudenge, 'The Role of Foreign Trade in the Rozvi Empire: A Reappraisal', *Journal of African History*, xv, 3 (1974), p. 383.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p382.

directly in the collection of tribute from these chiefs and administered the ‘poison ordeal’ to execute those chiefs who failed to meet their requirements.⁶¹ Again, this became an established culture and when the Rozvi state crumbled, this succession model continued amongst these tributaries as they scattered around the plateau in a process that created the new Karanga.

The Rozvi concept thus described certainly fits the basic centre-periphery theories explaining spatial behavior universally where core areas become the net consumers of the products of the periphery and are the dominant partners in the network of political relationships while the peripheries are the net providers and the dominated partners.⁶² The decline of the Rozvi core is however interesting in that although it gives way to a new power (the Ndebele) with their own core, it leaves behind an intact political culture in the periphery that continuously used the models set by the Rozvi on a micro scale and gave rise to a new Karanga identity.

1.5 Karanga Adaptation to the ‘Rozvi System’ and the New Micro-Level Concepts of Territory in Chishanga Under the vaHera

By the beginning of the 19th century a number of factors contributed to the demise of the once powerful Rozvi state. Chief amongst them were succession disputes that led to

⁶¹ See the deposition of the Ngowa chief Kuvhirimara in .M. Hove, ‘Notes on the VaNgowa Tribe’, *NADA*, 20, (1943), pp.41-5.

⁶² T. C. Champion, ‘Introduction’, in T.C. Champion (ed.) *Centre and Periphery: Comparative Studies in Archaeology* (Unwin Hyman, London, 1989), p. 14.

several wars that left the state severely weakened. Key groups forming the core of the Rozvi elite began to migrate outside the state's nuclear area such as the Mutinhima and Jiri houses. Equally, there was an evident fallout between the political leadership and the Mwari cult and soon the final blow came in the four years between 1824 and 1828. In this period, more than four Nguni groups attacked the Rozvi state, each leaving the state devastated until the flight and eventual capture of the Rozvi Mambo Chirisamhuru by the Ndebele. This triggered a new wave of migrations by groups who came to be identified as the Karanga by virtue of their choosing to occupy areas controlled by former key vassals of the Rozvi and organising their political structures along the lines of the Rozvi although on a micro-scale.

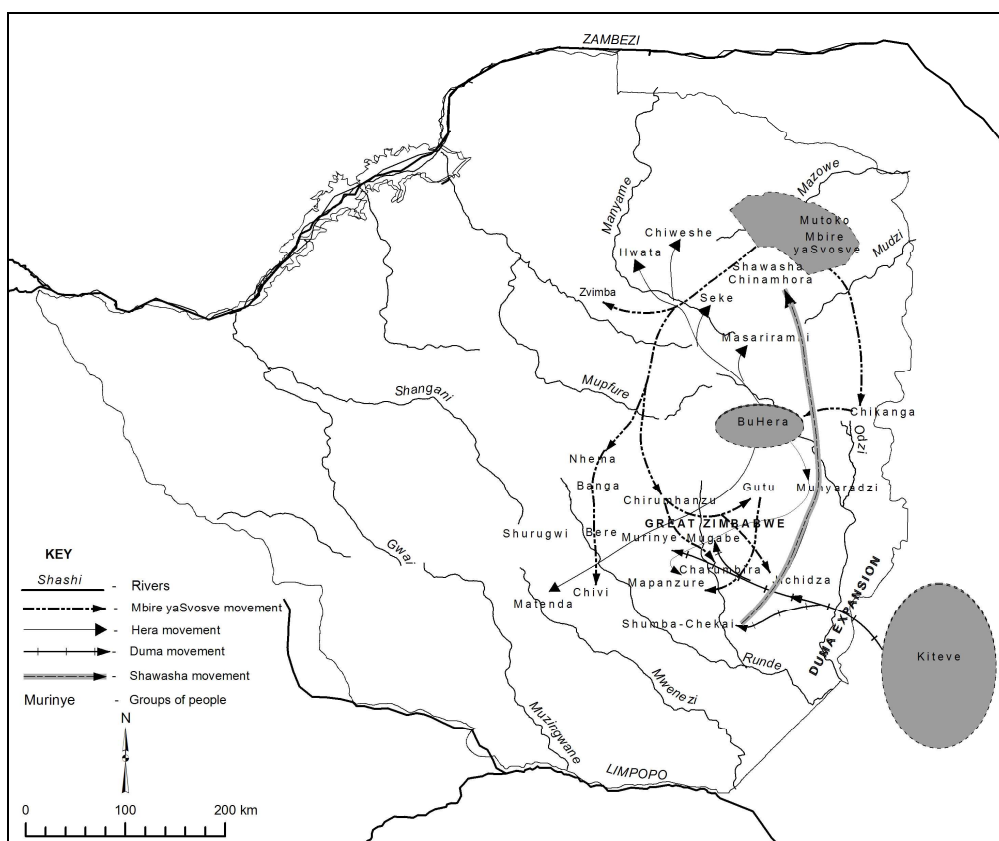


Fig. I. 1 Karanga migrations during the Rozvi period *c.* 1750

Most of the groups that settled in the south did so from three main centres; Mbire ya Svosve in the northeast, Old Buhera in the central plateau and Kiteve in the south-east. They are identifiable as *Shumba* (Lion), *Mhofu*-Shava (Eland) and the *Moyo* (Heart) groups respectively. The *Shumba* groups all emerged from Mbire ya Svosve near Budya and split into the Mhari (Nhema, Bere, Rera and Chivi), who settled between the Tugwi and Runde rivers, while Charumbira, Jichidza and Nyakunhuwa settled between the Tugwi and Save rivers. The *Mhofu* group was composed of break-away groups from Mbiru-Nyashanu's vuHera (Buhera) and include Munyaradzi in the Soti-Popoteke river valleys, the Mapanzure settled in the Tugwi-Musuka-Musogwezi waterways and the Matenda across the Ngezi river. Lastly the *Moyo* were largely Duma clans dominating the area around Mutirikwi river, i.e. Murinye, Shumba-Chekai and Mugabe. To this group can also be added Nyajena. They all timed their movements to fill in the vacuum created by the Rozvi retreat and the confusion created by continued Nguni presence in the form of the Ndebele in the west and the Gaza in the east. It must be acknowledged that this turmoil actually shaped their attitude to territory and they all formulated their political and territorial cultures around their idea of the *gadzingo*.

1.5.1 The Gadzingo

The Karanga polities that emerged in this period were almost all founded by individuals, usually lone hunters that entered 'no man's land' (frontiers) or were invited by a host to help with their skills. After a feat, they are offered land (and/or a wife) to which they invite their kinsmen to settle. As time passed, they established a political authority, either

by leading a war of dispossession or by becoming partriarchs with many descendants. All these charter myths serve to buttress a single point; the establishment of a political core in which the principle of a sacred chieftainship may obtain. To this extent, Kopytoff's 'Frontier Process' can easily be applied beginning with the frontiersmen or these lone hunters who leave their original clans to found new polities in 'no man's land'. They then proceed to invite their kinsmen, establish authority, convert these kinsmen into their subjects and construct a patrimonial model in which their new entity is legitimized by set rules governing succession and recognition. Usually they found their neighbours doing the same and became interdependent by recognizing each other's symbolic elements to which common traits could be identified. In doing so they sought recognition and legitimacy amongst each other as neighbours after which this process became universal and was repeated constantly in a regional context.⁶³

Karanga polities constructed their authority around a politico-religious metaphor known as the *gadzingo*. In physical terms it was a political centre embodying all the traits that gave these polities meaning in their early lives. It was their official headquarters, their burial ground, their place for ancestral veneration and also their place of refuge in the event of an attack by enemies. Chief Zephaniah Charumbira qualified how the Charumbira *gadzingo* emerged around Barapate mountain:

....so when they [Charumbira brothers] stayed at Nhinhihuru and they gathered in their numbers and they started distributing land to each other. Bika as the eldest brother was given his ward, Nemazuhwa his ward, Nezvigaro his ward. And Chainda [the founder] chose to live in the *gadzingo*, right here where I am settled. This is called the *gadzingo*, meaning that this is where the mountain Barapate is found. In Barapate, is

⁶³ I. Kopytoff, 'The Internal African Frontier'

where each incumbent chief was supposed to stay, because this is where the stronghold *nhare* was found. This is where they hid from the Matabele *madzviti*. When the *madzviti* came they hid their chief in there. In the past they used to say if a chief is defeated so is his clan. There were plenty of caves in there where the chiefs would hide when the Ndebele had come. There were also sentinels *nharirire* whose job was to watch out for the *pfumo* (invading army/raiding party), they would then fight that *pfumo* while the chief hid in the *nhare*. All the Nhinhi chiefs who died were buried in the *gadzingo* and whoever would have been appointed chief stayed in the Barapate, the *gadzingo*.⁶⁴

Sometimes the *gadzingo* could even be a cluster of mountains as in the case of the Mapanzure people. Former acting Chief Mapanzure, Raphael Manyoka described it thus:

What we call the *gadzingo* is when a chief is in his area, for example in our case the Mapanzure *gadzingo* is around the Zhou area. Zhou was the biggest mountain in the area and that is where Muravu lived, then came Mapanzure and Mazorodze this was the place where the chief was supposed to reside and it had a number of mountains including Matiringe, Murove, Chenhoro, and Nyandimbobvu including our sacred forest the Rambotemwa...all belonged to the *gadzingo*, nobody was parcelled out this land for personal use...but the incumbent chief and his *machinda* (councillors), as well as other important functionaries of government lived... in the *gadzingo*.⁶⁵

The *gadzingo* however need not always be at the centre. The distance between the two *gadzingos* described above is less than five kilometers because Charumbira and Mapanzure are neighbours, yet the two polities' spheres of influence stretch over tens of kilometers in different directions. It is also important to appreciate the Rozvi background in this emergent political culture. First, the collapse of the Rozvi tributary structure was not followed by the collapse of the parallel Mwari cult ideology that remained intact. Instead, it was transformed from working at supra-territorial level to assume an intra-chieftainship structure that used local ancestral spirits as religious provinces. The *mbonga* and *hosannas* transformed their roles as well to become *manyusa* (messengers) concerned more with collecting gifts for Mwari as a rainmaking cult. This way the *gadzingo* as a

⁶⁴ UZHD Text 184 Vta. Interview with Zephaniah Charumbira October 1975.

⁶⁵ Interview with Raphael Manyoka Gwenhamo, Mapanzure Communal Lands, 18th July 2001.

religious centre gained prominence, receiving the *manyusa* and being the centres where *mitoro* (rainmaking ceremonies) were conducted. They all invariably constructed *marambatemwa* (sacred forests) in or around the *gadzingo*. The local ancestors were easily incorporated into the regional network that shared common traits and was even more powerful than it could have been in the heyday of the Rozvi empire. The individual chieftaincies now enjoyed political autonomy and freedom to choose incumbent chiefs without official approval by an authority far away. Although the cult became a socio-religious movement, its basis in Rozvi political structures however never faded hence its relevance to most of these new Karanga polities. Let us consider the two other variables that shaped Karanga political culture as it emerged at this time; defence and the environment.

1.5.2 Defence

The new Karanga polities as mentioned earlier were sprouting at a turbulent period marked by internal strife within the Rozvi state and invading Nguni armies during the *mfecane* wars. The emergent Karanga 'Big men' who were building up lineages also needed faithful and powerful clients.⁶⁶ Before the Nguni period resistance to enemy attacks in some areas as amongst the Duma was organised at a confederate level in a top down fashion but with the coming of the Nguni it had to be organised at village level and chiefdom level, going up.⁶⁷ This was achieved through the system of *Makota* which became much more prevalent at this time. *Gota* literally means a prefect or councillor but

⁶⁶ See, G.C. Mazarire, 'The Politics of the Womb: Women, Politics and the Environment in Pre-Colonial Chivi c. 1840-1900' *Zambezia* XXV no. ii, 2003, p.5

⁶⁷ Mtetwa, 'A Social and "Political" History of the Duma', p.164

in the traditions relating to the 19th century, the term gradually came to refer to territorial guards.⁶⁸ Amongst the Duma the *makota* were territorial councillors not related to the ruling lineage head but occupied the same position as his relations or *machinda* and this hierarchy went down to the village level.⁶⁹ Today recollections of pre-colonial land allocations amongst the Mhari of Chivi have much to do with the role of such *makota* who were often allocated land on hills bordering the lineage head's territory, usually those in the direction in which the enemy often came.⁷⁰ They were the first to fight the enemy and to raise alarm. Quite often the *gota* was given a wife and assumed a vassal status as *mukuwasha* or son-in law.⁷¹ Occupying a similar status as the *makota* were the *nharirire* or sentinels. In what Mtetwa terms a revolution in the Duma defensive warfare; during this period a wide range of techniques and devices were introduced including this system or network of watchmen. The watchman or *nharirire* was stationed on every high hill or stronghold *nhare* to be on the lookout for the coming of the *madzviti* (a collective term referring to the Nguni) and then to warn immediately the people who were attending to the fields, or herdmen, by blowing the trumpet *hwamanda/mbuvuvu*. When one *nharirire* blew his trumpet, the next *nharirire* did the same and the process went on until a very large area was warned.⁷² Thus a larger community could benefit even more in terms of security from the services of several lineage *nharirires* who could warn the people in time to give them the opportunity to react. The *gadzingo* as the centre, was usually the most well protected and the least vulnerable composed of *nhare* with caves

⁶⁸ Interview with Pingirayi Mhosva, and vaNyakurayi 22/10/99, Interview with Johannes Tongoteya, 26/03/97

⁶⁹ Mtetwa, 'The "Political" and Economic History of the Duma' p. 57

⁷⁰ Razaro Hofo, Interview on 13/10/99

⁷¹ G.C. Mazarire, 'Defence Consciousness as Way of Life "The Refuge Period" and Karanga Defence Strategies in the 19th Century', *Zimbabwean Prehistory* no. 25, 2005

⁷² Mtetwa; 'The "Political" and Economic History of the Duma', pp. 164-5

where the chief could be saved from death or capture, for to kill the chief was to destroy the whole clan. In times of peace this defence network assumed a cohesive social function. The spaces occupied by these offices became in themselves special administrative units fitting perfectly into the centre-periphery arrangement.

1.5.3 Environment

The period in which the Karanga emerged was also one of scarcity following the famine period of the 1820s to 1830s. The major reasons for movements during this time was competition for resource rich areas. The *gadzingo* of the Mhari in Chivi was founded around a cluster of hills at Nyaningwe which was not only good defensible area but was a micro-climate with fertile land and enjoyed good relief rainfall. On the contrary, the land just behind it was the complete opposite, a rain shadow, dry and plain known as the *Deve*. As a result the ruling Mhari lineage descendant from Tavengegweyi (Chief Chivi I) dominated this Nyaningwe area of the *gadzingo* while subordinate groups were confined to the *Deve* and each bad year they relied on the benevolence of their benefactors in the rich *gadzingo*.⁷³ Similarly for the Mapanzure, their *gadzingo* in the Zhou zone was not only a cluster of mountains but the source of several rivers in their Chishanga territory. These are principally three or four rivers that form an upside-down triangle as Tugwi (south), Musogwezi-Musuka [Nyamangura] (east) and Ngondo-Mutiwazizi (west-north-west). All these rivers, draw their waters from the central watershed in the highland area of the *gadzingo*, so physically and metaphorically they were one because of the source. Naturally, political competition was a struggle to control the source of Chishanga waters

⁷³G.C. Mazarire; “The Politics of the Womb”: Women Politics and the Environment in Pre-Colonial Chivi ‘.

and own them. They became a natural core because they controlled the periphery, controlling water meant controlling everyone and confining them to some delimitable authority as far as the water supplies could go.⁷⁴

In many ways, therefore, a number of factors came together in the new Karanga political culture that emulated the Rozvi model but developed interesting local peculiarities that found universal application among the Karanga neighbours. By the mid 19th century Karanga succession system was almost uniform, almost all Karanga had political centres and when they did find reason to move, the same principles informing the foundation of a *gadzingo* applied to the new area that was moved to. Several sacred forest *marambatemwa* obtained in different chieftaincies and the Mwari cult messengers operated amongst them in the new refined terms of the Karanga. These overlapping factors defined the new Karanga political geography in which they all co-existed as neighbours. And even as they fought and conquered each other now and then, principles for recognition remained the same if all the variables discussed above had to function in equilibrium. By the end of the 19th century, Karanga boundaries were as fluid and porous as ever, they could not be bounded and mapped easily in the typical European tradition that came in the 1890s, yet the Karanga themselves understood each other's spheres of influence and how they functioned or were regulated.

⁷⁴ G.C. Mazarire, 'The Chishanga Waters Have Their Owners: Water, Politics and Development on South-Central Zimbabwe' *Journal of Southern African Studies* vol. 34, no 4 (2008).

1.6 Conclusion

The *gadzingo* concept was an important first stage that had achieved universal appeal as a Karanga political culture because it embraced most of the facets that had defined previous political structures. It brought together local ancestral presence and the universality of the High God cult, yet in this arrangement, it guaranteed individual chiefly autonomy. It broadened the scale of the political core and its periphery by bringing this at a micro-level and turned the supra-territorial concept of the Rozvi with all its inefficiencies upside down. It created a new sense of recognizable neighbourliness based on the same principles and driven by the same ideals with checks and balances in different polities. Although they had stationary administrative centres, their spheres of influence overlapped as spiritual or political peripheries which were in constant change as these were often occupied by very mobile adherents or followers. Somehow, control of the periphery was little no more than appointing, or making sure that loyal followers were appointed to positions of responsibility. Their expansion was also based on kinship webs and almost a large number of the Karanga neighbours were related. It was encouraged to offer land as means to forment or strengthen kinship relations if a polity was in any way keen to expand. There are plenty of examples in these Karanga traditions where nephews are offered land by their maternal uncles and in turn come to dominate it (e.g. the Mhari and the Ngowa). Land was therefore not a constant variable in the new Karanga tradition for it was a commodity of exchange, a gift or a means of rewarding clients. In this way it would not pass for demarcating a 'boundary' in the European sense of the word. This is why Karanga traditions of territory even at this transitional stage did not favour to talk of

miganhu (borders) but of distributions of mountains or rivers because they embodied their political culture built up from more established territorial configurations under the Rozvi empire. This symbolized a transformation in their conception of political geography which was still changing when European borders were imposed on them. The Duma concept of a boundless territory is illustrative; '*Duma Harina Mughu*' (Duma has no boundary) is a Duma song denoting the boundlessness of Duma country, it also 'gives the extent to which Pfupajena [the Duma founder]'s wars were carried and the country which he covered in his travels.⁷⁵ To this extent, therefore, Karanga boundaries remain invisible no matter what demarcations can be erected around them, colonial demarcations did cause conflicts between different Karanga groups such as Nemamwa and Mugabe, Nhema and Chamburukira among others but this is because the colonial government attached chiefly authority to territorial demarcations in the same way that the Rozvi did but on different principles. They thwarted the Mwari Cult that had qualified this principle on the pretext that it had organized the 1896/7 Uprisings but failed to appreciate the new role it had assumed amongst the Karanga polities that emerged after the demise of the Rozvi. In today's land reform programme this issue of the meaning of land to the Karanga still emerges. Although resettlement attaches value to land as surveyed and planned economic units to boost rural production they are still loud clamours for the restitution of lost lands. On closer analysis, this is not necessarily good agricultural land nor is it even land at all, but mountains, ancestral graves and sacred forests that qualified Karanga political geography for most of the 19th century. This is the framework from which Chishanga is analysed, as a changing social concept defined by center-periphery dynamics.

⁷⁵ Mtetwa, 'The "Political" and Economic History of the Duma' pp. 41-42.

Chapter 2

Chishanga and the Autochthons c. 1750-1830

2.1 Introduction

Before the coming of the vaHera Chishanga can be viewed broadly as Rozvi territory. Going by current knowledge on Rozvi identity, it is fairly clear that by Rozvi is not meant those people belonging to the *Moyo*-heart lineage alone but a combination of *Moyo* and non-*Moyo* lineages who had achieved the status of Rozvi as a social class.⁷⁶ Thus it is only plausible to speak of Chishanga as a territory in relative terms because it is impossible to treat its history separately from that of neighbouring and contemporaneous territories. In this sense, Chishanga appeals to an 'interactive' past which can be reconstructed either as it is remembered collectively by people whose history shares spatial proximity with what used to be Chishanga or as it is perceived by those who are either still resident or have left that area. The object of this chapter is to locate Chishanga and its contemporaries in order shape the picture obtaining in the region before the coming of the vaHera and other Karanga groups.

2.2 The 'Rozvi System' in Chishanga

Not much is known about the Rozvi from documentary sources although a significant amount of oral traditions about them remain untapped. Similarly, historians have

⁷⁶ D.N. Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past: Shona Dynastic Histories and Oral Traditions* (Mambo Press, Gweru, 1994), Chapter 5.

concentrated much on Rozvi ruling lineages than on the commoner groups in the same way that archaeologists have concentrated on the sites of the Rozvi elite. In Chishanga the Rozvi are also remembered as builders of the stone structures scattered around the territory just as they are seen as king-makers who distributed land and allocated chiefly power to deserving lineage heads whom they adorned with badges or *nyembe*. This is a role that is sometimes confused with that of the Native Affairs Department in the 1890s. In a number of instances the Rozvi are recalled as violent and interfering in local succession disputes although this is usually related to the mystery of their power and their royalty. They are often associated with the ownership of the land and stories about them could easily be interpreted as time markers. For instance *nguva yavaRozvi* literally ‘in the time of the Rozvi’ is a staging point in many narratives seeking to draw a line between the mythical period and the historic or recent past.

Chishanga and Mushawasha appear to be the two major territories south of Great Zimbabwe which thrived at the peak of Rozvi power in the later half of the 18th Century. They were both ruled by *Shoko* (Monkey) lineages which were predominant in the area between the Tugwi and Mutirikwi rivers although some peripheral zones were entrusted to clients from other totemic groups or *vasokeri*. Mushawasha was named after the ruling VaShawasha lineage of the *Shoko-Watinaye* totem and had its capital at Mavugwi in what is modern Nyajena. They later left the area going north to present day Murehwa where they became the Chinamhora lineage and changed their totem to *Soko-Murehwa*. This left the *Shava-Nhire/Matutu* (Spring-hare) lineage occupying this zone although they have no traceable political or economic centre. It was only during the period of Karanga

expansion that the Duma under Shumba-Chekai overran the Nhire from Vuzeze in the north and established a capital at Hoya and Gondoyi mountains further north east of Mavugwi near what is now the Tadzembwa area.

From the totemic surveys of the delineation exercise of 1965 and what emerges from oral traditions collected recently from the Musinahama and Marumbe communities, Chishanga people appear to have been of the *Shoko* totem as well, probably, of the *Vhudzijena* group and the principal Rozvi recognized lineage which presided over the region south of Mushawasha and controlling the land to the south between the Mukosi and the Tugwi rivers.⁷⁷ They held sway over a number of tributary groups principal among whom were the NeRombo-*Shumba/Musekeswa* and the NeGwadzi-*Moyo-Rozvi*? who maintained a presence to the north-east of their territory in the region dominated by the Chigaramboni, Nhinhihuru and Ruvhure mountains and slightly further beyond the Vadanda river. They themselves were in the process of expanding their power by entertaining incoming foreign clients such as the Venda who later became the *Zhou-Mhizha-Murimigwa* lineage that assumed spiritual control over the Zhou and Marungudzi region between the Govogwe and Murara river valleys.

Chishanga was ruled by a dynasty with the titular name of NeChishanga or 'ruler of Chishanga'. It could have been much more stable than Mushawasha, relying more on a federal system of government under the overlordship of the NeChishanga ruling figure supported by clients over a relatively small territory which remained fairly intact and stationary until the Karanga invasions of the later half of the 18th century. By contrast,

⁷⁷ Interview with Rori Musinahama, 10/11/2002 and Shonhai Marumbe 7/09/2003

Mushawasha was a much bigger territory which slowly drifted northwards towards Great Zimbabwe under successive rulers but, with time, kept shrinking in size until it was taken over by the vaDuma. What is interesting for both territories is that despite these significant political changes of over 300 years, the territorial terminology of this region has not changed and still carries the meaning of an imagined political and socio-historical geography that is captured in the names 'Chishanga' and 'Mushawasha'. Where it does change, it serves only to give a record of change visible in the oral traditions relating to their landscapes.

The object of this chapter is to trace the dynamics of the shifting identities brought about by these population movements in this Rozvi period and how much they created a sense of place for the locals which lies safely captured in their historic names before the coming of the immigrant Karanga groups such as the *Shava*-vaHera, some *Shumba* groups and the *Moyo*-vaDuma. It should be mentioned that there were also some groups that were scattered about in between Chishanga and Mushawasha following these developments, amongst them the *Shava*-Nhire, *Shumba*-Nzira and the *Shumba*-Chivige. All this notwithstanding, Karanga rule failed to erase the memories of both Chishanga and Mushawasha. For purposes of this study however, the dynamics of Chishanga's transformation begin unfolding in the broad socio-political context which is distinctly Rozvi.

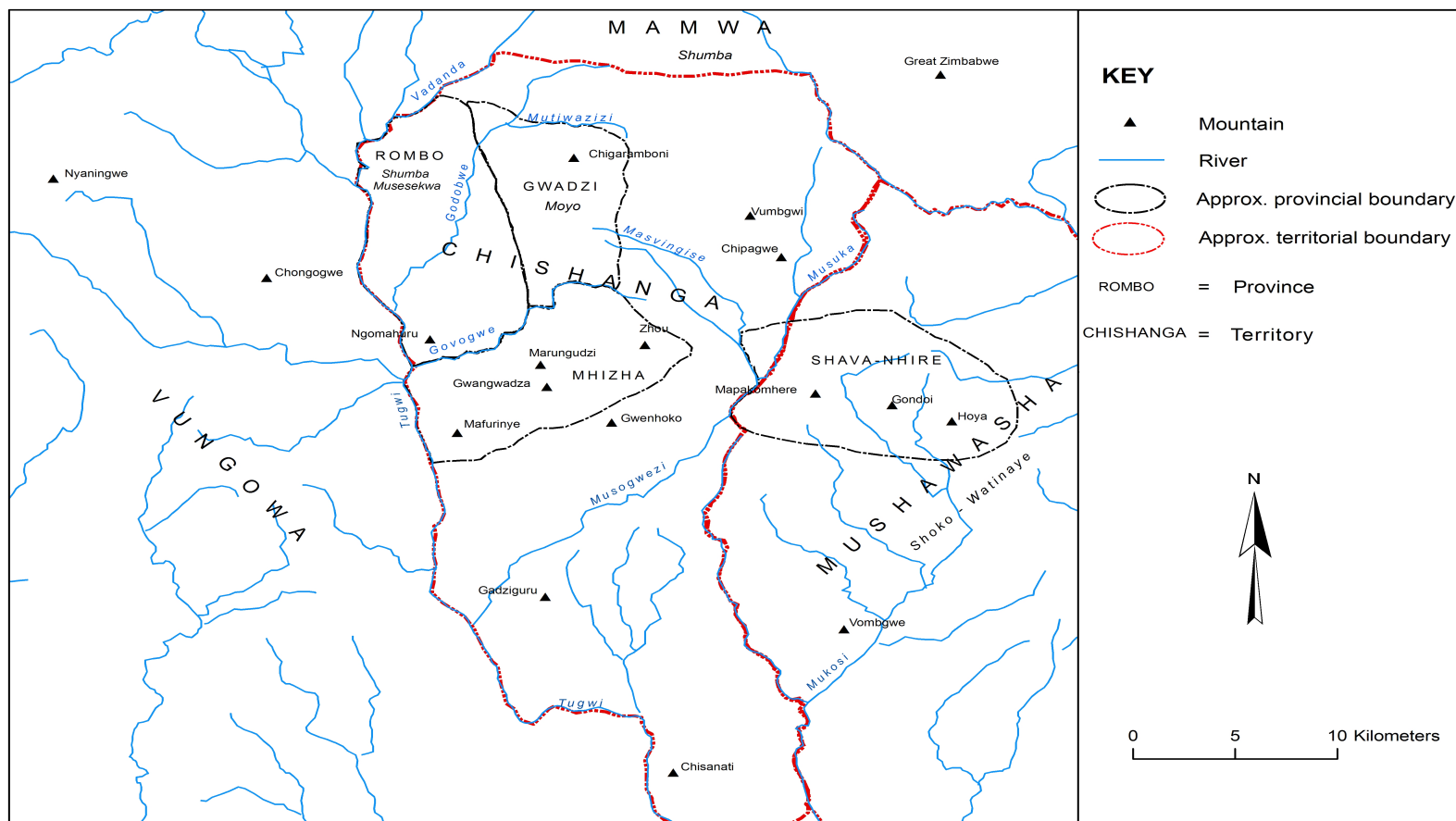


Fig. 2. 1 Chishanga and Contemporary Autochthonous Polities c. 1750

2.3 The VaShawasha

In the northern section of the area under study, the VaShawasha are undoubtedly the oldest remembered neighbours of Chishanga. They occupied and were dominant in the area immediately south of Great Zimbabwe in the mid to late 18th century. They controlled a lucrative trade in iron implements which made them the wealthiest and most powerful force in the region and the Rozvi overlordship recognized them as such. They were part of a large cluster of *Shoko* lineages that dominated this region inclusive of the *Shoko-Vhudzijena*, *Shoko-Mbereka* of Chivamba and to some extent the *Shoko-Makovere* now found across the Tugwi in Chivi. The VaShawasha were originally of the *Shoko-Watinaye* totem but are now the *Soko-Murehwa* people of Chinamhora found north of modern day Harare after their migration from Great Zimbabwe.

At least four generations of the Vashawasha are recalled in the period of their stay near Great Zimbabwe. Their first leader, one Tumbudu (whose estimated date of death is d.*1660+/-48) was famed for his powerful army and magic.⁷⁸ He established himself in this territory known historically as Mushawasha with its capital at Mahumwi (also recalled in other traditions as Mazhumwi), which although not rich in iron ore was home to a thriving iron industry with ore obtained from as far as Wedza in the north east.⁷⁹ This was probably the Mavugwi peak (1019m) in modern day Chief Nyajena's area just northwest of Renco Mine although the latter, however, thrives today as a gold mine.

⁷⁸ Joshua Chidziwa, 'History of the Vashawasha', *NADA* vol. IX, no. 1. 1964, p. 17.

⁷⁹ Aaron Hodza & George Fortune, *Shona Praise Poetry* (Oxford University Press 1979), p. 179., put forward the name Mazhumwi which literally means a fruit tree common in the area but misread the evidence to suggest that the VaShawasha migrated from somewhere to Mazhumwi near Great Zimbabwe.

It appears much of Shawasha wealth depended on the ability to sustain the iron industry and managing the scale of its trade beyond Mushawasha borders. Thus although Tumbudu had as many regional clients and traded as far afield as possible, his son Nemango (d.*1687+/-44) failed to match the father's prowess and consequently, his power receded until he eventually lost the Shawasha territory to an unnamed invading group. Nemango's son Tingini (d.*1710+/-40) was only able to wrest power from this group after a sojourn in 'Zululand' where he learnt the iron trade and agriculture and became wealthy once more.⁸⁰ On his return he won over to his side many followers and build up a force large enough to oust the invaders and take over power. As it were, Mahugwi remained the centre of economic and political activity until the VaShawasha decided to abandon it during the reign of Tingini's son Derere Gonzonga/Godzonga who led them forth to what is now Murehwa.

Many reasons have been put forward for this migration; Edward Matenga, using evidence from fairly distant Portuguese observers, locates this movement within the wider context of the political turmoil caused by competition over mining rights beginning in the 16th Century.⁸¹ Indeed Shawasha traditions claim that the iron reserves at Mahugwi were depleted and their move to the north was informed by the desire to get as close to the Wedza mines as possible. We have indicated already that Mahumwi for the Shawasha was never important as an iron ore site since they always relied on Wedza ore. It is possible that declining food reserves and pasturage could not sustain the increasing Shawasha population and traditions also claim that the increasing number of relatives also made

⁸⁰ The generational dates of death of the VaShawasha rulers are supplied in RMG Mtetwa, 'The "Political" and Economic History of the Duma' p.20.

⁸¹ Edward Matenga, *The Soapstone Birds of Great Zimbabwe: Symbols of A Nation* (African Publishing Group, Harare, 1998) pp. 11-12.

exogamy difficult.⁸² Yet there are also several references to Derere Gonzonga's mounting problems with invading groups and divisions amongst his bulging number of followers resulting in the decision to move to Wedza. Derere had developed a reputation of harshness to both his relatives and the *vasokeri* and he also fell out with his eldest brother Chidyausiku.

Even then, some of the Shawasha remained behind and these were the groups under Tingini's other sons including Chidyausiku, Marembo, Ngarande, Chaitezvi I and Charakupa.⁸³ Although not significant in numbers, this group has been responsible for keeping the legacy of Mushawasha intact as an imagined political geography safely captured in its name despite successive hordes of occupiers until the Rhodesians named the Native Purchase Area after it in the 1930s.⁸⁴ This legacy was also assisted by named local landscapes both in the Mahugwi area and the Shawasha destination in Chinamhora.⁸⁵ Contacts continued to be maintained between these remnant and diasporic Shawasha. More importantly however, Derere never stayed in his new territory in Chinamhora but came back to Mahumwi where he died and his body ritually sun dried there but carried back to Chinamhora where it lies buried today at Caledonia farm near Ruwa.⁸⁶ Those vaShawasha who remained continued to co-exist with the *vasokeri* although their numbers were not significant enough to sustain the political structure that had existed under the larger group, among some of these *vasokeri* are the *Shava-Nhire*.

⁸² J.H. Seed, 'A Glimpse of Native History: The VaShawasha', *NADA* 1936-7 pp. 8-9.

⁸³ Ibid. p. 9, Chidziwa, 'History of the Vashawasha' p.18.

⁸⁴ See Chapter 6.

⁸⁵ Chidziwa, 'History of the Shawasha' p.19.

⁸⁶ Seed, 'A Glimpse of Native History' pp.10-11.

2.4 The Shava-Nhire/Gwizhu-Matutu/ Mafusire

It is possible that the vacuum created by the departing Shawasha gave way to the expansion of the *Shava-Nhire/Matutu* group. There are no traditions of the political or military accomplishments of this group and it is possible that they slowly outnumbered and completely engulfed the remnant vaShawasha. This group is interesting in a number of respects; first, they belong to a fairly older generation of Shava totems which, although now appropriated by the antelope groups, gives us a critique of the term *Shava* itself. This older generation Shava are the *Nhire/Gwizhu/Maherane* (Spring-hare) common in Mushawasha, Nyajena and Chishanga and the *Mhara* (Impala) groups found in modern day Chivi under Nebgwine. Shava is a Karanga term meaning the colour red and/or brown and it could be taken to refer in totemic terms to animals sharing such colours. Charles Bullock writes:

Shawa (sic) is the totem word for Eland, and so we say that the *Shawa* people taboo the eland. But *Shawa* is that which is red, and the mutupo maybe *Shava-Mwena-Shawa* of the hole, which is said to be a reddish wild cat.⁸⁷

Here, Bullock was referring to the vaZinga people of Mount Darwin whose laudatory name is *Nematombo*. The Nhire take their name from the Spring-hare, *pedentis capensis*, a common nocturnal rodent in Southern Africa which is also known as *gwizhu* or *maherane*. They are also known as *Shava-Matutu* people referring to the mounds of soil, *matutu*, made by this animal when it burrows the earth. The *nhire* is reddish-brown in colour, hence *shava*, and scientists have detected its widest occurrence in this part of the country. It is widely hunted and a much sought after delicacy of

⁸⁷ Charles Bullock, *The Mashona: The Indigenous Natives of Southern Rhodesia* (Juta and Co. Ltd., Cape Town, 1927) p. 95.

the local people.⁸⁸ Although identifying it as a wild cat, Bullock does not classify it under the cat family in his master catalogue of Shona totems in Southern Rhodesia.⁸⁹ He prefers to place it under the eland group. It is probable that the spring-hare has been mistaken for a wild cat by many people because of its whiskers just as some have mistaken it for a kangaroo because of its long hind legs. Scientifically it is related to neither families nor is it even a hare.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, the *shava-nhire* people today bear one of the rarest Karanga totems and Bullock seems to have been the only scholar who ever got close to identifying them although he did not accompany this with much more detailed research.

The second interesting point is that there is no identifiable or remembered ruler of the Nhire people nor is there a capital associated with them in this area. There is however plenty of evidence indicating that they thoroughly spread throughout Mushawasha and diluted the power of the remaining vaShawasha families.⁹¹ Today most *shava-nhire* groups are scattered around the chieftaincies that were later superimposed on Mushawasha and Chishanga. For instance, in 1965, the Mufahore lineage had 18 villages in the Chatikobo headmanship in Chishanga while the Mutubuki and Muvengi lineages had 27 and 12 villages respectively in Chief Nyajena's area.⁹² The Duma invasion mentioned earlier seemed to have sent most of them across the Musuka river into Chishanga where pockets of them established themselves while some like the Makavaye line ventured further across the Tugwi and settled near Sese hill in Chivi at a place known as

⁸⁸ J.L. Bill King, *Know Your Mammals and Reptiles* (Academic Books, Harare, 1999), p.8.

⁸⁹ Bullock, *The Mashona*, pp.96-115.

⁹⁰ Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia

⁹¹ S2808/2/4 R. Sheppy, 'Historical Background' in the Report of the Land Husbandry Assessment Committee, Victoria South, March 1956.

⁹² S2929/8/5 Ministry of Internal Affairs Delineation Report, Victoria District, Chatikobo Headmanship 1965, *idem.*, Nyajena Chieftainship and Community 1965.

Gwindingwi.⁹³ Part of the reason for this lack of detail in Nhire traditions is that the majority of this totemic group in Chishanga deliberately choose to identify with the dominant *shava-hera* people in their endeavor to seek inclusion within the ruling political system of the vaHera. This was a serious obstacle to this study since informants from this group were not easy to identify because most deliberately avoided any association with their own totem. Where they did accept this identity, they did not make a difference between themselves and the Hera.⁹⁴

2.5 The Rombo and Gwadzi

We know relatively little of these two groups except that the Rombo were one of the autochthonous Shumba groups known as *shumba-musekeswa* which lived in the immediate vicinity of Great Zimbabwe who welcomed and co-existed with the incoming Mamwa. They were later conquered by the Karanga under Charumbira who was originally Shoko but later adopted the Rombo's Shumba totem to become *Shumba-Sipambi*.⁹⁵ The Rombo territory stretched as far north beyond the Vadanda river to Mhungudza in modern Mashava under another *shoko* Chief Garanyanga-Muzukuru.⁹⁶ The Gwadzi appear to have been a *moyo* totem *Nyai* group which was yet to attain Rozvi status. They were part of the autochthonous groups under the NeChishanga ruling figure who were settled in the environs of Chigaramboni mountain and the region stretching south from the Mutiwazizi valley to the Tugwi river. Their remembered ruler is Vuombe who was a subordinate of the NeChishanga ruler, or perhaps, his *gota*.⁹⁷ In the early 19th century and in the wake of the Karanga invasions, he

⁹³ Interview with Munhumeso Manenji, at Sese 11/06/2005.

⁹⁴ See for example Interview with Josiah Chikwavava 17/07/2005

⁹⁵ Sr. Mary Aquina, 'The Tribes of Victoria Reserve', *NADA* ix, 12, 1965, p. 12.

⁹⁶ H. Franklin, 'Nyanningwe', *NADA* vi, 1928, p.80.

⁹⁷ Interview with Poterai Gon'ora Mupota Mhizha, Chen'ombe Hill 21/07/05.

began making marriage alliances with the Venda, parcelling out to them most of the land due south of his territory. Not much is known about this Gwadzi dynasty but on the passing of Vurombe, traditions recall another Gwadzi *moyo* patriarch, Mabvumba, probably one of Vurombe's sons and successor, who still doubled as a *gota* and is associated with the fall of Chishanga to the Hera.⁹⁸

The Gwadzi disintegrated only after the fall of Chishanga which makes three important points on the sequence of events and the nature of political administration of the Chishanga polity. First, that the Hera were the first group of Karanga to appear and effect conquest on Chishanga which left the Gwadzi exposed to conquest by Bika's Charumbira-Nhinhi. Secondly, the exposure of the Gwadzi made them seek to strengthen their position by seeking marriage alliances with the immigrant Venda traders who became the Mhizha elaborated below. Lastly, but more importantly, the NeChishanga figure appeared to have held sway over a federation of the Rombo, Gwadzi and Mhizha to the extent that when he was conquered, these groups fell to other invaders or became incorporated by his conquerors, the vaHera.

The Chishanga conquest however, was more dramatic, being effected by Karanga invasions on two fronts. From the north, the vaHera led by Mutunhakuwenda and his brother Mutizira dealt a heavy blow on NeChishanga driving him out of his territory completely. To the south, Bika of the Charumbira-Nhinhi, led an offensive against both the Rombo and Gwadzi, divided their territory amongst his brothers and himself assumed overlordship over the Gwadzi zone while completely absorbing the Rombo and assuming their *shumba* totem. Bika was described by Carl Mauch in 1871 as a very good chief who seemed to have 'given freedom and almost complete liberty to many of his vassals' but this was probably because he had not completely subdued the Gwadzi having often to

⁹⁸ Interview with Poterai Gon'ora, Interview with Mbonga Musiiwa, Tangenhamo Farm, Mushawasha West, 6 /07/01.

completely circumvent their area when travelling or conducting business across it.⁹⁹ Although there did not seem to be any major villages of the Gwadzi in the 1965 delineation exercise, Sr. Mary Aquina identified some of their descendants in this area two years before, who had drifted slowly into the south-western parts of what came to be the area ruled by Chief Mapanzure.¹⁰⁰

2.6 The Mamwa

The Mamwa claim to have ‘germinated’ at Great Zimbabwe, a tradition linked to both their spiritual relationship with the monument just as it serves to enhance their priority of residence in the area.¹⁰¹ Some traditions claim that the Mamwa arrived at Great Zimbabwe in the 17th century when their leader became a servant of the Rozvi Mambo and successfully achieved religious ascendancy as to be elevated to senior positions in the hierarchy of the Mwari cult. The Mamwa remained the custodians of the Zimbabwe shrines after the Mwari cult had been shifted to the Matopos.¹⁰² This tradition is aligned to a thinking that saw Great Zimbabwe as a Mwari cult centre, which has now been revised.¹⁰³ Mtetwa claims that the Mamwa arrived at Great Zimbabwe in the early 18th century under their leader Chirichoga and found it being inhabited by the Rombo and Gwadzi. Chirichoga settled on the ruins themselves and earned the laudatory name ‘garabwe’ or one who stayed amongst the stones, whilst he maintained an uneasy co-existence with the two. Later on, the Mamwa were able to enlist the alliance of the Nhinhi under Bika-Charumbira and launched a war that successfully conquered both the Rombo and Gwadzi who were forced to leave the Zimbabwe area.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ E.E. Burke (ed.) *The Journals of Carl Mauch 1869-1872* (National Archives of Rhodesia, Salisbury, 1969) pp. 185, 187.

¹⁰⁰ Aquina, ‘Tribes of Victoria Reserve’, p. 12.

¹⁰¹ Fontein, *The Silences of Great Zimbabwe*, p.22.

¹⁰² Mtetwa, ‘A Political History of the Duma’, p. 92.

¹⁰³ D.N. Beach, ‘Great Zimbabwe as a Mwari Cult Centre’ *Rhodesian Pre-History* 11, (1973) pp. 11-13.

¹⁰⁴ Mtetwa, ‘A Political and Economic History of the Duma’, p107.

Mtewa's account was concerned with demonstrating the extent of the Duma confederacy which sometimes exaggerated the extent of Duma influence and power. The Mamwa, being the perpetual enemies of the Duma who lost much of their territory to the latter, should be seen in Mtewa's interpretation of these events, to be controlling a larger sphere of influence which invariably incorporated the Rombo and the Gwadzi. However, the Rombo were settled south and not north of what became Charumbira's territory and as Aquina's account shows, they were incorporated rather than displaced. Secondly, it was the Hera pressure on NeChishanga that made the Rombo seek new alliances elsewhere as the NeChishanga weakened and, like they did with the Mhizha, land was always a good incentive to immigrating groups. The only difference between Charumbira and Mhizha was that Charumbira pursued a political project while the Mhizha sought to re-create Venda 'portable landscapes' which transformed them into a religious powerhouse. Let us consider the Mhizha and their strategy.

2.7 The Zhou-Mhizha/Murimigwa: An Ethnography

The Zhou-Mhizha are, after the Hera, the second largest and important community in modern Chishanga. They are the only group from this period that are still living in Chishanga and this section of their past is constructed from both their ancient traditions and their present circumstances. They are also known as the Zhou-Mukamba. They are of Venda origin and came into this territory as clients of the Gwadzi but it remains unclear which group of the Venda they belonged to. The Venda remain a huge challenge to the historian of southern Zimbabwe because they have always been part of a moving frontier going back and forth across the Limpopo for more than four centuries between 1600 and the later half of the 19th century. In addition, Venda traditions are a serious source of chronological confusion given the prevalence of ascending anachronisms concerning their

interactions with Mashonaland. There are two major epochs of Venda penetration into Mashonaland that are of interest to this study. The first are a series of migrations back and forth Marungudzi mountain near Beitbridge in the late 18th to early 19th Centuries which were a result of clashes between Venda clans involving the Rembetu, Twamamba, Pfumbi and Thavhatsindi among others. Several of these groups made permanent settlements in the region between Bubi and Mwenezi rivers and the Rembetu in particular, came close to the region under discussion when they settled at Romwe hill east of the Mutirikwi river.¹⁰⁵ The second wave of Venda movements in southern Mashonaland occurred in the 1850s and 1860s and involved Venda commissioned hunters pursuing game across the Limpopo. They were supplied guns by Zoutpansberg Boers but immediately took up to a gun culture in which they not only repaired and manufactured sophisticated guns but traded them in the interior with Shona rulers.¹⁰⁶ Indeed Shona politics in the later half of the nineteenth century is punctuated by increasing participation of the Venda, not only as gun traders, but also, as mercenaries in local wars. However not many from this group settled in the area.

The Zhou-Mhizha belong to the first group of migrants and we know a lot more about them in Chishanga from their portable landscapes, that is, physical paraphernalia named after their ancestors or other landscapes found in their areas of origin. As shall be shown below, after being allocated land in southern Gwadzi territory towards the Tugwi river, they immediately set about naming it in this fashion. The whole area between Murara river and the Tugwi became known as Chikwerengwe, a name associated with a *zhou* totem chief under Matibi of the Twamamba group of the vaVenda.¹⁰⁷ Their spiritual and permanent abode, Marungudzi, is named after the famous Marungudzi mountain

¹⁰⁵ RMG Mtetwa, 'A "Political" and Economic History of the Duma', p. 20.

¹⁰⁶ R. Wagner, 'Zoutpansberg: The Dynamics of a Hunting Frontier, 1848-1867', in Shula Marks & Anthony Atmore (eds.), *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa* (Longman, Harlow, 1980)

¹⁰⁷ Harald von Sicard, 'The Origin of Some of the Tribes in Belingwe Reserve: the Pfumbi under Macetu and Mketi', *NADA* 1952 p. 59.

near modern Beitbridge and is one among many such mountains with the same name associated with the Venda including the one in Chief Matibi's area which was the dwelling of Maranda in the 1880s. Ngomahuru, another prominent mountain of this territory is probably named after the first ancestor of the Romwe at Chingoma.¹⁰⁸ It could also be a Karanga corruption of the name of the sacred Venda drum *ngoma lungundu* [big drum] which is recalled in Venda mythology as having disappeared into the lands of the vaKaranga and that some Venda groups migrated north in search for it.¹⁰⁹

More evidence of Mhizha appropriation of the local landscape is found in their praise poem which goes as follows:

*Mazviita Mhizha Mhukahuru Murimigwa
Mazviita veGwangwadza vari muChen'ombe
VarimuGwiranenzara, Marungudzi neChitukumaro
Mazviita Mhururamunanga, Muchecheni ukava Munhanzva,
Pwanya-kupwanya risingapwany muti kaviri
Matuku panzira wakavona wakati Chiware,
Tinotenda vadyi vemhahwa, Garuranyika,
Tinotenda Musango Munavanhu,
Maita henyu Masvisvohwenyu,
Ndizvo Mhukahuru¹¹⁰*

Which translates to:

Thank you *Mhizha* (tradesman), the big animal (elephant),
Murimigwa One whose fields are cultivated by others,
Thank you those who reside in *Gwangwadza* and *Chen'ombe* hills,
You who are also in *Gwiranenzara*, *Marungudzi* and *Chitukumaro*

¹⁰⁸ Harald von Sicard, 'The Origin of Some of the Tribes in Belingwe Reserve: The Romwe under Chief Chingoma' *NADA* 1951 pp.19-20.

¹⁰⁹ E. Mudau, 'Ngoma-lungundu and the Early invaders of Venda', in N.J. van Warmelo (ed.) *The Copper Miners of Musina and the Early History of the Zoutpansberg* (Department of Native Affairs, Pretoria, 1940).

¹¹⁰ Compiled by Simbarashe Mupeyiwa Chimwango and Shadreck Matewe, 28 December 2005.

Thank you, *Mhururamunanga* (one who rips the thorn tree)
Who chews the *Checheni* tree until it is as slippery as the *Munhanzva*
Pwanya-kupwanya (the crushing-crusher) who does not crush a tree twice
One who leaves mounds on the road (elephant excreta), that many mistake for
inselbergs,
We thank you eaters of thorn, *Garuranyika* (traversers of the land),
We thank you owners of the forests full of people,
We thank you *Masvisvohwenyu* (those who eat what is theirs),
Thank you big animal!

As can be seen, Mhizha praise poetry apart from its broader description of the anatomy and physical attributes of the elephant, is very territorial. It seeks at all costs to claim the key mountain zones of Chishanga and this has been helped by the fact that these mountains continue to fall under the Mhizha descendants who purchased farms around them and adjacent to each other in the wake of the Land Apportionment Act in the 1930s. Thus many Mhizha rituals have continued to be performed where they were originally performed with landscape playing a key role in Mhizha sacrilegious performances. In this way Mhizha history has been best preserved in their rituals based on and contextualised in their sacred landscapes.

Mhizha traditions in Chishanga are unanimous on the Venda origin and they recall coming specifically from Musina. The migration route is never clearly given and Musina is simply a staging point. Like the many Shona traditions, the Mhizha progenitor is a lone tradesman and a skilled ironsmith who settled among the Gwadzi-*moyo* under Vurombe who was at Chigaramboni hill in what is now Charumbira-Bika's lands. He was able, through his skills as an ironsmith, to win the favour of Vurombe and, eventually, the heart of his daughter whom he impregnated.¹¹¹ At this stage, oral recollections become vague over the name of this character although an uncorroborated tradition

¹¹¹ Interview with Poterayi Gon'ora.

names him Madhumbu.¹¹² Sometimes he and his son from Vurombe's daughter share the name Mhizha or have their activities compressed and telescoped into those of a single individual.

Madhumbu is said to have fled back to his home in Musina but later returned to Vurombe with some guns as bride price or *rovora*. Meanwhile, in his absence it had been decided to name his son Mhizha (tradesman) after his father's work. At this point Madhumbu disappears from the traditions and his trade is taken over by Mhizha who assumes a principal role as a *muzukuru* and trusted councillor or *muchinda* of the Gwadzi. Mhizha was allocated land by his uncle to the east of the territory and he chose to settle at the highest peak, which he named *Zhou* (elephant) after his *dupo* or paramount totem.¹¹³

While at Zhou, Mhizha set a reputation on his father's trade as an ironsmith. Through his hoes, axes and other iron implements including guns, he was able to establish a lucrative trade which became his major pre-occupation that he never partook in agriculture. His customers cultivated his lands for him in exchange for his wares and this is how he earned the laudatory name *murimigwa* (one whose lands are tilled by others). Gradually he accumulated a lot of wealth and became very powerful and married many wives who gave rise to the Mhizha lineage. Mhizha's sons in order of age were as follows; Mugwamba, Mimwe, Makonese, Njiri, Shindi, Guku, Chadya and Matewe otherwise also known as Gumbira or Makumbe.¹¹⁴ These were born at Zhou, which was most likely to be the ancestral *gadzingo* of the Mhizha until their prolonged settlement there was ended by the retreating Rozvi.

¹¹² Interview with Tarusarira Gon'ora

¹¹³ Interview with Poterai Gon'ora

¹¹⁴ Interviews with Poterai Gon'ora, Simbarashe Chimwango and Jonah Gon'ora, Ngomahuru Club, 21/08/05

Mhizha was forced out of Zhou by these marauding Rozvi who are also recalled in Mhizha oral tradition as *mandionerepi* (short people: a common term referring to the *Bushmen*). Interestingly for the Mhizha and the people of Chishanga, and contrary to Beach's assertions, it is actually the Rozvi who are recalled as the *mandiwonerepi*. In this mythology, the *mandiwonerepi* are depicted as violent short people who are highly irritable, especially at the slightest suggestion that they were short. Their trick was simply to ask *wandionerepi*? Literally, 'where did you see me?' although implying, 'from how far did you see me?' If one was rude enough to reply "right here!" or just 'there!' this was taken as an overt reference to their short height. Their immediate reaction would be a thorough beating of the person concerned.¹¹⁵

There are no traceable references to the physical attributes of the Rozvi directly relating them as a short people, but Karanga mythology in general has common allusions depicting evil beings, particularly goblins, *zvituhxwani* or *zvidhoma*, as short people that beat their victims hence the saying *kurobwa nezvidhoma* (being beaten by goblins).¹¹⁶ Although there are many stories of people who have actually been beaten in Chishanga in the recent past, these refer mostly to the activities of witches and make a distinction between this and the wanton violence of the *mandionerepi* from that of the Rozvi which was perhaps 'acceptable'. In these recollections the Rozvi belong to a world of taboos, where everybody had to be careful of what they say, do or touch lest they offend them. This accounts for the relatively good condition of most stone buildings found in Chishanga today which are still tabooed as Rozvi property. It is important however to point out that *mandionerepi* metaphorical claims to height as space are important in linking them to a key aspect of Rozvi territoriality; that is, vassals could only have rights to land if they acknowledged Rozvi suzerainty.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Chimina Muchibwa, Runyararo Village, 8 August 2000.

¹¹⁶ see H. Aschwanden, *Karanga Mythology* (Mambo Press, Gweru), idem. *Symbols of Death: An Analysis of the Consciousness of the Karanga* (Mambo Press, Gweru, 1987)

This validates Bullock's depiction of the intermixture of religion, mystique and power in Rozvi administration.

It is in this vein that the Mhizha expulsion from Zhou is seen as but one of those bully acts and never perceived as a defeat. Mhizha oral traditions literally depict this as a flight from the wrath of *zvimandionerepi*.¹¹⁷ The Mhizha sought refuge in a stronghold that they also named after one from their ancestral homeland, Marungudzi, and it was in the relative peace of Marungudzi that subdivisions of the hinterland amongst Mhizha's sons took place. These emplacements gave Mhizha country its character and shape as it is perceived today. Unlike other neighbouring territories and contemporary polities where land allocations are dominated and sometimes personified by elderly sons of the founding lineage head, the Mhizha political geography was defined by younger members of the founding family in some form of gavelkind. The elderly sons of Mhizha either chose to remain in the *gadzingo* or search for new territory. In this sense, Mhizha power never got the sanctity of a political authority spearheaded by powerful elders. Instead, a welfarist situation emerged in which younger members took care of the elders either in the *gadzingo* or in their own allocated areas of expansion. The fountainhead of the historical influence of the Mhizha in Chishanga lies in this spirit of custodianship passed down to younger members of the founding family and embedded in the portable landscapes that the Mhizha refounded and appropriated. Naturally, what is, and has always been, Mhizha political territory for the past five generations has been dominated by the three junior houses; the Njiri-Musingarebwi, Shindi and Matewe houses. This could also be explained through the phenomenon of *nhaka* (inheritance), where it appears the most powerful and prolific Mhizha, Matewe who was also Mhizha's youngest son, perhaps because of the age difference with his elder brothers, became the ultimate inheritor of Mhizha wealth earning himself the name Gumbira or

¹¹⁷ Interviews with Poterai Gon'ora.

Makumbi [the gatherer] from the Karanga word *kukumba* meaning to gather together [the wealth of his elders.]

The allocation of Mhizha territory was executed from Marungudzi where most elderly sons of Mhizha resided. Mugwamba has no known descendants and Mimwe died a bachelor. Makonese probably moved out in search of new territory and so too did Guku who went to reside at Munaka in Chivi following his maternal uncles. This left Njiri or Musingarebwi effectively in charge of Marungudzi because Mugwamba was reportedly old and had relegated all responsibilities to his siblings.¹¹⁸ The first effective departure from Marungudzi was that of Shindi who settled in the Gorokota zone with his children and were to dominate the Gweshindi and Gwenhoko mountains right up to the vicinity of the Mamvura river.

Chadya was allocated the Ngomahuru mountain right at the territorial border with the Ngowa overlooking the Tugwi river and its confluence with the Godobgwe. We do not know much about the descendants of Chadya except that he was the father of Pfidze and Wafanawaka whose descendants were still occupying the Ngomahuru area until they were evicted when the site of the Leprosarium was moved from Morgenster to where they were settled in 1928.¹¹⁹ Today the Hera house of Mudzitigwa under Ponde who were resettled there after independence effectively constitute the traditional authority who however owe religious allegiance to and recognize the Mhizha historic ownership of this zone.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Jonah Gon'ora.

¹¹⁹ See sections 5.3 and 6.5 in this thesis.

Matewe the last born son of Mhizha was allocated the area beyond the Nyamangura stream around Gwangwadza mountain. Archaeological surveys at Gwangwadza show that it is a typical refuge site with corresponding potsherds and plenty of grain bins that traditions associate with Matewe. The expansion of his house in Chishanga is more dramatic under his descendants who became dominant by virtue of numbers and were only rivaled by those of the Njiri house. This was particularly true of the third generation, the sons of Matewe's son Chingonyani. The eldest, Mufandanaka, moved to the south and settled at Chivunje where he gave rise to the Shiri and Mataka houses who carry the name Matewe to this day. Chimwango was moved to Chamagwiro in the background of the Marupe pass while Chihwedza moved to Marirangwe.¹²⁰

Njiri or Musimgarebwi's house is the second largest Mhizha lineage after that of Matewe in present terms. It remained stationed at Marungudzi and its dispersal ratio is very limited to the vicinity of Marungudzi and dominated also, like that of Matewe, by the descendants of one of Njiri's sons, Mupota. Movement from Marungudzi was basically in search of well drained land not far from the swampy environs of Marungudzi and a stretch of these Mhizha settlements of the Mupota house are traceable from Chen'ombe, Chomupaikwa, Zvomutobwe, Mhamhasi to Marupe mountains.¹²¹

By the mid 18th Century the Mhizha literally dominated the south by numbers and transformed the landscape into their own, effectively reproducing Venda identity in this section of Chishanga. In addition to the names they gave to key landscapes they also established an elaborate ritual process which fossilized their presence in the area through burials. Naturally these rituals became operational two or three generations later and were overseen by the three dominant houses. All first and second

¹²⁰ Interview with Baba Blessing Matewe, Chinobhuruka Chinomhara Store, Mshawasha West, 2/05/03.

¹²¹ Interview with Tarusarira Gon'ora

generation Mhizha are buried in Marungudzi and today about three Iron Age burials under boulders are identifiable on the hill although modern informants cannot assign names to the people buried there.¹²² Meanwhile, all the heads of specific houses in later generations are buried in the mountains or hills that they were allocated. For instance we are aware that Mufandanaka is buried in Chivunje, Gon'ora at Chen'ombe, Chimwango at Chamagwiro, Chivhanga at Gwenhoko and so the list goes because of the continuous rituals held at these sites by their descendants when they hold *biras* today. The Mhizha praise poem lays special emphasis on these burial places but so far, this study has been unable to attach names to those important Mhizha in the praise poem that lie buried in either Gwiranenzara, Chitukumaro or Gwatakwata. Similarly in Marupe is a place called *PaBwe paGwanungwa* (Gwanunga's rock) where Gwanunga, a Mhizha elder is buried under a rock. While it is acknowledged that it was impossible to capture all Mhizha in the genealogy given here (see Appendix 2) because it is only a collective reconstruction by the surviving Mhizha, it should be noted that Mhizha landscapes such as *pabwe paGwanungwa* come in handy in locating some personalities where human memory fails.

There is always a level of Mhizha exceptionalism in their relations with other people which is firmly grounded in their relationship to their landscape as the place of their forefathers graves. This emphasis on their special relationship with the landscape is often used as a qualification of excluding others from directly appropriating the Mhizha territory in the absence of a Mhizha chiefly authority. This is particularly true of Marungudzi.

¹²² Crispin Chauke and Edward Matenga, 'Site Nomination Statement for Marungudzi Hill' National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe, Southern Region, April 2005.

Marungudzi is special to the Mhizha not only as a mausoleum of their departed ancestors but mostly because, as a physical structure, it has an aesthetic appeal and evokes a number of emotions for them. Crispen Chauke and Edward Matenga have called it an associative cultural landscape given the living traditions of the Mhizha and other surrounding sacred sites in its vicinity such as the already mentioned Gwangwadza and Ngomahuru mountains.



Plate 1: Marungudzi Mountain Southern Elevation

In their archaeological survey, Chauke and Matenga identified several tunnels on the eastern slopes of the hill behind some boulders. It is also on this side, near some caves, that one can see R-type stone walling stretching some twenty or so metres in length and reaching to a metre or so high. Oral traditions associated with the hill claim it was a *nhare* (stronghold) with underground tunnels and huge caves capable of housing hundreds of people and their stock in times of raids, which is a fairly common concept in this region. However recent associations of these caves with royal burials

containing gold crowns are more from the imagination of the medium of Nehoreka who has recently attempted to perform cleansing ceremonies for mostly Zanu Pf ex-combatants at the site since 2004 as shall be shown in chapter 10. Amongst other things the Nehoreka medium hopes to launch a search for the lost Venda drum *ngoma lungundu* which is believed to be in Ngomahuru hill, as the name may imply.



Plate 2: Marungudzi Mountain From Chen'ombe Hill

More interesting and fascinating are the three fountain-like ponds at the bottom of the hill on its eastern side feeding the nearby stream Masvingise. These have a perennial flow and are the site of all principal Mhizha rituals except Chomukamba described below. For instance, all the millet used in brewing Mhizha beer is first soaked here and typically the actual propitiating at the start of any Mhizha *bira* starts here. These ponds are known in Mhizha nomenclature as *zvitovavadzimu*/

zviturivadzimu which Chauke and Matenga suspect to suggest connections with the Venda *dulibadzimu* in present day Beitbridge. Water flows directly from Marungudzi into the first pond which has an underground connection extending to the two other ponds enabling them to fill up slowly in a uniform pattern. Once filled the sparkling clean water flows further down the rocks in the form of a waterfall into the nearby Masvingise stream. The Mhizha have often used the ponds to forecast their seasons and although the *zviturivadzimu* never dry, a fall in their level foretells a bad rainy season.¹²³

Many traditions abound of the Mhizha themselves and these ponds. The more common one is that the ponds are the abode of Mhizha spirits which sometimes appear as mermaids or *njuzu*. It is alleged that two of Mupota's daughters were taken by the mermaids while playing in the water near the *zvitoravadzimu* and they sometimes re-appear as old women. Janie Loubser has submitted that mountains and pools have always held special meaning in ancient Venda culture and in the traditions of the Ngoni and Mbedzi, mountains symbolized a chief's political power whereas pools were associated with the chief's control over procreation. This duality, often expressed in the lay out of Venda settlements was replicated in areas where the Venda migrated to and Chishanga seems to confirm this.¹²⁴ The Mhizha like their Venda ancestors appreciate the special link between the *zvitoravadzimu* pools and Marungudzi mountain which cannot operate without each other. Although the *zvitoravadzimu* may be normal products of chemical weathering, it is interesting to note how much the Mhizha have interpreted and given meaning to them and continue to showcase them as evidence of their spiritual overlordship of the area.

¹²³ Interview with Poterai Gon'ora

¹²⁴ J. Loubser, 'Oral Traditions, Archaeology and The History of Venda *Mitupo*', *African Studies*, 49, no. 2, (1990), pp. 30-32.

The Mhizha also established a local rainmaking ritual based at Chomukamba, hill behind the Marupe in the area under Matewe Chimwango. There are so far no direct references of the origin of this ritual and in recent days it has worked independently of the Mwari cult or the collective efforts for *mutoro* organized by Chief Mapanzure. It is, by and large, a family affair. Briefly, when the families of the three sons of Matewe Chingonyani grew, it was necessary for them to establish some sort of central authority. A court was established at Chomukamba Hill and two competing explanations are given as to why this place. The first is that it was established after Mufandanaka had died leaving Chimwango as the most senior elder, this does not however explain how this system would have been able to rope in other important houses apart from that of Matewe. The second and more convincing was that it was central to all the important Mhizha houses, the Shindi house in the Gorokota, the Njiri house just behind the Marupe and the rest of the Matewe house in the vicinity. Today the Mhizha are also known as the *Zhou-Mukamba* people implying a derived relationship with this particular tree and perhaps the rituals associated with it but this remains an open line for further research.

Chomukamba is a small hillock dominated by the *Mukamba* tree from which it derives its name. The Mhizha *dare* (court) still lies there under a huge baobab tree in various stages of disintegration and there is all the evidence of settlement. Judging by its relics, with beaten earth floors, hearths and middens, Chomukamba could have functioned primarily as a residential place with an important administrative court. It has evolved eventually to be a religious site where the Mhizha still perform several other rituals. Today, when they want to conduct their *mutoro*, Mhizha elders gather for days at Chomukamba and make a *musasa* (enclosed shelter) where beer is brewed in a similar fashion to that of the Mwari Cult, involving only pre-menstrual girls and post-menopausal women in the actual

preparation of the ritual beer and the slaughtering of an animal *chipfuwo* (usually a goat or beast). It is different, however, in its use of water-related plants as the paraphernalia of the ritual. A piece of wet wood is cut from the water-associated *muturukusi* tree, to this wood is pierced waterbone plants; *rushanga* (water-reed), *rushezhu* and *runhokwe*. To this combination, the brewed beer is poured while the names of Mhizha ancestors are recited and they are all asked to pass on the message of the land's dryness to *Musikavanhu* meaning God the Creator. A night is spent drinking the beer and dancing. All the beer should be drunk until it is finished. By the time they leave the *musasa* it is alleged often that it rains.



Plate 3: Mhizha Elders at the Three Sacred Pools or 'Zvitoravadzimu'



Plate 4: The Chomukamba Court

It is still to be established whether the Mhizha rain ritual preceded or was a result of the Rozvi incorporation of the Mwari Cult. In the present day, the Mhizha conduct their rain-making rituals at Chomukamba in consultation with, but separately from, the Mwari inspired *mitoro* ceremonies led by Chief Mapanzure.

2.8 Conclusion

Chishanga exhibits in a large measure the attributes of a Rozvi satellite state. This chapter has attempted to locate the various groups and polities that were contemporary to Chishanga and comes to the conclusion that Chishanga and Mushawasha were the two major Rozvi territories south of Great Zimbabwe at the close of the 18th century. Chishanga was not part of the Duma confederacy as some historians have alluded, instead, it had become a fully established Rozvi province run on federal lines with the NeChishanga as the supreme political authority. Although there are no direct oral traditions relating to the order obtaining in such a federal structure, it has been demonstrated that the Gwadzi, Rombo and Shava/Nhire were an integral part of it. Much of this evidence is supported by the ethnography of the vaMhizha who still reside in Chishanga and carry on the legacies of belonging shaped by this period before the vaHera emerged and took over the territory, subduing and incorporating groups that were part of the Chishanga federation.

Chapter 3

Chishanga as a Hera Frontier and the Politics of Emplacement

3.1 Introduction: Hera Expansionism

Hera expansion into Chishanga is part of a larger wave of migrations by Hera groups moving out of vuHera (Buhera) in different directions. The reasons for this ‘break up of old Buhera’, as David Beach has termed these movements, are varied but most of the groups involved claim descent from, or are linked to, the figure Mbiru Nyashanu. He is one of the founders of two *shava*-Hera totemic groups in vuHera, (the other being Marange’s Bocha) and both belong to the larger eland or *mhofu* category. Nyashanu was subordinate to the Rozvi but, like many others in his position, he began to assert his independence as soon as Rozvi troubles surfaced. The Rozvi were keen to contain him and his successors with punitive raids or by supporting factions of incoming immigrants such as the Njanja to check on Hera expansion. If this was achieved in the long term, and probably assisted in the break-up of VuHera, it did not prevent Nyashanu’s descendants from seeking new territories outside vuHera. North of VuHera, the Masarirambi group established what later became known as the Mutekedza dynasty; further north, other groups descending from Nyashanu established the Hwata and Chiweshe dynasties which were welcomed by their kinsfolk under Seke, a descendant of Bocha, who had preceded them in that region.¹²⁵ In the south three groups are identifiable; the *shava*-Wakanonoka, who established the Munyaradzi chieftainship in modern Gutu district, Matenda’s group, which found land in what is now Zvishavane, and the group led by two brothers

¹²⁵ Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe*, pp. 74-7, 289-93.

Mutunhakuwenda and Mutizira that took over Chishanga and established the Mapanzure dynasty. This chapter details the expansion of the Hera in the southern frontier and discusses the politics of emplacement that resulted in the Hera take-over of Chishanga. It then goes on to track the various Hera houses that emerged within Chishanga and the areas they occupied and appropriated in the first phase of disaggregating Chishanga.

3.2 The Hera Southern Frontier

The area south of VuHera was always seen as a possible arena of Hera expansionism, a frontier. Although oral traditions of the Hera often give the impression that they moved into the south as one common group, there is evidence of more than one phase of settlement by different Hera groups. For instance, some Hera groups had penetrated as far inland as Gutu although it is still not clear whether they were descendants of the progenitor of the major southern Hera dynasties, Mbiru-Nyashanu. Although Munyaradzi's Wakanonoka group became the most dominant Hera dynasty in Gutu, before it settled its present area around Mt. Rasa, this region was occupied by some earlier Hera groups under Mheresi while the nearby region just north of the Dewure river was under the Hera lineages of the Nechirima and Mushava houses.¹²⁶

The Munyaradzi are descendants of Chinamasabwa, the son of Mbiru-Nyashanu by his estranged wife Marumbi-Karivara. Karivara was the daughter of a legendary rainmaker Marumbi of the Muwushu *moyo-sithole* dynasty that lived north of the Save. When Marumbi died his powers were passed on to his daughter Karivara much to the chagrin of her brothers. She fled to Nyashanu's area

¹²⁶ Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past*, p 49.

as a refugee and was forced into a marriage with Nyashanu. She bore him a son, Chinamasabwa, and also gained prominence as a rainmaker during the devastating droughts that hit Buhera, which won her accolades even from the Rozvi. This did not go down well with Nyashanu's other wives who eventually forced her to flee in the direction of Gutu. There she first settled at Matiti in what is now Headman Makumbe's area but later requested Gutu to allocate her the area around Mutinhe near Mt. Rasa (1469m) where she would be able to 'see Buhera.'¹²⁷ Some traditions however mention that she was rewarded this area by Gutu or the Rozvi after some rainmaking feats. She first settled with her brothers but when her son Chinamasabwa came, this led to tensions between him and his uncles and the community split into two with his uncles founding the Chamutsa-*moyo* community still settled at Rasa today and Chinamasabwa himself moving to the upper Save-Soti area where he founded the Munyaradzi dynasty.¹²⁸

The Hera we now find in Chishanga appear to be the descendants of a third wave of Hera expansionists who later moved to the south after Marumbi although, again, it is not certain whether they were part of the groups mentioned above under Mheresi and others. Beach describes them as a 'left-over' group under Mutunha and Mutizira who on entering the Chishanga territory overpowered the Nechishanga figure and took over his territory to give rise to the Mapanzure chieftainship we know today.¹²⁹

Mutunhakuwenda (shortened to 'Mutunha' and loosely translating to 'the wayfarer') was the younger of two brothers who led this third initiative. His elder brother, Mutizira, is less prominent

¹²⁷ J. Mujere, 'The Changing Patterns of Shona Kinship with Particular Reference to the Gutu People From c.1752', Unpublished BA 4th Year Special Honours Dissertation, Department of History, University of Zimbabwe, 2003. p. 21.

¹²⁸ Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past*, p 51.

¹²⁹ Ibid. p.175.

and is better known in local oral traditions as Masarasungire (one who remained behind). As will be shown below, both names are suggestive of each one's role in the founding of Chishanga territory. Mutizira's descendants gave rise to the Muchenugwa house while Mutunha fathered the founders of the Mapanzure dynasty and other important Hera houses in Chishanga. There have been serious differences between the descendants of these two figures chiefly over who has the right to rule the territory. The Muchenugwas have been excluded from succession to the Mapanzure chieftainship by the simple technicality that they are descendants of Mutunha's brother and therefore not direct beneficiaries to his inheritance or *nhaka*. Nonetheless, the Muchenugwa people have had a strong connection with the Hera ancestors because most of the mediums of Ndyakavamwa, Mutunha's father, have come from their house. It is only recently that the Mapanzure house has usurped the Ndyakavamwa spirit through sheer force. However, contrary to Hera traditional law and principles of chieftainship, the Mapanzure mediums of Ndyakavamwa have also sat consecutively as Chief Mapanzure between 1965 and 1986.¹³⁰ We shall return to this later.

Mutunha is remembered as one of the many sons of Nyashanu and, specifically, as the founding figure of the vaHera of Chishanga. Although this is a popular depiction of Mutunha serving the purpose of making direct links with the broader Hera identity based at their metropole in vuHera, it is significantly telescoped. Mutunha was not a son but a great-grandson of Nyashanu, his father was Ndyakavamwa who was the son of Gukunava, the son of Dukuta or Mutekwatekwa the son of Nyashanu.¹³¹

¹³⁰ J.F. Holleman, *The Pattern of Hera Kinship*, (Rhodes Livingstone Papers no. 17; Oxford University Press, London, 1949). See also S2929/8/2 MLG DDA Delineation Report, Victoria District, Sr. Mary Aquina, 'The Tribes of Victoria Reserve' pp. 6-7.

¹³¹ Ibid. p.6., Interview with Mapope Tavarera and Raphael Manyoka Gwenhamo, Gwenhamo Homestead, Shumbayaonda Village, Mapanzure Communal Lands 18/07/01.

There are several traditions that describe Mutunha's dramatic escapades in the south. One such tradition depicts him as a fugitive from vuHera who had escaped the wrath of his kinsmen after an act of incest with a sister.¹³² The more common traditions locate him variously as a guided figure, who in the fashion of most Karanga dynastic founders, ventures to the sea (probably the Indian Ocean) in search of celestial powers normally inhabiting paraphernalic objects like beads *chuma* (pl. *Zvuma*) or gourds *chitende*. In some instances Mutunha is said to have reached the sea and obtained the powers.¹³³ In others, Mutunha encounters a *chitende* of this nature while herding cattle in the vleis of vuHera, and upon mistakenly tripping over it, out came the beads and the *mashavi* or wandering spirits of Mandisekwa and his wife Mafumanadzo [and in some cases, their son Wewe as well] which were already in search of a host. Beyond that Mutunha fell seriously ill. A diviner was consulted and, when all the necessary requirements were performed, it emerged that Mandisekwa and his wife's spirits had possessed Mutunha.

Three spirits were immediately identifiable as *Mafumanadzo* a female spirit with powers of maternity delivery over human beings and livestock, *Vutavumire* a male spirit endowed with hunting and fighting skills, and *Wewe* a divining spirit. Today these spirits are still revered amongst the vaHera of Chishanga. Many Hera children bear these names in different families but noticeably *Mafumanadzo* is also a name common amongst Hera livestock, particularly cattle, stemming from the firm belief that if given to a female cow it is able to calve very well.¹³⁴ In typical allusions to the

¹³² S2929/8/2 MLG DDA Delineation Report, Victoria District, Mapanzure Chieftainship and Community.

¹³³ Interview with Chief Vhuramayi Vushangwe Mapanzure

¹³⁴ Interview with Kadiviriregwiziguzere Gapare, Chifuridyana Farm no. 118, Mshawasha West, on 26/12/04.

biblical prophet Moses, these spirits convinced Mutunha that they will lead him to a land flowing water, honey and wild loquats or *mashuku*.¹³⁵

Mutunha set off with a group of brothers and fellow kinsmen from amongst the Sinyoro people of Njanja to the promised land.¹³⁶ He settled first, in the land of Gutu at Vumba mountain. At this point emerges an interesting conundrum of portable landscapes. Oral traditions differ as to whose lands the Vumba mountain was encountered. Some say it was in the lands of Chiwara, others claim that it was in Munyaradzi's area on the strength that the latter were pioneers and precursors of Hera expansion south of VuHera. It appears however, that modern Gutu district actually has two important mountains by the same name Vumba and that both are associated with the Munyaradzi people.¹³⁷ As demonstrated above, the Munyaradzi people appear to have settled in Chiwara's country when they entered Gutu for the first time, later they moved to their present area at Soti after clashes with Chamutsa *moyo*'s people at Mt. Rasa. While in Chiwara they named one of the mountains there Vumba and when they moved to Soti they carried with them the idea of a Vumba mountain and named yet another mountain there after the one they had abandoned. There is no evidence of a pre-existing Vumba in Buhera nor are any of the Hera in Chishanga able to recall which one exactly is the mountain they refer to in their traditions. Common allusions are that it is just in Munyaradzi's country yet as we have seen both mountains are technically associated with Munyaradzi.

¹³⁵ Interview with Chomunogwa Frederick Mazarire, Mafurinye Farm no. 127, Mshawasha West, on 26/12/04. However although there are many *mashuku* there are not as much as you would find in the land now falling under Charumbira.

¹³⁶ Interview with Mbonga Musiiwa, Tangenhamo Farm no. 352 Mshawasha West on 6/07/01.

¹³⁷ I am grateful to the insightful findings by my former student Joseph Mujere who has worked amongst the vaHera of Gutu and produced his own captivating study, J. Mujere 'Historicising Shona Kinship: the Case of the Gutu People', Unpublished BA 4th Year Special Honours Dissertation, Department of History, University of Zimbabwe, 2003, he has been able to revise his ideas in a sequel seminar paper, 'Historicising Shona Kinship', Unpublished Seminar Paper Presented to the New Dimensions in History Seminar Series, Department of History University of Zimbabwe, August 2005.

Vumba carries other associations for the Hera of Chishanga. Some traditions believe that Mutunha was buried in Vumba. This comes amidst a number of variant traditions on the death and burial of Mutunha with some alleging he went back to die amongst his kinsmen in vuHera while others claim that he was buried in Chishanga. We have seen also amongst the vaShawasha, the link between the soul of the founder and his place of origin, but unlike the Hera, we are able to trace the grave of Tingini the Shawasha founder to modern Ruwa. Being such a ritualistic people, it is highly unusual to see no association with the grave of such a crucial Hera figure as Mutunhakuwenda. The most common reference to the spirit of Mutunha amongst his descendants is actually centred around Vumba. It is alleged that there are sheep in Vumba belonging to Mutunha which can still be found today. They are said to be the abode of his spirits and the feeling is strong among the people subscribing to this tradition that this flock must be ‘claimed’.¹³⁸ It is not unusual in Shona communities to find stray livestock because this is part of the *kurashira* concept in Karanga culture in which evil spirits are disposed of through animals or poultry, and actually, close to Chiwara’s Vumba there is a hillock where several stray goats reside.¹³⁹

Many Hera travelling in these lands are said to have previously slaughtered these sheep for personal consumption while on major journeys, but were never able to exhaust them. This is, in many ways a fable, but an interesting one in Hera etiquette. Terence Mashingaidze’s work amongst the nuclear Hera of Nyashanu shows that a ram is an important paraphernalic object of Hera ritual. In all Hera traditional functions, writes Mashingaidze, a ram has to be slaughtered, and he cites a telling case in 1975 when the newly installed Chief Makiwa Nyashanu was momentarily cursed by the Dukuta

¹³⁸ Interview with Mapope Tavarera , Mapanzure Communal Lands, 17/7/ 01.

¹³⁹ Interview between Joseph Mujere and Jaison Mudukuti at Mudukuti Village in Chiwara 12/11/02.

Medium Pikitayi Manyanga for not honouring this ritual at a function.¹⁴⁰ Certainly, Vumba is viewed as a place of pilgrimage by the descendants of Mutunha and many entertain the idea of a collective effort to host a joint *bira* with the people of Munyaradzi there but these are far-fetched products of Hera soul-searching. It is equally possible that the Bible has crept into Hera oral traditions and indeed there are some grounds to associate the famed sheep of Vumba with the sacrificial lamb of Mount Morea, which characteristically emerge for sacrifice as divinely sent by an omnipotent ancestor or supernatural figure that Mutunha is often equated to.

3.3 The Hera in Chishanga

Hera expansion into Chishanga was piecemeal although in the long term and once their take-over was complete it became a classic case of 'big-brother take all'. This was both a product of the competition between Mutunha's sons to control the chieftainship and a creation of the Native Affairs Department in the early 1900s. Although the role of the Mutunha figure begins to fade at the point that the Hera enter Chishanga, he seems to have been the unifying force binding a band of men who followed him to 'his' promised land. Their team was composed of different people but principal in most traditions are his brother Mutizira and his sons Muravu, Gapare, Muchibwa and Chitekedza. Muravu's role has recently been overplayed, not least because he is the father of Mapanzure after whom the Hera chieftainship in Chishanga is named, but principally because the Native Department paid attention to this chieftainship as a political entity rather than to the Chishanga-Hera as a group

¹⁴⁰ Terence Motida Mashingaidze, 'Constitutional Crisis in a Traditional Polity: The Case of the Hera People of Buhera District in the Late Colonial Period', Unpublished Seminar Paper Presented to 'History Matters: New Ideas in Zimbabwean Historiography' a Valedictory Workshop in Honour of Professor T.O. Ranger, Monomotapa Hotel, Harare 28-29 June 2001, p.15.

as was usually the case in other reserves founded after pre-existing chieftaincies. Later scholars seemed to be guided by the same principle and subsequent works have had the tendency to reproduce each other. There has been, as a result, a total neglect of other vaHera outside the house of Muravu and even so, those outside that of Mapanzure and a focus on those from the Mazorodze house. Subsequently the history of these southern Hera has narrowed to a single powerful house defined politically. This has had a severe impact on these people's social history.

From this enquiry, it emerges that Hera expansion into Chishanga involved the many sons of Mutunha including his brother Mutizira or, as shall be seen later, Masarasungire. Attempts at excluding others are not only recent but have been inspired by the competition for first-comer status which has been used as entitlement to the Mapanzure throne. Among the sons of Mutunha were in order of their age Chitekedza, Muravu, Gapare, Muchibwa, Muchenjedzi, Jeka-Masase, Chako and Makashe.

We are unaware of the whereabouts of the descendants of Chitekedza, Muchenjedzi, Chako or Makashe but those of Gapare, Muchibwa and Jeka-Masase occupied the greater part of the south-western ends of Chishanga and co-existed with the Zhou-Mhizha. Although some of them were displaced by the Ngomahuru Leper Settlement and the Mshwawasha Native Purchase Area scheme in the 1930s, the bulk of them, like the Mhizha bought their ancestral lands. A group of Jeka-Masase's descendants first went to settle in the Mapanzure reserve for some time after this displacement from Ngomahuru, but in 1956 they were removed to Chilonga under Chief Chitanga with other groups from Mapanzure Reserve.¹⁴¹ The 1965 article by Sr. Mary Aquina only mentioned

¹⁴¹ S2929/8/4 Delineation Report on the Chilonga Headmanship and Community, Chief Chitanga, Matibi II TTL, August 1967.

Gapare as one of the sons of Mutunha without any further enquiry, just as the Ministry of Internal Affairs Delineation report of the same year failed to mention any other of Muravu's sons. Similarly, both of Beach's monumental texts on Shona dynasties completely ignored this. Mutizira the brother of Mutunha was part of the occupying group and was covered in these works simply as the father of the Muchenugwa house. However, since the 1960s this house has been involved in a bitter struggle with the Mapanzure house over the spirit of Ndyakavamwa which is supposed to regulate and appoint the Mapanzure chiefs. The Muchenugwas have adamantly refused to recognize the idea of a Mapanzure chieftainship and later competing mediums to the Ndyakavamwa spirit have emerged from the Mapanzure house including Chief Gwenhamo, his son Manyoka and now Manyoka's daughter Maneta. This is a fairly awkward scenario of a group spirit being monopolised by one house which has led to a number of revelations on the history of the Hera.

Contacts between the Mapanzure and Nyashanu people of Buhera are said to have existed because Dukuta had mediums in both groups in the late 1940s. This connection was an attempt at a revival coming after a long time and it is alleged this 'narrowed the gap between the two sections and revived a feeling of kinship long lost.'¹⁴² On arriving in Chishanga, the Hera group functioned as kinsmen at first but after consolidating their conquest, this began to pose some operational difficulties which became serious political problems for later generations in many ways that validate the Kopytoff model discussed earlier.

¹⁴² Holleman, *The Pattern of Hera Kinship*, p.31.

3.3.1 The Chishanga-Hera War of Dispossession

Many versions of the eventful take-over of the territory of NeChishanga exist. The picture given is one of a slow and cautious approach. From Chikarudzo hill, the Hera team moved to Makungubwe then to Chisanati in what is now Shumba-Chekai's country but then falling under the powerful chief Nyajena. Because they had coveted NeChishanga's land, the Hera conspired a plan to provoke a war.¹⁴³ First, there was need for an oath or *mhinganidzo* binding all Hera warriors who were to participate in the invasion. This is normally administered by a war doctor who gives war medicine *ndudzo* or prescribes a taboo. All Hera men in Chishanga today do not eat the nightshade, a vegetable known as *musungusungu* (*solanum nigrum*) which is alleged to have been the prescribed taboo.¹⁴⁴ One version claims that the Hera waited for an opportune moment to strike which availed itself in the form of an invitation from NeChishanga to all his subjects to participate in his *Zunde* (obligatory cultivation of the chief's fields). Towards the end of the day when people were about to complete the day's work and partake of beer at the indulgence of NeChishanga, his *machinda* first served their close relatives, which incensed the Hera who felt discriminated. The Hera protested and fetched their weapons hidden in the nearby stream and fought NeChishanga and his people forcing them to flee across the Tugwi river in the direction of Chivi's country.¹⁴⁵ In another version, the NeChishanga figure was not involved in the whole debacle, but his *gota* Mabvumba, who was responsible for discriminating the vaHera in the distribution of beer thereby inviting their wrath and the consequent loss of his master's territory. In yet another version, NeChishanga was ousted and an understanding was reached with his *gota* Mabvumba who continued to stay in Chishanga but after a

¹⁴³ Interview with Raphael Manyoka Gwenhamo, Mapanzure Village, 18th July 2001.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Gibiel Gapare, Greendale, Harare, 11/04/04.

¹⁴⁵ Interviews with Boniface Tungamirayi Mazarire, Mhosva School, Chivi 6/8/2000, Chomunogwa Mazarire, Vhuramayai Vushangwe, and Mapope Tavarera.

while, he conspired to win back the territory for his chief and was himself hounded out of Chishanga following his master.¹⁴⁶

In all instances of the NeChishanga's defeat however, there has never been an attempt to locate, in these traditions the whereabouts of the Chishanga people. This drama is variously presented as if it involved only the individuals concerned. The chief reason for this is that there are very few members of the Chishanga lineage today left to tell their side of the story and, unlike other ousted groups such as the Ngowa in Mazvihwa across the Runde river, after their defeat by the Mhari, the Chishanga people did not reconvene in some diaspora. In addition, the vaHera also became totally consumed in their triumph to the point of believing that by taking over Chishanga territory, they became *vaChishanga* or 'those of Chishanga' who appropriated the place and its identity. As shall be shown below, the Hera never succeeded in ruling Chishanga as it was, and as result of a number of factors involving divisions amongst themselves, clashes with other immigrant groups and the failure to maintain Chishanga federalism, their territory began to shrink from the very point that they took it. In this sense Chishanga remained an idea far much more imagined than real to them but they were successfully able to use it as metaphor of power.

3.4 The Hera Political Geography

The Hera political geography in Chishanga was constituted in two phases, the first a large scale constitutive emplacement designed to mark territory was executed by Muravu in his capacity as eldest brother but in consultation with his siblings and through the advice of his uncle Muchenugwa/Mutizira. The second was effected two generations later by Mazorodze, designed to

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Mbonga Musiiwa.

populate the territory and entrench his political and secular authority within it at the expense of other Hera houses. The following is a Hera praise poem collected from Chishanga:

Mazviita Shava
Thank you Shava
Mazviita Nyashanu
Thank you Nyashana
Mhofu Yomukono
The bull eland
Ziwewera Ziendanetyaka
That moves with a click (from the sound of its hooves)
VokwaSadzadete
Those who eat thin porridge
Gobvu rinodzipa mwana
And avoid thick porridge because it chokes the children
Mazviita Mhukahuru
Thank you big animal
VariMatiringe
You who are buried in Matiringe mountain
Vamodana vari Majakatira
And call out to your kin buried in Majakatira
VariChishanga
You of Chishanga
VariMashakazhara
And those buried in Mashakazhara
Chimhundu Chamago
The beast that carries a hornet's nest
Ikachema misodzi
Vhu-u yashura mutumbu
The beast that spells bad omen when it sheds its tears¹⁴⁷

This poem is a celebration of the Hera triumph over Nechishanga realized through appropriation of key landscapes particularly mountains where they interred the remains of the clan's founding fathers and converted it into their *gadzingo*. It acknowledges that the name of the territory is Chishanga and there has never been an attempt to erase that from official memory. It is important to know, however, how this political geography was constituted in order to arrive at some of the permutations of its contestations over time.

¹⁴⁷ Compiled from various vaHera informants, see also one version by L. Vhurinosara, 'Hekanhi Shava', in J. Haasbroek (ed.), *Uyavaya Hwenduri dzeChinyakare vol. 1* (Mambo Press, Gweru, 1988), p. 161.



Plate 5: The Zhou Zone From Inside the *Gadzingo*

It is clear from the traditions that once the Chishanga takeover was complete the figure in charge was Muravu-there is corresponding equivalent of his from the cousins of the Muchenugwa house-the rest were his siblings. The first key consideration was the defence of the new territory especially in the wake of remnant NeChishanga threats such as that posed by his *gota* Mabvumba. Thus the distribution of land was informed by the establishment of *nheyo* (literally trappers) at all the nodal points of the territory to guard against invasion by powerful neighbours. While Muravu chose Zhou as the administrative center, his brother Gapare was seconded to the Gadziguru (983m) to look out for the *pfumo* (invading army) from Nyajena. Muchibwa was allocated Mafurinye to watch over the Chivi-Mhari *pfumo* across the Tugwi. The circumstances of the settlement of the Muchenugwa house at Chipagwe hill are controversial, some traditions claim that the Muchenugwa people were

not part of the group that fought and won the territory from Nechishanga, they only came (probably from Gutu) after realizing that their kinsmen had just won the 'promised land' and were, in the spirit of brotherhood, allocated Chipagwe to watch over the Duma *pfumo* from Shumba-Chekai.¹⁴⁸

The Mhizha, through some understanding were left undisturbed, but near them Muravu settled his own children as *matego* (buffers). Murevegwa and Musingarabwi were placed in a zone right where they would buffer the Mhizha and Charumbira's Nhinhi, Hwena was placed at Rusadze with no primary function, so was Mavodzeke-Gotosa in an undesignated place. With time, Gapare, who had grown fairly old, decided to move in with Muchibwa at Mafurinye and occupied Chifuridyana which, as shall be shown, became Bedzavanhu later.¹⁴⁹ On the departure of Mukapare arrangements were made to second one of Muravu's sons, Murira, to take over Gadziguru from Gapare as the *nheyo*.

After the death of Muravu, the country was still not safe to tread freely, it had not been established as a political authority in the form of a chieftainship and Muravu and his brothers still functioned as a group of good-willed cooperating brothers right up till his death and the country did not even have a new name. There was therefore need to establish bonds with local people, Mapanzure took over as the effective political authority, Mukapare predeceased Muravu and Muchibwa was devoured by a lion at Mafurinye.¹⁵⁰ Under Mapanzure, however, the administration of the territory became centralized and most important people began to move towards the *gadzingo* area around a cluster of mountains including Zhou, the political capital, Matiringe, Majakatira, Murove, Mashakazhara, Chenhora, Nyandimbobvu and Vukona. It was under Mapanzure that a religious authority also

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Mapope Tavarera, Tavarera Village, Mapanzure Communal Lands, 6/07/01.

¹⁴⁹ See section 4.2 of this thesis.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Chomunogwa Mazarire

emerged centred around the burials of the founding chiefs and the principle behind the establishment of the sacred forest or *Rambotemwa*.

Mapanzure himself had several other children apart from Mazorodze described in detail below. Surprisingly, only two feature prominently in Chishanga memory. The eldest of the remembered is Mavhengere who was given the Zvemapere hill right on the border with Charumbira to boost the defence there to contain an expansionist Charumbira. The Mhizha, who probably felt insecure following the expulsion of their host and overlord Nechishanga, were keen to reach a settlement with the victors and would probably have used any opportunity that availed itself to express their loyalty or solidify an alliance with the new rulers. Mapanzure then married a Mhizha woman VaChirungeni who became the mother his most powerful son Mazorodze. Although traditions vary on the process, this move secured the place of the Mhizha in Chishanga for good and shortly, we will examine the competing narratives concerning the nature of this union.

The second phase of Hera emplacement was more robust and aggressive, reflective of the growing fissures in the expanding Hera community. It was characterized by the concentration of power in the Mazorodze house and the isolation of other houses. Mazorodze who himself was a prolific father with more than forty sons, placed them in their numbers strategically in a process that entrenched his political power as it concretised Mapanzure as a political entity. The distribution of his sons over time was strategic and it went as follows; Chatikobo one of his eldest sons was given Hangara and Musinazano given the place of Hera first settlement before taking over Chishanga, Makungubwe. Zishiri and Chizema were given Vukumbo and Bangomwe respectively, in a move meant to neutralize Gapare dominance in this zone. Mupandasekwa occupied Matiringe and Murove while

Chimbuya the eldest son (and Mazorodze's successor) entered Vujakata/Majakatira, key mountains situated right in the *gadzingo*. Murira moved into Gove, and as the population grew in the *gadzingo*, Shumbayaonda, Magwirokona, Tavarera and Gwenhamo first settled collectively in Mativone but later Shumbayaonda moved to Mutiwakuva, Tavarera to Zvomukonde and Gwenhamo went to Chitinhira hill.¹⁵¹

When Chatikobo became chief, he moved to the *gadzingo* leaving his son Makasi in charge at Hangara. While at the *gadzingo*, Chatikobo allocated Majakatira to his sons Jongoni, Tazvigwira and Munikwa. Gradually, all the key places of the territory were occupied by Mazorodze's sons and by extension, all the politics of Chishanga became centred around his house. Mazorodze ruled well into his old age and even then, he was still considered the most powerful Chief north of the Tugwi river. On his visit to Mapanzure in August 1871, the German explorer Carl Mauch found this irreconcilable with his physical stature;

...I found myself disappointed in the person of Mapansule [Mazorodze], for instead of a vivacious, strong man, I saw a small, old little man, almost hidden underneath a homemade bark cloth; a picture of ruin and poverty.¹⁵²

It remains to be seen how Mazorodze had accumulated so much power ahead of his uncles or elder brothers and there are various reasons that have been put forward. Before considering these, however, we need a thorough comprehension of other existing houses in the expanding Hera community within Chishanga vis-a vis his own

¹⁵¹ Interviews with Raphael Manyoka Gwenhamo, Vhuramayi Vushangwe and Mapope Tavarera, Manyoka Homestead 14 February 2002.

¹⁵² E. Burke, *The Journals of Carl Mauch*, pp.135-136.

Mountains in Chishanga

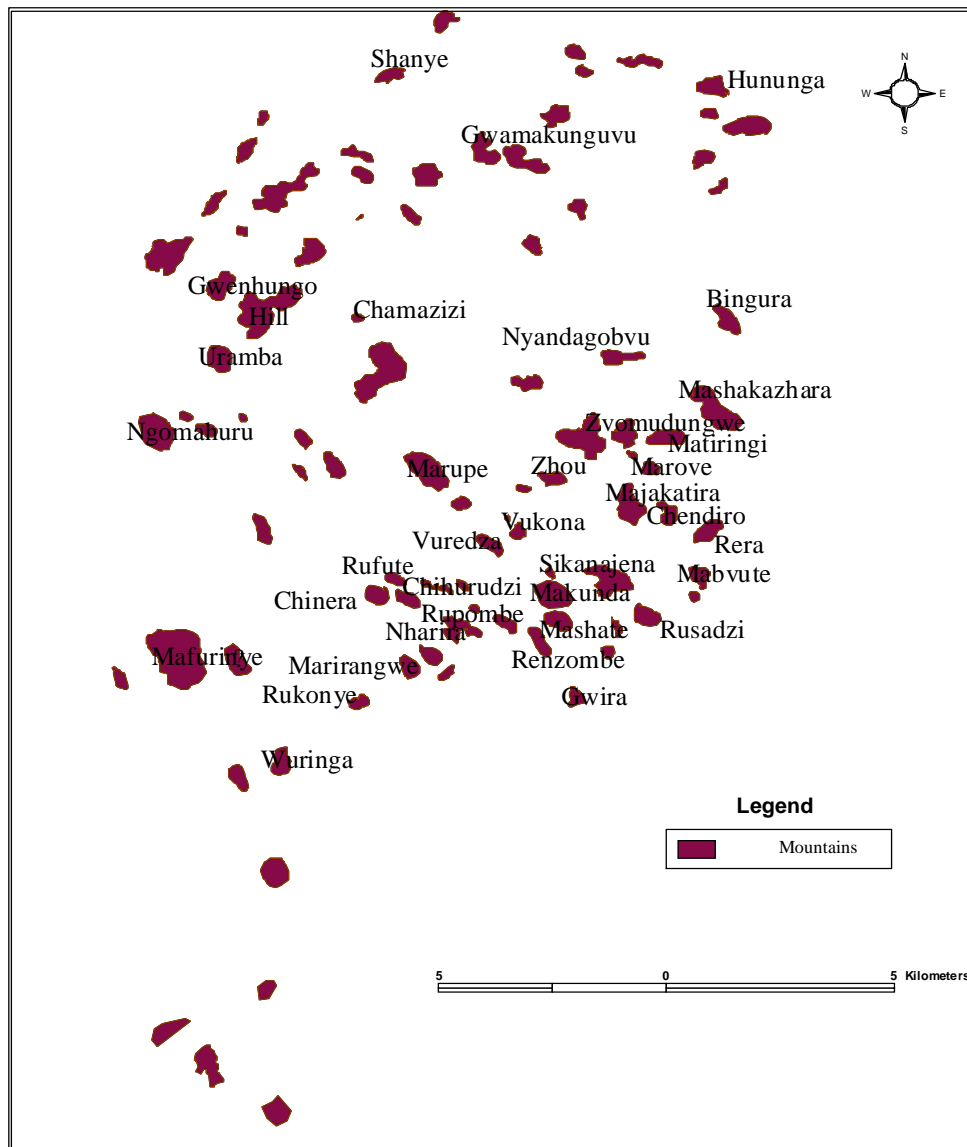


Fig. 3. 1: Mountains in Chishanga

3.5 Hera Houses and the Battle for Political Supremacy in Chishanga

These Hera houses considered here are based on the descendants of Mutunha and Mutizira, the brothers that came into Chishanga. It shall appear that the Mutunha group is more dominant with more houses but indeed the Mutizira house has been reduced to that of Muchenugwa. Any attempt to trace the houses becomes deeply embroiled in more contemporary matters regarding succession to the Mapanzure chieftainship and, it would appear, that the chieftainship almost assumed its present form in the turn of the century when it became centred in the house of Mazorodze, the son of Mapanzure. There are serious contestations because of the continuous flouting of succession regulations with spirit mediums doubling as chiefs. There has also been a tendency of leaving out sections of the Hera from succession by simple technicalities based on the principle of *nhaka* inheritance which is supposed to be a nuclear concept that does not recognize the ties of the extended families. Thus brothers are left out in one generation, in another they become grandfathers and in the next ancestral spirits, in a fashion that distances them further from the chieftainship. In Mapanzure the principle of collateral succession has never worked. We will look at each house in order of age to see how the cobweb of kinship functioned in a confusing way. First let us consider the house of Mutizira, better known as the Muchenugwa house today, before turning to the descendants of Mutunha.

3.5.1 The Muchenugwa House

The Muchenugwa house is descendant from a brother of Mutunha otherwise remembered as Mutizira or Masarasungire. They are today settled in the area around the Mapanzure Township and Business Centre near Chipagwe Hill, although the community's boundaries are imprecise. There are

conflicting traditions of how Muchenugwa came to Chishanga. Some claim that he was part of the Hera party that fought and won the territory from NeChishanga. More recent traditions particularly those emanating from the Mazorodze house claim that Mutizira was Masarasungire who, as the name suggests, remained behind, either in Vumba or in vuHera and only came to Chishanga after they had heard that there was new territory ready for settlement. According to this version, Mutizira and his descendants did not fight the war that won Chishanga (*havana kugwa nyika ino*) so they should not have entitlement to the *nhaka* of his brother. Although Muchenugwa, Mutizira's son benefited from the initial parcelling out of Chishanga territory, the Mazorodze version of the story alleges that this was a *chipandauko* (limb) [the land as a human body] or piece of land given to kinsmen in the spirit of brotherhood and the desire to establish a much broader Hera kinship web beyond that based on the nuclear family of Mutunha.

We are aware however that Muchenugwa was the first medium of Ndyakavamwa, and that probably when the chieftainship was established, he was unable, according to custom to become chief. The same is also true of his son Mhondera who became the next Ndyakavamwa medium after his father's death.¹⁵³ In such a scenario it is possible to suggest that the Muchenugwa house could have been part of the Hera group that conquered Chishanga but assumed the religious authority of the new territory while the Mutunha house controlled its political and secular authority. In addition, at this stage such an arrangement was possible in the desire to establish stability and to give the new territory some form of sanctity and authority along the Rozvi model as those obtaining in neighbouring polities.

More recently however, it shall be shown that the Mazorodze house descendant from Mutunha has appropriated the spirit of Ndyakavamwa and contrary to custom the sitting chief from 1949 to 1973,

¹⁵³ Aquina, 'Tribes in Victoria Reserve', p.6.

one Gwenhamo Mapanzure was both the medium of Mutunha and that of Ndyakavamwa, which is contrary to the Karanga custom that a chief cannot be a medium. Gwenhamo's son Manyoka who acted as Chief after his death from 1973 to 1983 was the next Ndyakavamwa medium until his death in 2005. His daughter Maneta also became the Mutunha medium at much the same time to this day. There has been so much tension between the Muchenugwa and Mazorodze houses over this matter since the 1960s, the Mazorodze house claims that at some point, probably after the death of Mhondera, the spirit of Ndyakavamwa sought a host from the Muchenugwa house but was rebuffed, then it chose Gwenhamo instead, now 'it cannot return where it was rejected.'¹⁵⁴

As a result of these tensions the Muchenugwa house has never been recognized in the political hierarchies of the modern Mapanzure chieftainship, even at the Mapanzure court it is simply represented by a senior village-head who is not a functional *sabhuku* (village-head) with the responsibilities that go with the name. Here and there he receives cases at his home but has no power of trial.¹⁵⁵ The genealogy of the Muchenugwa house is fairly sketchy and still an important subject of inquiry. There are other houses under Muchenugwa whose connection to the other sons of Muchenugwa is still difficult trace. These are; Macharaga, Njerere, Mudadigwa, Nyanyiwa and Mutero. It might be possible, as Joost Fonetin has shown for the Nemamwa people-a small clan numerically and territorially- that its conflicts and disputes have taken far greater significance in internal disputes, so that debate over precise genealogy has been minimal in comparison, and there is lack of knowledge of genealogy precisely because it has not been an issue of the same proportion. This suggests that the past is remembered, negotiated and constructed dependent upon its relevance

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Mapope Tavarera, Raphael Manyoka and Vhuramayi Vushangwe.

¹⁵⁵ S2929/8/5 MLG DDA Delineation Report Victoria District, Mapanzure Chieftainship and Community June 1965.

to conflict in the [historical] present.¹⁵⁶ This is also true of other Hera houses that have not been involved in the chieftainship wrangles which contrasts sharply with the exhaustive knowledge the Mazorodze people display of their genealogy and how it ought to function.

3.5.2 *The Muravu House*

3.5.2.1 Muravu's Sons

Muravu is the second eldest son of Mutunha after Chitekedza. His eldest son was Mapanzure after whom the Mapanzure chieftainship is named. Mapanzure is in turn the father of Mazorodze the personality responsible for giving the chieftainship its current shape and character. Because of the dominance of the Mazorodze house as shall be shown, less emphasis has gone to the other brothers of Mapanzure born of Muravu. Muravu did, in fact, have many other sons apart from Mapanzure such as Murevegwa, Musingarabwi, Hwena, Mavodzeke and Wushemasimba.¹⁵⁷ Of these we are aware that Wushemasimba was the father of Zvinavashe father of Mubaiwa who is the father Makopa. It has been decided to treat this house separately because it is perceived as such and is known as *imba yaMuravu* in common Mapanzure discourse. There is a reason for this, which is simply to distinguish it as a house descendent from the father of Mapanzure and by extension the grandfather of Mazorodze and therefore has no inheritance in the *nhaka* of the grandson. It is therefore not allowed to contest the Mapanzure chieftainship although it has a special place in the *dare* of the chief where Makopa has acted as a *mutongi* (presiding officer) for a long time. In the recent past and under an independent resettlement programme, Chief Mapanzure has made some of the descendants of Muravu such as Hwena, Mavodzeke and Makopa villageheads.

¹⁵⁶ Fonte, *The Silence of Great Zimbabwe*, p. 35.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with K. Hwena and Raphael Manyoka Gwenhamo.

3.5.2.2 The Mapanzure House

So far as the house of Muravu goes, the Mapanzure group should belong there but it perceives itself as separate because it gave rise to the chieftainship in its present form. This is only done conveniently with respect to the house of Mazorodze which has appropriated the name Mapanzure in its generic sense, as the embodiment of the chieftainship that has become centred around them. However, it seems others descending from Mapanzure's other sons are not Mapanzure enough in this nomenclature and are, therefore, not eligible for chieftainship. We know for instance, that Mapanzure's other son was Mavhengere and that this is now a large lineage in Chishanga, but this house was only represented at the *dare* where, in the 1960s, Tagwireyi the son of Mahowe the only known son of Mavhengere was, like Makopa of the Muravu house mentioned above, one of Chief Kunyanhu Gwenhamo Mapanzure's councilors at his *dare*.¹⁵⁸

3.5.2.3 The Mazorodze House

This is the most prominent house which has controlled the Mapanzure chieftainship since the reign of Mazorodze to the present day. Mazorodze was a powerful personality who, as the Mhizha argued, capitalized on the strength of the number of his descendants. Mazorodze bore well over forty sons of whom the eldest was Mupandasekwa and the youngest Gwenhamo as shown in the genealogy (Appendix 3). Of these, seven of them became chiefs in the following order, Chimbuya, Chatikobo, Shumbayaonda, Magwirokona, Zishiri, Bwangu and Gwenhamo the last born. The BSAC established itself while Chimbuya was chief and he was the first to be adorned with the colonial

¹⁵⁸ S2929/8/5 Delineation Report Mapanzure Chieftainship and Community.

badge. By some means, succession became confined to the list of brothers in this house virtually excluding the Muchenugwa, Muravu, Muchibwa, Gapare and some Mapanzure houses of the Chishanga Hera for reasons explored below and above. Thus, the chieftainship, despite having the generic description Mapanzure which, as shall be shown, was arrived at due to some misconceptions, it functioned principally as the chieftainship of Mazorodze. However, as with all adelphic collateral succession systems, the overlaps in age are both a source of confusion and animosity and this had already begun creeping into the Mazorodze house itself as early as the 1960s. Mazorodze's own grandsons born of his first sons such as Mupandasekwa, Chimbuya, Kufandada and Zingoni were older than Mazorodze's youngest sons such as Gwenhamo, Chivendera and Tazviziva amongst others. This in effect meant that Gwenhamo's sons were a generation senior to people older than them, in Karanga terms, they were fathers *vanababamunini* to people older than their father.¹⁵⁹ Under the circumstances, it emerges that complications do arise when the whole generation of first brothers is gone or, the one that is left is a spirit medium not eligible for succession to the throne. This seems to have been the case on the ascension to power of Gwenhamo, where he was the last surviving son of Mazorodze and the medium of Dyakavamwa. In his own words Gwenhamo claimed; 'I was not selected, I was the only one left, I am the last born, *rugohwe* son of my father'.¹⁶⁰ It is only after this generation had passed that succession began to start a new round in a new generation with Masimba the son of Chimbuya taking over in 1983 after Manyoka the son of Gwenhamo had acted as chief following the death of his father and the office remaining vacant for more than twenty years because of internal disagreements within this house. Masimba died and again the office was to remain vacant until 1997 when the current chief Vhuramayi Vushangwe of the Mutukwa house took over.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid..

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

3.5.2.4 The Chatikobo House

This house has been singled out because of its peculiar position in Chishanga and its implications on the Mapanzure chieftainship. To start with, Chatikobo was the fifth son of Mazorodze and he is the only one of Mazorodze's sons with a separate sub-territory under himself in Chishanga. Chatikobo was as prolific as his father and bore a total of thirty five known sons as shown in the genealogy (Appendix 3a.). During the reign of Chimbuya in the early colonial period, Chimbuya is said to have approached the colonial administration to give his brother Chatikobo a headmanship *nyembe* since he was in charge of a large area. As shall be shown, Chimbuya had been placed in charge of a huge area designated and recognized by the Europeans as old Mapanzure. This included territory that fell under other Hera groups that Mazorodze had not even been in charge of. That is the undesignated land in colonial land classification such as the Gapare zone near the Gadziguru which was eventually incorporated into the Mukosi River Ranch as well as the Muchibwa and Mhizha zones that were to become part of the Native Purchase Area and Ngomahuru Leprosarium.

The colonial administration agreed to this and Chatikobo was placed in charge of an undesignated zone with no clear-cut boundaries because he was viewed as still part of the Mapanzure chieftainship. Later however, Chimbuya himself died and Chatikobo was due to succeed him according to custom. Chatikobo took over the chiefly *nyembe* and gave his headmanship to his eldest son Tasarirowona or Makasi. Chatikobo controlled the rest of the chiefdom but invested in the sustenance of his headmanship which became established as his own lineage inheritance. Over time Chatikobo evolved into 'a community within a community', but although Chatikobo exercised judicial authority over his people, he owed allegiance to and recognized the supreme authority of

Chimbuya and the Mapanzure spirit mediums. This seems to be an established tradition with the incumbents of various religious and secular offices observing the same principles today.¹⁶¹ The people of Chatikobo seem to take a leaf from the succession system of the Mazorodze house where spirit mediums are eligible for succession contrary to Karanga principles. Gwizi, the son of Chatikobo was in the line of succession despite being possessed by the spirit of his father. The justification given for this was that the *svikiro* in the Mapanzure system does not participate in the nomination of a successor or in the actual ceremonial appointment, 'he merely acts as the mouthpiece for the *midzimu*. He is seldom, if ever, asked to consult the *midzimu* and obtain its sanction for any act or appointment.'¹⁶² Chatikobo was however, the last of his line to take up office as Chief Mapanzure because his descendants are now excluded since they are presumed to have their own *nhaka*.¹⁶³

3.5.3 The Mukapare/Gapare House

The house now commonly referred to as that of Gapare is descendent from Mukapare (shortened to Gapare) the third son of Mutunha. Gapare became the first medium of Mutunha and by that token, like Muchenugwa, was excluded from succession to the Mutunha political hierarchy. His other brothers predeceased him and on Gapare's death, Mapanzure automatically became chief because he was considered the eldest senior person.¹⁶⁴ Gapare had two remembered sons Mutsiviri and N'ombeshoma whose descendants can be found in the Mshawasha Purchase Area, in Chief Nyajena's Nyikavanhu area and in modern Chivi communal lands. Despite this broad threshold of

¹⁶¹ S2929/8/5 Delineation Report Mapanzure, Chatikobo Headmanship and Community

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ S2929/8/5 Delineation Report Mapanzure Chieftainship and Community

¹⁶⁴ Aquina, 'Tribes in Victoria Reserve', p.7.

spatial dispersal, the Gapare house has maintained a high level of cohesion. This has been helped by the fact that the descendants of both Mutsiviri and N'ombeshoma continue to occupy their ancestral land in what became the Mshawasha African Purchase area. At least four farms are owned by members of the Gapare house, Tindiri the son of Gwasengwa who is the son of Munyarari the only remembered son of Mutsiviri owns Farm 105 near Bangomwe and overlooking the Gadziguru, while three descendants of N'ombeshoma, that is; Madhumbu, Njeru, and Chivandire bought farms 118, 119 and 339, adjacent to each other in their ancestral lands around Chifuridyana and Chehuni mountains. Most of the *biras* arranged by the Gapares attract family members scattered all over and there is a very high degree of unity.

This house has often tried to contest the Mapanzure chieftainship and made deputations to the Native Affairs Department in the colonial period to no avail. More recently, Mbovora, the eldest surviving descendant of N'ombeshoma contested the appointment of Vhuramayi Vushangwe but was beaten on account of his age. Vhuramayi being older than Mbovora.¹⁶⁵

3.5.4 The Muchibwa House

Muchibwa who was also known as *Wembowa* was a brother to Gapare by the same mother. He is traditionally known as a *mhare* (warrior). His house is assumed to have carried with it the spirits that possessed Mutunha which found a host in his eldest son Mazarire who bore no male offspring. It should be noted that these were *mashavi* and not the spirits of the personality of Mutunha. Muchibwa's permanent abode was Mafurinye mountain where he eventually met his death after being devoured by a lion which consumed every part of his body save for his head and limbs which

¹⁶⁵ See Appendix 5.

were buried at the foot of the mountain. His death is reminiscent of the Hera ancestor Dukuta who was killed and carried around by a lion and is remembered in Nyashanu traditions as Mutekwatekwa because of his eventful death.¹⁶⁶ There is no reason however, to think that this could be a cliché accounting for the end of Hera warriors. There is evidence that Muchibwa died before he could retire to the *gadzingo* at Zhou.

Meanwhile, apart from Mazarire, Muchibwa left behind two other sons Muvaka and Maputire. Maputire was however, not biologically his own son. Muvaka bore Chikomba who in turn had nine sons; Gwatiringa, Chinyavada, Manenji, Mudadi, Zishiri, Bhidhi, Muzhandamuri, Chenjera and Chikozho. There was certainly a reason for this proficiency; we have already intimated the issue of security in numbers, but in this case, the continuity of the Muchibwa line was under threat. Mazarire the eldest brother bore no male offspring and as he was getting older, he approached his nephew Chikozho the last born of Chikomba to carry on his lineage through a process known as *kupfumbidza zita*. In return Chikozho would inherit the three spirits of Mutunha and assume the name of his uncle Mazarire. A different theory is advanced for the extinction of the Chikomba name. In an interview with Chikozho's last born son, Taguma, he revealed that he knew of a family secret told him by one of his elders a long while ago that Chikomba contracted leprosy at an old age and died a miserable death. As was the custom then, he was banished to wilderness and left to die, and for fear of the disease coming back to haunt members of his family once again, his name was done away with forthwith. None of his descendants should carry it or touch any items used in the attempt to treat him such as tortoise or snail shells. Hence the saying by all his descendants '*tiri vaNyasha*' (we are lepers).¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Holleman, *The Pattern of Hera Kinship*, p.31.

¹⁶⁷ Interview with Benjamin Taguma Mazarire, Mafurinye Farm no. 127, 26 April 2006, see section 5.3.2 of this thesis.

Muchibwa's other 'son' Maputire however, is another interesting case. It is said that Muchibwa married a second wife who was already pregnant by another man and decided to adopt the child whom he named Maputire because he was already 'wrapped' in his mother's womb, *kuputigwa*. Maputire had three known sons, Maburuse, Kunavanhu and Vushe and these gave rise to a huge lineage of the Muchibwa house known as *imba yaMaputire*. After the lion attack, all of Muchibwa's descendants continued to live around Mafurinye but were later scattered by the coming of the African Purchase areas. Chikozho and Kutadza, the son of his brother Manenji, managed to buy farms around and near Mafurinye, but most people went into Chivi and the Mukorsi River Ranch. There is a remarkable degree of cooperation between the Gapare and Muchibwa house both in the ancestral zone and in the diaspora, and this finds common ground in their interests to pursue the chieftainship issue. Technically, they cannot, like the other houses we have seen, compete for the *nhaka* of Mapanzure because they branch off too early in the succession line and, somehow, their traditional territories now fall under the private property of either freehold farms of the purchase area or the Ngomahuru hospital. We have already seen Mbovora's attempts to contest the chieftainship recently but this is only now. In the 1940s and 50s, Njeru, Madhumbu and Chikozho were sitting in the *dare* of Mapanzure and held their own *bhuku* (sub-headmanship) in the farms. Now with the resuscitation of *vusabhuku* (headmanships) in the farms, Chomunogwa the son of Chikozho and Tindiri the son of Gwasengwa Gapare, have been given *mabhuku* while Munyarari is in charge of a village in the resettlement area.

3.5.5 The 'Lost Houses' of MuMbijo and Chitekedza

In the struggle for emplacement, there is no doubt that some houses were frustrated or others were simply not attracted to the new environment. Some sought new areas and vanished from the historical radar that has, up till now, been only sensitive to properly constituted political entities. Others chose to return to the source, and by some stroke of luck, we are able to remotely track them down. This is true of houses found in modern day Buhera district with very thin narratives of their connections with the Mapanzure people. The MuMbijo are one such house tracing their origins to Mapanzure in the turn of the 20th century, although they have no traceable ancestor directly linking them to any of the houses in Mapanzure and Chishanga today. On the other hand, the Mumbijo house is not remembered amongst the vaHera of Chishanga itself. We know from traditions however that Chitekedza, one of Mutunha's sons returned to Buhera where he actually became a chief and in the 1960s Chief Gwenhamo Mapanzure recalled meeting some of his descendants at the chiefs' meetings in Gwelo and Bulawayo.¹⁶⁸ There is no link that has been established between the MuMbijo people and Chitekedza although this should be the subject of further research. The MuMbijo seem to have left Mapanzure with another group of Ngara-Wamambo migrants under Matauto. The latter now live in the Mabvuregudo area of Chief Nyashanu in Buhera, who trace their migration from the Fort Victoria region via Mutambara, near modern Chimanmani and when they reached the territory of Nyashanu, they were welcomed by the then incumbent chief Makuwa who persuaded them not to return to Mutambara.¹⁶⁹ However, it seems the first villagehead MuMbijo was appointed in 1922 and the group has a collateral succession system as well as a *svikiro* who assists in the selection of its leaders.

¹⁶⁸ Aquina, 'The Tribes in Victoria Reserve', p. 7.

¹⁶⁹ S2929/1/1 MLG DDA Delineation Report Sabi, Mbijo Community 1965 and Matauto Community, Subdivision of Mabvuregudo, Chief Nyashanu 1967.

3.6 Accounting For the Dominance of the Mazorodze House in Chishanga

Ever since the ascendance of Mazorodze to the Hera throne, the chieftainship has never gone out of his house and, today, succession to the Mapanzure throne is limited to descendants from his house alone. Although most scholars working on Mapanzure history have taken note of this, none ever attempted to interrogate it. There are a number of possibilities. The first, is connected to the fact that the new Chishanga assumed a semblance of political maturity under the reign of Mapanzure who was able to give it political and religious meaning laying claims on key areas of the territory and, where necessary, constructing a Hera identity through the strategic emplacements that we have seen. It was Mapanzure who went into marriage alliances with the Mhizha, who had remained as the religious power in the area. Under Mapanzure, the *gadzingo* became fully constituted and assumed a new meaning centred around a broad based and participatory Hera identity inclusive of all the houses of the vaHera. Naturally therefore, even the *rambotemwa* forest developed entirely as a Hera moral geography. In this sense therefore, it would have been possible to call the new political geography Mapanzure. He was the key political figure, his uncles Mukapare, Muchibwa and even Muchenugwa being in one way or the other spirit mediums of key Hera ancestors and therefore not eligible for succession.

If after the death of Mapanzure, the chieftainship went to his son Mazorodze as, possibly, the eldest surviving Hera patriarch is thinkable but suspect as it cannot account for the continued monopoly of power by this house. Terence Mashingaidze, once again, draws our attention to a Hera custom prevalent, albeit, more recently in Buhera, which may easily explain the complicated nature of Hera adelphic collateral succession system. This custom known as

chitumburira is based on the principle that if in a line of brothers, some die before getting the chance to succeed to the throne, their descendants are automatically disqualified from the line of succession.¹⁷⁰ In 1952 however, the Native Commissioner of Buhera confirmed that this was a fairly recent invention with no historical precedent and argued instead, that the guiding principle in Hera succession has always been ‘strength in numbers.’¹⁷¹ If *chitumburira* were accepted, it would account for the exclusion from succession to the Mapanzure chieftainship of the houses under Muchenugwa, Mukapare, Muchibwa and others whose ancestors may not have had the opportunity to ascend to the throne within their generation for various reasons, either as a result of early death, or occupying an office such as that of spirit medium, which is traditionally not permitted to take the position of chief. This however does not account for the Mapanzure tendency to combine these offices in the recent past.

On the other hand, ‘strength in numbers’ has always been a Hera strategy employed against other people and sometimes, even against each other. A related and fascinating explanation does not come from the Hera, nor is it associated with their customs, but is put forward by the Mhizha. It combines both the strength in numbers thesis and what I have termed elsewhere, ‘the politics of the womb’.¹⁷² In Chapter 3 we have already alluded to the fact that the Mhizha never viewed themselves as a secular power with such political functions as to preside over a chiefdom, but have been keen to promote and champion an image of themselves as custodians of Chishanga’s moral and religious health, from which they draw the moral high ground to preside over issues concerning Chishanga’s cultural landscapes. In this explanation, we are taken back to the Rozvi

¹⁷⁰ Mashingaidze, ‘Constitutional Crisis in a Traditional Polity’

¹⁷¹ S2403/2681 Native Commissioner’s Report Buhera, 1952

¹⁷² G.C. Mazarire, ‘The Politics of the Womb: Women, Politics and the Environment in Pre-Colonial Chivi c. 1840-1900’ *Zambezia* 30 (1) 2003. This is essentially the tendency of competing incumbents in Karanga politics to gather around factions identified by the mothers to which they were born.

period when the Mhizha did have a *nyembe* (or *thoho* according to their Venda tradition) giving them political suzerainty over a significant section of Chishanga territory. This could have been presided over by the NeChishanga figure who was, himself, a Rozvi chief. In this tradition however, emphasis is placed on the marriage between Mapanzure and VaChirungeni, the Mhizha woman, which is depicted as unconsummated. Mapanzure is alleged to have impregnated VaChirungeni and abandoned her, leaving her to raise an illegitimate son, Mazorodze, amongst the vaMhizha. The Mhizha grew to love Mazorodze as their own son and he won their confidence as a trusted *muzukuru*. Thus Mazorodze was allowed to run political errands on behalf of his uncles who allowed him to even wear their *nyembe*. Mazorodze was nicknamed *Kondo* (the stork bird) because he grew up as the only child of vaChirungeni as the stork's mythical one eye. Mazorodze is actually remembered more in Hera circles by this nickname than by his actual name. It is alleged that as time went on, Kondo requested to move to Zhou, his uncles' former stronghold before they moved to Marungudzi, and he was granted the permission but still, dutifully, undertaking the tasks he had been given by his uncles.

Kondo, as his name implied, compensated for his isolation with marrying several wives and having many children whose numbers gave him strength that gradually claimed much of the Chishanga territorial space to the point of almost engulfing the Mhizha. The Mhizha never thought of claiming their *nyembe* back, they argue, because to them, it is a token of the love they have for their sister's son Kondo. It was therefore, an honour to their sister. Kondo and his descendants took advantage of this to name the territory and give it a Hera meaning under Kondo's father Mapanzure, but to the Mhizha, this is all a forgivable distortion by the younger generations of vaHera who know nothing about this special covenant. In this sense, the Mhizha

claim that *inyembe yegadzingai* (it is a maternal chieftainship) that cannot be claimed by other Hera not born of VaChirungeni and, for them, this is why the chieftainship has remained and must continue to remain in the house of Mazorodze, their nephew.

This begs a number of interpretations and, in the next chapter, we shall deal with the colonial authorities creation of a new Mapanzure which is associated with various other myths from competing Hera houses. A thread that runs through all these competing explanations is that while Mapanzure may have been the focal point of constituting the new political space in Chishanga, Mazorodze gave it its political aggressiveness that earned him accolades far and wide as ‘a great Banyai Chief’.

3.7 Conclusion

When the vaHera arrived in Chishanga, they certainly viewed it as a ‘frontier’, vulnerable to intrusion according to the process proposed by Igor Kopytoff. This is what prompted their attack on NeChishanga and his people. When the latter was dispossessed of his territory, the Hera needed to establish a political authority. Initially, this was done around a core of kinsmen using a patrimonial model based on the one in vaHera, where they had come. This needed however, to adapt to the one already functioning under the NeChishanga federal system, incorporating and establishing alliances with autochthonous groups. With time, as the Hera clan grew, ‘houses’ emerged based on lineage heads that were direct descendants of the two Hera founding figures Mutunhakuwenda and Mutizira. Competition amongst them resulted in the dominance of a single ‘house’ under Mazorodze which reconstituted the sacred chieftaincy and established monopoly over succession to it. There was also a corresponding effect on the political geography which can be categorised in two phases, the first, a phase where distribution of territory was egalitarian and

representative of all the Hera houses that were part of the conquest of Chishanga. The second phase reflected the dominant power of the Mazorodze house which sought to entrench its power by establishing control over much bigger and strategic territory. In the development of Hera politics however, the idea of a political core or the *gadzingo* was fully concretised and so was its spiritual sanctity with a sacred forest around it. In this arrangement the position of peripheral provinces was also made clear. This way it was possible to adapt also to the changing nature of Rozvi power with the increasing importance of the *Mwari* cult. It is this arrangement that the Nguni and the Europeans encountered when they entered Chishanga in the 19th century.

Chapter 4

The Forces of Change in Chishanga 1819-1890s.

4.1 The Hera Neighbours and the New Dispensation

The shape assumed by the emergent Hera polity that took over Chishanga was dictated partly by the ability of the ruling Mapanzure lineage to negotiate its space between competing relations and neighbours. It also owed much to circumstances taking place in the sixty years between the 1820s and 1880s, amongst them, forces of inevitable change that were affecting the rest of the Zimbabwean plateau. The first was the impact of the *mfecane* wars from south of the Limpopo which brought in new groups of migrants that upset the balance of power prevailing in the region around Chishanga. The second was an independent movement of Muslim VaRemba/*Mwenye* groups of the Dumha clan under Tadzembwa (that was in one way or the other linked to the *mfecane*) who sought settlement in Chishanga and clashed with the Hera on numerous occasions over direct control of territory within the traditional Chishanga area. A Hera faction settled in Chikwerengwe province suffered a serious political setback following a catastrophe that befell them when they provoked a Ndebele raid. This forced a significant section of them to retreat to the *gadzingo* where Mazorodze (Mapanzure II) was in control. Mazorodze had himself accepted the status of tributary to Lobengula and this, together with the return of some Chikwerengwe-Hera as some form of refugees in his zone, further consolidated his power. While this was taking place, Chishanga began receiving its first international visitors, mostly white travellers, who in turn opened up the road to colonization. This chapter focuses on this period of change paying

particular attention to corresponding changes in the spatial arrangement of Chishanga, it is also concerned with alternative impressions of Chishanga by other people other than the vaHera alone, these include the vaRemba, the Nguni and the Europeans.

4.1.1 The Duma under Shumba-Chekai and the VaRemba Problem

We noted in Chapter 3 that the power vacuum left by the VaShawasha was slowly filled up first by the Shava-*Nhire* people who were then, later, overcome and absorbed by the incoming Duma. Murinye, the Duma progenitor, settled in the Zimbabwe area through Mamwa hospitality.¹⁷³ He established himself at Vuzeze, where he turned against his hosts to embark on an ambitious expansionist programme which saw him conquering territory stretching as far east as the Chivake river in Zaka and Shashe river in the north where he bordered with Zimuto.¹⁷⁴ In the south we have already realized NeChishanga's power beyond Musogwezi and Musuka rivers which was probably the limit to Duma expansion. Gradually as he grew older, Murinye divided his expanding territory amongst his brothers and sons. Chikwanda, his younger brother got territory that was later turned into European area in the 1890s. Mugabe settled in the Great Zimbabwe area where he entered into his well-documented perpetual conflict with the Mamwa.¹⁷⁵ Shumba Chekai established himself at Hoya and Gondoyi mountains further south where he bordered Chishanga and was involved in several attempts to expand across the Musuka river.

¹⁷³ Aquina, 'The Tribes in Victoria Reserve', p. 10.

¹⁷⁴ S2929/8/5 MLGDDA Delineation Report for Shumba Chekai Chieftainship and Community, Victoria TTL 10 June 1965.

¹⁷⁵ For a recent appraisal of this see Fontein, *The Silence of Great Zimbabwe* pp. 19-22.

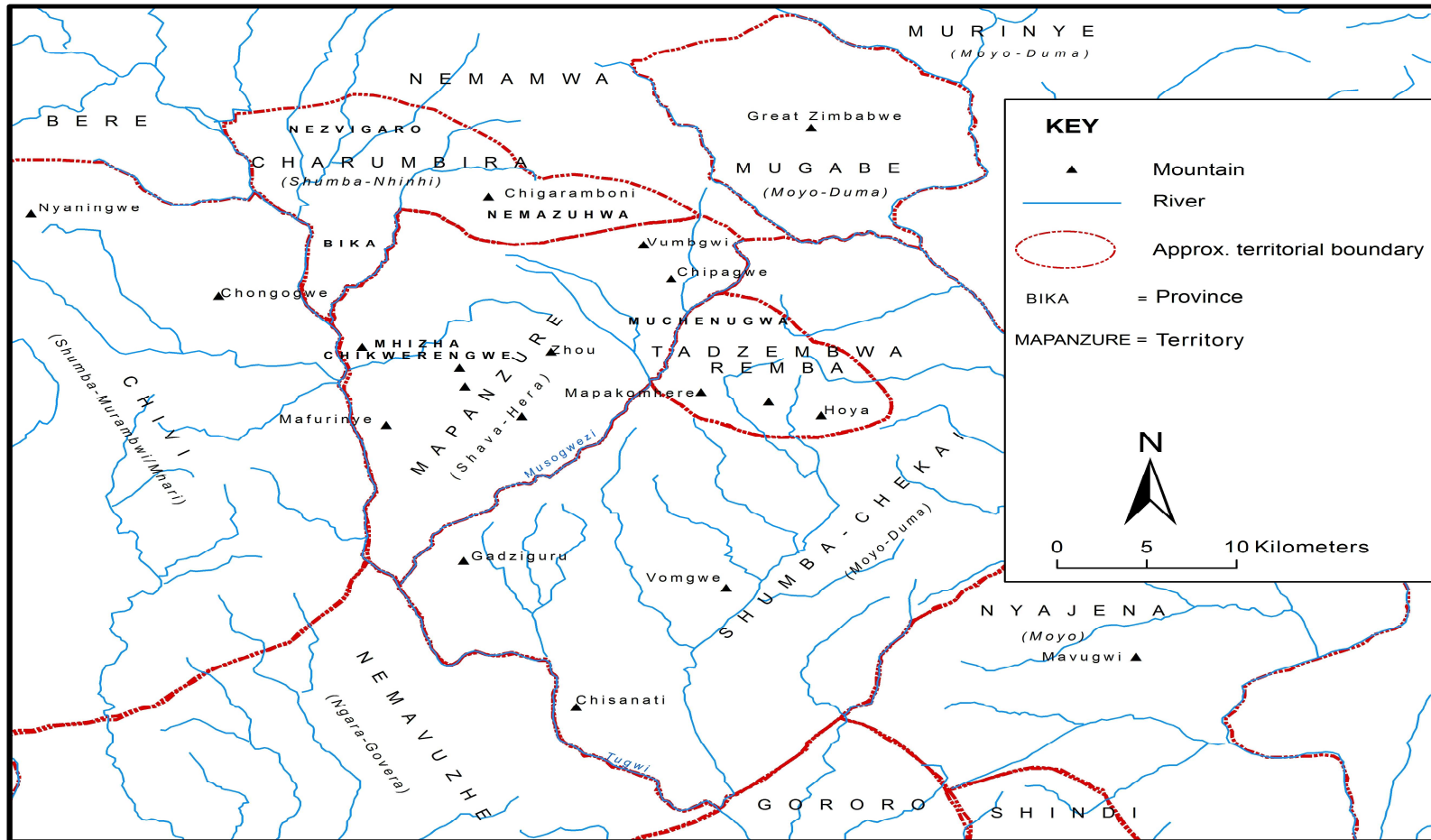


Fig. 4. 1: Chishanga After the Hera-Mapanzure Conquest c. 1830

Shumba Chekai was the first of the Duma chiefs in the area which placed him high above all the other Duma clans. He was recognized as such by the colonial government which elevated him to the status of paramount chief and made the areas under Murinye and Mugabe headmanships under Shumba Chekai. Chikwanda survived as a Chieftainship outside its traditional area until 1943 when it was abolished by the colonial government.

As already shown, the Hera traditions rarely mention the place of Shumba-Chekai in their settlement in Chishanga nor that of Chikwanda, perhaps to buttress their first-comer status. We notice however that most of the places of their early stay before invading Chishanga were in what is now Duma country, that is Chikarudzo under Mugabe and Makungubwe and Chisanati both falling under what is now Shumba Chekai's territory. In fact, the Hera claim that when they took over Chishanga, their territory stretched well beyond the Musuka river. Later on, Manunure, the second son of Shumba-Chekai, who also succeeded him as chief, married into the Mapanzure house and his sons claimed land belonging to their uncles which pushed the latter back to the other side of the Musuka river.¹⁷⁶ This is a fairly common cliché in Karanga oral traditions which we have even seen in use by the Mhizha against the Mazorodze house of the Hera. On further enquiry it appears this is the Duma house of Ndevo which, indeed, traces its maternal descent to the Mapanzure house but flatly denies these allegations.¹⁷⁷ While it may be true that indeed the absence of Duma associations may denote the vacancy of the area there is no doubt these first-comer feelings stem from the bitterness of the Mapanzure chiefs to being demoted to a Headmanship under Shumba-Chekai in 1948, which they ultimately refused on the basis that

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Mapope Tavarera and Raphael Manyoka Gwenhamo.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Raphael Manyoka Gwenhamo and Chief Mapanzure (Vhuramayi Vushangwe)

they were there before Shumba-Chekai. For this refusal, they were punished by the colonial government and went altogether without status until 1961 when their chieftainship was restored and Gwenhamo (Mapanzure VI) was installed.¹⁷⁸ This also aroused similar sentiments amongst other chieftainships that were brought under Shumba-Chekai around the same time in a similar arrangement like Charumbira, between 1950 and 1964, and Mugabe for an indefinite period.¹⁷⁹

The Hera and Shumba-Chekai have always had an uneasy co-existence as neighbours, sometimes as a result of such friction amongst themselves over boundaries, but often, as a result of conflict due to other people. The most dramatic conflict pitting the Hera and the Shumba-Chekai's Duma involved the settlement of immigrant vaRemba communities in a buffer zone between the two territories. In the later half of the 19th Century, Remba clans were moving steadily from Sena country in the Zambezi valley in search of land to settle. Two of these, the Dumha and the Majiri clans sought land amongst the Duma under Shumba-Chekai and Murinye respectively and were welcomed. Apparently, in their drift from Sena they had established friendly relations with the Duma who also trace their origins to Uteve in the east. Thus most of Remba settlement in Gutu for instance is associated with the Duma and perhaps settlement amongst Murinye and Shumba-Chekai was part of a long established tradition in Duma-Remba relations.

Most vaRemba settled in Shumba-Chekai trace their ancestry to one Rukore who befriended the Duma and settled with them in Gutu where he bore two sons Dumha and Tadzembwa. Of these, Tadzembwa went further from Gutu in search of land amongst his father's friends the Duma.

¹⁷⁸ S2929/8/5 MLGDDA Delineation Report for Mapanzure Chieftainship and Community

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, Reports on Mugabe and Charumbira Chieftainships.

Shumba Chekai was able to grant Tadzembwa some land in Chishanga amongst the Hera people in a very controversial move that continues to be a source of conflict today.¹⁸⁰ Tadzembwa is said to have won the heart of Shumba Chekai through his trades in sewing and making copper wires and gradually Shumba Chekai gave him Mapakomhere hill. Slowly, Tadzembwa won the confidence of Shumba Chekai to the extent that he was elevated to the exalted status of a *mazodze* an office for one who crowned all the Shumba Chekai chiefs upon investiture. It is possible Shumba-Chekai also valued a Remba alliance for their famed magic in war given the uneasy relationship with the Hera.

The trouble was not so much that Tadzembwa became an ally of Shumba-Chekai as it was that he invited his other Remba relatives to come forth to settle in the new territory and transform the area into the second largest concentration of Remba communities in the country today after the ones in Mberengwa. In fact, Tadzembwa met his death in one such endeavour to solicit settlement by Remba relatives from Mposi in Mberengwa. His brother Macharaga and his sons Marazanye, Muzheri, Imbayebwe and Zvinowanda eventually pursued this dream and brought into shape a huge community of Rembas on the fringes of Hera territory bordered by the Musogwezi, Musuka and Mukorsi rivers. This way they effectively replaced Shumba-Chekai as the immediate Hera neighbour.¹⁸¹ The Tadzembwa are said to have coveted Chishanga for its camouflaged landscape which was conducive for the secrecy of their initiation rites. Douglas Mudhosi has seen Remba migration into this area as motivated by the search for a place that was 'hilly, fertile with plenty of water and fruits as well as wild animals for these formed the core for

¹⁸⁰ D.C. Chigiga, 'A Preliminary Study of the Remba in Rhodesia', Unpublished Seminar Paper, University of Rhodesia, September 1972, p.10.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, p.11.

Remba food during their stay in the circumcision lodgings.¹⁸² Typically Remba commitment to their rituals made them lay claim to such key features as Hera rivers and forests. To this end, several attempts were made to appropriate the rivers as the sites of their ceremonies which included renaming Musogwezi river Nyamangura and completely blocking access to key parts of the Musuka river in winter. The Remba viewed the Hera and other non-Remba as *vasenzi* or *shuvuro*, derogatory terms used to refer to the uncircumcised and uninitiated. The ensuing conflict over Musuka has been a central feature in Hera-Remba relations since the 19th Century. Similarly endogamy amongst the Remba ensured that they remained a closed society and difficult neighbours. This was not helped by the Remba's own double standards where, over time, their men often sought non-Remba women for marriage. Even where this happened, co-existence between in-laws was difficult owing to the strict kosher rules of the Remba.

Maxwell Musingafi's fictional novel *Rwizi Pakati Ko!* (The River of Love's Divide) captures images of these struggles more vividly. Set in Tadzembwa community, the novel depicts a love triangle in which a Remba youth, Tazvishaya, who is betrothed to a Remba girl, falls madly in love with another non-Remba from Chishanga much to the chagrin of his family. Amidst this tension, he occasionally meets his lover on a spot at the contested Musuka river which is often depicted as symbol of nourishment of their love. In the dilemma, Tazvishaya eventually marries the two women.¹⁸³ Although set in the modern day, Tazvishaya is exposed to the wise counsel of his grandfather who insists on Remba traditions and is aware of the historical relations of his people with the *vasenzi* of Chishanga.

¹⁸² Douglas Mudhosi, 'The Remba People of Tadzembwa (Masvingo): An Investigation into their Beliefs and Practices and their Areas of Conflict with the Non-Remba', Unpublished BA Honours Dissertation, Dept of Religious Studies, University of Zimbabwe, June 2003, p.18.

¹⁸³ Maxwell C.C. Musingafi, *Rwizi Pakati Ko!* (Mambo Press, Gweru, 1992).

Although fictional Musingafi's story attempts to use real images in his plot which helps him depict the prejudices and points of conflict historically. Being a Remba from Tadzembwa himself his novel approaches the level of a semi-biography. The names used capture this succinctly. Murira is a real-life Hera family of the Mazorodze house settled today near Musuka just as Tadzembwa is Remba. Remba praise poetry emplaced within Tadzembwa territory is widely evoked. Not only is the name Chishanga given full life and meaning in the narrative, but it is also seen as a land of autochthons filled with people who imagine their identity not only as a group but as belonging to a particular territory. Musuka, the river is an acknowledged but contested physical marker of territory evoking different meanings on either side of it. In any case it is Nyamangura to the VaRemba. Yet in it, Tazvishaya, the main character of the plot finds the love of his life and the river is their perpetual meeting point. In many ways the novel is an appeal for love to prevail and bring an end to divisions based on the historic prejudices and stereotypes of religion. The river is often depicted as able to wash away all these evil divisions and purify the seething hatred with love.¹⁸⁴ At best, the novel locates Chishanga in the larger story as a frontier and an arena of contest for varying groups and how the history of its transformation is captured in differing images by different people even in the present, which is a central feature of this thesis. Nevertheless the VaRemba community of Tadzembwa has since grown into larger communities under the children of Tadzembwa and his brother Macharaga who include among others Machaya, Benye, Chamauya, Marazanye, Muzheri, Imbayebwe, Mafaune, Mudhomo, Zvinowanda and Mutuzu.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ A masterly treatment of the context and imagery in this and other Shona novels is E. Chiwome, *A Social History of the Shona Novel* (Juta, Eiffel Flats, 1996). For this novel in particular see p.75.

¹⁸⁵ Mudhosi, 'The Remba of Tadzembwa' p. 17, Chigiga, 'A Preliminary Study of the Remba', p.11.

4.1.2 Charumbira

There is no debate on the timing of the arrival of Charumbira since most traditions are agreed that he was a latecomer who capitalized on the Nemamwa-Mugabe wars to emerge victorious with territory far much larger than that of Nemamwa, his host.¹⁸⁶ It should be appreciated right from the onset that like Mapanzure the Charumbira chieftainship assumed its name and shape in its second generation. While it was Bika who originally obtained land from Nemamwa after the help he had rendered them, the Charumbira chieftainship was founded by his nephew Mudavanhu. Bika had divided his new found territory between himself and his brother Chainda. It was however Chainda's son Mudavanhu who in the next generation consolidated the territory and gained enough power to wrest the political supremacy from Bika's son and successor Madzivire. Thereafter his fame, *mukurumbira*, went far and wide to earn him the nickname 'Charumbira' from 'Chakurumbira'. On the coming of colonial rule, Nemamwa further lost some of his lands to European farms and as his territory continuously shrunk, the Native Department further buttressed Charumbira hegemony when they eventually recognized Charumbira as chief over Nemamwa and this has been a serious source of agitation for the latter. There have been, as a result, recent attempts by the Nemamwa to trump up their firstcomer status to this territory by making claims to the effect that they also parceled out land to Mapanzure and gave him a wife.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ S2929/8/2 Delineation Report, Victoria District, Charumbira Chieftainship and Community, 1965, Aquina, 'The Tribes of Victoria Reserve'

¹⁸⁷ Chief Nemamwa made this assertion to Joost Fontein in a trumped up narrative seeking to buttress Nemamwa's firstcomer status and entitlement to the custodianship of Great Zimbabwe, see Fontein, *The Silence of Great Zimbabwe* p.22.

We have already noted how Bika came and assisted the Mamwa to conquer the Rombo and Gwadzi, but instead of driving them out of this territory as some traditions allege, the ‘Charumbira’¹⁸⁸ accommodated the Gwadzi people and settled on the fringes of Chishanga soon after Mapanzure had ousted the NeChishanga ruler.¹⁸⁹ They also absorbed parts of the Rombo people from whom they got their totem Shumba. Whilst they may have got their *chidawo* Sipambi from not taking Nemamwa land, their other laudatory name *vaNhinhi* was derived from the hill they settled called Nhinhihuru.¹⁹⁰ Bika ruled the western part of the new territory and Chainda assumed control of the east. Bika lived with one of his brothers Muvengwa or Nezvigaro while Chainda settled with another brother Mugondegwa or Nemazuhwa. On Bika’s death, his son Madzivire took over the chieftainship ahead of his uncle. The net effect was it ultimately alienated Chainda who took advantage of this to become more autonomous and consolidate himself in the eastern area. Chainda however continued to pay the respect due to his nephew as the chief.¹⁹¹

In another development, Muvengwa eventually moved in with Mugondegwa on Chainda’s eastern side which effectively made the east a powerful centre of a coalition of Bika’s brothers. This union was also solidified by the assumption of new names by the two brothers Muvengwa becoming Nezvigaro and Mugondegwa becoming Nemazuhwa. This way Bika’s son and successor, Madzivire was technically isolated. Chainda was succeeded by his second son Mudavanhu, who became very powerful and concretized the process begun by his father of amalgamating all the kinsmen in the east. When this was achieved and his fame grew far and

¹⁸⁸ The name is used here in an anachronistic context to maintain the flow of the narrative. At this stage it did not exist.

¹⁸⁹ Interview with Raphael Manyoka Gwenhamo and Renias Mutuvari 12/08/2001

¹⁹⁰ S2929/8/2 MLG DDA Delineation Report, Victoria, Charumbira Headmanship and Community, 14th June 1965.

¹⁹¹ Interview with Renias Mutuvari.

wide, he brought together everybody under a new chieftainship named 'Charumbira' (from the word *kurumbira*-to become famous). Somehow, Madzivire-Bika acknowledged the new power wielded by Mudavanhu-Charumbira and joined Nezvigaro and Nemazuhwa as important officials in the Charumbira *dare* as nominators of chiefs or *magwee*. By the same token they lost the right to succession and left the Charumbira chieftainship to be confined only to the house of Mudavanhu.¹⁹² Again this is a source of friction for all the houses involved, and as shall be shown below, the main bone of contention between Madzivire and Mudavanhu in the late 19th Century.

4.2 The Nguni in Chishanga c.1819-1888

As the new Karanga dynasties were in the process of populating the south-eastern plateau, the Ndebele were establishing themselves in the southwest and slowly becoming a factor shaping the political and social arrangements obtaining amongst these fledgling Karanga formations. 'Nguva yeMadzviti' is a common reference in Chishanga oral traditions to the period of Nguni presence in this region which, in a number of instances, coincides with the period that key lineages within or around Chishanga were establishing themselves. *Madzviti* is a catch-all term often used to refer to any of the Nguni groups that passed through or settled on the Zimbabwean plateau after 1824 and as a result of the *mfecane* wars. Another term, *maguvu* has often been employed in reference to the Swazi warriors who feature in a number of traditions relating to political struggles amongst the Karanga although we are yet to establish the factual validity of such a presence.

¹⁹² Based on Aquina, 'The Tribes of Victoria Reserve', pp.12-13.

The first direct reference to Chishanga in this context however relates to the period 1819 to 1823 where Chishanga is depicted in some Venda oral traditions as a place of refuge for Remba women and children fleeing Shaka's *impis* that had been sent on a copper looting expedition to the Musina mines. Although very few people in Tadzembwa remember this southern connection, this appears to be the only instance that the vaRemba are associated with the *mfecane*. Traditions collected by the German Lutheran missionary Harald von Sicard in the late 1950s indicate that some Remba families living amongst the Venda migrated northwards as a result of this attack on Musina and teamed up with a group of Swazis who later settled at Maguti amongst the people at Vuzeze, the then Duma capital.¹⁹³ These Swazi later adopted the *gumbo* or Leg totem. While indeed plenty of Remba clans can be found around and near Vuzeze, they trace their ancestry to Sena in the Zambezi Valley. Some traditions collected in the 1970s and confirmed by recent religious studies suggest that during their migration from Sena, the group of vaRemba that eventually settled in Mberengwa under Mposi had traveled all the way to Vendaland and moved back and forth as a result of clashes with the Changamire rulers and eventually due to the *mfecane*.¹⁹⁴

It is probable that some of the groups that left Vendaland for Chishanga in von Sicard's account did so to seek refuge amongst fellow VaRemba groups that had settled there in the initial journey from Sena. However some nearby Karanga groups such as Zimuto of the *ngara* (Porcupine)

¹⁹³ Harald von Sicard, 'Shaka and the North', *African Studies* vol. 14, no. 4, 1955, p.148. There are today references to a group of people calling themselves vaZeze (the people of Zeze) who are recent immigrants from Mutambara in the eastern highlands. Their totem is *garwe* (crocodile) but their name has no historical links to the Duma capital at Vuzeze. Interview with Chief Murinye, 10/08/2006.

¹⁹⁴ Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past*, p.184, Edmore Dube, 'A Tradition of Abstinence and Ritual Identity: A Study of the Ruling Sadiki Branch of the Remba of Mposi (Mberengwa)', Unpublished B.A. Honours Dissertation, Dept. of Religious Studies, University of Zimbabwe, 1993, p.15.

totem, claim some Swazi descent yet they place their migration from Swaziland at an earlier period than the *mfecane*.¹⁹⁵ This is at best an anachronism since the Swazi state only comes into existence in the 1840s when it is constituted by Mswati. In other words, the Zimuto cannot be Swazi before the Swazi themselves achieve this identity.¹⁹⁶

There were indeed the *maguwu* or Swazi warriors who feature in the traditions concerning the wars in Chivi and Nyajena whom again we have no trace of their origins. We are also aware of the Dumbuseya who took after the fighting methods of Zwangendaba's Ngoni but later settled amongst the Karanga of Wedza near Zvishavane.¹⁹⁷ The present inquiry did not come across any direct references to any other Nguni groups of the *mfecane* period save for the Ndebele and we are aware that the term *madzviti* was often employed variously to refer to any of these groups.¹⁹⁸

It seems by the mid 19th Century Mapanzure Mazorodze had accepted that his grip on the traditional Chishanga territory could only hold good if he avoided direct confrontation with the Ndebele. This way, he became tributary and so did his clients the Mhizha and the incorporated provinces of the Gwadzi-Moyo.¹⁹⁹ Before this arrangement however, Hera contacts with independent Ndebele raiding parties had been catastrophic, especially in the *Chikwerengwe* zone which formed a buffer with the Mhari of Chivi. One spectacular encounter involved a punitive raid by a Ndebele *impi* (raiding party) following a skirmish at the Mafurinye stronghold. Here, an *impi* stormed villages at the Chemudekunye hills, but as they advanced on the Mafurinye, an

¹⁹⁵ Interview with Alex Zimuto, Mshawasha West, 26 April 2004.

¹⁹⁶ See S2929/8/2 Delineation Report, Zimuto. Dr. Stan Mudenge, Personal Communication, Harare, 2 November 2006.

¹⁹⁷ Harald von Sicard, 'The Dumbuseya', *NADA*

¹⁹⁸ Beach, *War and Politics* p. 14.

¹⁹⁹ Interview with Raphael Manyoka Gwenhamo.

already alert group of Hera men, women and children began rolling stones and boulders on advancing Ndebele warriors who were negotiating the steep slopes to their villages on the western Mafurinye. This widely practised strategy known as *mhoromokwa*, was successful in wadding off the attack after killing the commander and injuring several others. The Hera knew for certain that the survivors had gone to call in reinforcements and so they tried to bury the dead warrior in a well and began a retreat into another adjacent stronghold or *nhare* known as Chifuridyana. This is a hill in what is now Madhumbu Gapare's farm (no 118) with a deep crevice at the front leading into a labyrinth that has an opening at the back which could accommodate significant numbers of both people and livestock.²⁰⁰

The Ndebele returned in larger numbers as predicted, sought out Chifuridyana and stormed it. They used smoke to drive the people out, captured women and children and killed most of the men in a show of retribution. The casualties, it is said, were so heavy that the survivors could not bury all the dead to the point that it was decided collectively to make Chifuridyana a mass grave. From this point onwards, the hill was to be known by a new name, 'Bedzavanhu' or 'the hil that finished people'.²⁰¹ Apart from the living memories imbued in the landscape 'Bedzavanhu', the accompanying mythology is in itself revealing. First, is the underlying conspiracy for 'selling out' the Chifuridyana hide out which implicates a *muzukuru* to the Gapare house, one Tawonezvo of the Shumba-Chivige totem, who had run away with one of his uncles' wives and sought refuge among the Ndebele. He is alleged to have taken advantage of the Ndebele

²⁰⁰ Interview with Chimina Muchibwa, Chomunogwa Mazarire, Munhumeso Manenji and vaDhurun'aru. For a description of the methods used by the Karanga to defend themselves from Ndebele *impis* and the use of such strongholds, see G. C. Mazarire, 'Defence Consciousness as Way of Life' *Zimbabwean Pre-History*, 25, March 2006. Similar landforms in Mugabe's country are described by J.T. Bent; *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland*, (Longmans Greene, London 1892) pp. 81-82

²⁰¹ Interview with Kadivirire Gapare, Kokerai Chikozho, Boniface Mazarire, Chomunogwa Mazarire, Marume Manenji and Podzindicheri Gapare. Sandes, 'Zvenyika remembers' *NADA*, 1955,32, pp. 31-40. footnote 8, describes some of these strategies used by Ndebele *impis* to retrieve people from their places of hiding.

expedition to rid him of his uncles by revealing to the *impi* the *nhare* of the Hera of Chikwerengwe. According to this tradition, the victims were caught unawares at a beer party *humwe*, killed in their numbers and thrown in the cave that became 'Bedzavanhu'. Secondly it is not uncommon to hear local elders speaking of 'noises' by people and animals that can be heard coming out of the mountain at specific instances.²⁰²

However, the raid worked in favour of Mazorodze. It rid him of potential competitors and saw a temporary retreat of the Chikwerengwe-Hera back into ancestral territory that he had redefined. Mazorodze lived to an advanced age and many members of his generation from amongst the Chikwerengwe-Hera had pre-deceased him or perished in the 'Bedzavanhu' attack. Only Chikomba, Muvaka, Mazarire and Maputire moved in from the house of Muchibwa while Mutsiviri and N'ombeshoma came from the house of Gapare.²⁰³ In effect this meant that this group was coming as refugees and had no moral high ground to argue on cases concerning the *gadzingo* and by extension, succession. It would appear, however, that relations with the Ndebele ceased to matter in local Hera politics once the decision to become tributary had been made.

However, it is difficult to appreciate Ndebele policy in the region in full because of the nature of the evidence available at present. Apart from the oral traditions of the local people, historians have almost always relied on the account of Carl Mauch, a German explorer who traveled through this area between August 1871 and May 1872. The danger of over-relying on Mauch's

²⁰² Interviews with Kadivirire Gapare and Kokerai Chikozho. Such conspiracies are commonplace in traditions of this region relating to the Nguni period. Delineation Officers of the 1960s had trouble authenticating these one such example being the allegation that a contender to the Chivi throne in 1868 one Makonese had sought the assistance of the Ndebele to assassinate his father (Matsveru Chivi II) at Chomuteme, see S2929/8/2 Delineation Report Chibi District, Musvuvugwa headmanship and Community.

²⁰³ Interview with Podzindicheri Gapare and Mbonga Musiiwa.

narrative is that it is difficult to comprehend, as Cobbing has asked, whether Mauch was ‘coincidentally at the right place at the right time to describe the series of raids within this zone between 1870 and 1872 or were they every year activities’.²⁰⁴ In addition, it cannot be easily established whether these raids were made with specific objectives or that they had the authority of Lobengula and, indeed, whether the raiders were always Ndebele.

Cobbing himself gets most of the facts wrong in his picture of the circumstances obtaining in the area due to the problematic mapping employed by Mauch and his failure to identify the peoples whose names are frequently misspelt in Mauch’s Germanic orthography. Cobbing’s reconstruction resembles something like this; in February 1872 the Ndebele and possibly Dumbuseya assisted Chiefs ‘Matsoweli’ and ‘Savumbula’ against the latter’s brother, Tswala, who was apparently being aided by whites. In April, finally, Mauch heard that a ‘horde of Matabele is causing much trouble, beyond the Tokwe and had already killed the chief there, Tsungingwe’, they also seized cattle from Masunda, and at the end of the month passed on to the confluence of the Pokuteke and Mtilikwe and attacked Arabi and Duma.²⁰⁵

Mtsetwa’s version of the same is equally dependent upon the observations of Mauch ‘who was living with Zikara, a brother of Charumbira’ and is far more concerned to show the political rivalry between the Mugabe and Nemamwa people. He argues that in February 1872 the Ndebele entered into an agreement with Adam Render, a freelance German hunter, living near the Great Zimbabwe to keep the Duma of Mugabe beyond the Mshagase river away from the Mamwa in return for free hunting, safety of his ivory and friendship with Lobengula. This move antagonised

²⁰⁴ Cobbing, ‘The Ndebele Under the Khumalos’, p.316.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 316.

the Mugabes and Render was to die in 1873 after being shot with a poisoned arrow by a Mugabe warrior.²⁰⁶

Both historians, in some cases, read too much into, and accepted parts of Mauch's account despite its inaccuracies with names and geographical locations. The 1969 National Archives of Rhodesia edition of *The Journals of Carl Mauch* incorporates a reconstruction of Mauch's movements by A.E. Phaup, a professional surveyor, which has some level of geometric accuracy.²⁰⁷ This reconstruction is able to some extent to show who is where, at least between 1871 and 1872, giving us a fairly reasonable picture even of the people and places whose names Mtetwa, Cobbing and sometimes David Beach failed to comprehend.²⁰⁸ To start with, Mauch depicts the situation in Charumbira as if it was under three chiefs 'Sarumbula' (sometimes spelt 'Sarumbile'), 'Pika' (or 'Pike') and 'Zikara'. We have already demonstrated above the characters involved in Charumbira politics and the picture is pretty much certain that this 'Sarumbula' was Charumbira-Mudavanhu, 'Pika' was Madzivire-Bika and 'Zikara' was indeed Nezvigaro.²⁰⁹

Mauch does arrive at the time that the rift between the eastern and western Charumbira factions is intensifying following Chainda's consolidation in the east. His son Mudavanhu-Charumbira became involved in a bitter struggle with Madzivire-Bika heir to the original founder of the territory. This is quite understandable, Bika as the son of the original founder genuinely felt the political authority of *vuNhinhi* lay with him. After all, it was his father who got the territory from

²⁰⁶ Mtetwa, 'A Political and Economic History of the Duma' p. 193.

²⁰⁷ See Burke, *The Journals of Carl Mauch*, Appendix C and the accompanying map 'Probable Course of Carl Mauch's Journey Across Rhodesia 1871-1872'.

²⁰⁸ A.E. Phaup, 'Carl mauch's Geological Observations 1869-1872' in Burke, *The Journals of Carl Mauch* pp. 271-295. The following account largely depends on this reconstruction and my own map-readings based on the Zimbabwe 2030 B4 1:50 000 (1971) and Masvingo SF-36-1 1: 250 000 (1992) maps.

²⁰⁹ See Section 4.1.2 of this thesis.

the vaMamwa and parceled out land to his brother Chainda who later teamed up with their siblings, Nemazuhwa and Nezvigaro, to form the powerful eastern bloc which had now, successfully wrested power from him and made him a *mugwee*. Was it not only fair for Madzivire-Bika to find quarrel in this?

As Mudavanhu grew from strength to strength, he did not hesitate to bully his neighbours and any foreign visitors for that matter. This is Mauch's impression of him:

[Charumbira] is a big scoundrel, ill disposed towards the whites and a constant troublemaker between the minor chiefs living between the Tokwe and Motelekwe (sic)²¹⁰

Part of this power lay in Mudavanhu-Charumbira's ability to make alliances with the powerful; he maintained a very strong relationship with the young and notorious Mhari chief Masunda II (Manyumbu) settled at Chongogwe across the Tugwi, with whom he exchanged visits.²¹¹ It was also a common rumour in the area that Charumbira-Mudavanhu had befriended the Ndebele in order to wage a war against 'Tsuara' (described as Charumbira's brother) as well as Carl Mauch and Adam Render.²¹² In March 1872, Mauch and Render did attempt to broker peace between Madzivire and Mudavanhu in a tense atmosphere where Mudavanhu was only forced into talks because he wanted Mauch's help in treating his children who suffered from typhoid fever.

²¹⁰ Burke *The Journals of Carl Mauch*, p.181.

²¹¹ Ibid. p.185. Manyumbu had harassed Mauch at some point when he passed through his homestead. He was to give a similar treatment to Francois Coillard and his evangelical team in September 1877, see Hist. Mss CO5/1/1/1 'Nyanikoe, Banyailand' F. Coillard to major Malan, September 17, 1877.

²¹² Burke, *The Journals of Carl Mauch*, p.181. It is difficult to comprehend who the 'Tsuara' character was because of corresponding names in the Charumbira genealogy. Equally this 'Tsuara' is settled too far away from the scene of action (at the confluence of the Mshagashe and Runde rivers i.e. north of modern Mashava). The only likely possibility is Chiwara, the third son of Tavengeweiyi (Chivi 1) who was settled at Gungwe on the south-eastern fringes of the Chivi territory and shared the border with Charumbira. Mauch probably understood them as brothers because of their shared Shumba totem. This is possible because the same 'Tsuara' shared proximity with other Mhari notables under Bere identified only as 'Mawengetsi', 'Sandelai' and 'Manungu', see pp.177-178.

Mauch, on his part, was interested in getting porters from Mudavanhu and Nezvigaro to accompany him to Sena.²¹³

It is on the basis of the above picture that Mtetwa locates the Charumbira-Ndebele alliance. Nonetheless the Ndebele did emerge during Mauch's time, first in February 1872 and did little save for inquiring about the whereabouts of strangers (such as Mauch) and making sure that the Duma were kept beyond the Mshagashe. They ate and left in the direction Mapanzure.²¹⁴ The second instance of Ndebele presence is only two months later in April 1872. Here, information concerning their activities is a mixture of rumour and fact. It seemed on the 19th of April the Ndebele had besieged Nyaningwe, the Mhari capital across the Tugwi, in their long drawn out struggle with the powerful Mazorodze (Chivi III) after which they ransacked Manyumbu's stronghold at Chongogwe and the neighbouring Pako people at Chirogwe. Mauch continuously received news of cattle and people being driven to safety but proved most of this to be false later on. He was able, however, to see from his house (he was staying at or near Madzivire-Bika's) that some of Mudavanhu's homesteads had been set on fire. Apparently three Ndebele commandos were on patrol and making their way through to 'Sumba' (Shumba-Chekai), 'Mangapi' (Mugabe) and 'Tatsimka' (the VaRemba of Tadzembwa), leaving behind a trail of destruction.²¹⁵ Eventually they dispersed, one group leaving in the direction of 'Dsena' (Nyajena) while the other two went up north via Zimuto. In all instances Mapanzure was neither attacked nor raided. It remains to be proven whether the Ndebele-Charumbira alliance did exist and if it did, why Charumbira's village was burnt down by his own allies.

²¹³ Ibid, pp. 191-192.

²¹⁴ Ibid, p.183.

²¹⁵ Ibid, p. 131.

Mazorodze (Mapanzure II)'s policy with the Ndebele seemed to have been adopted by his clients such as the Mhizha who remember paying tribute to Ndebele with some of their women and children. Quite interestingly, some people taken during this period were able, in the early years of colonial rule, to return and re-unite with the larger Mhizha clan. For instance, two Mhizha women Nzvarika and Mazvarira, the daughters of Musingarebwi were captured and went to stay in one of the Ndebele camps near the Matopos. Upon the coming of the BSAC in the 1890s, they re-established their contacts with the people back at home and made their way back where they remarried. Mazvarira was married into the Chavuraya family of Chivi and memories of this are still quite strong.²¹⁶

4.3 Europeans 'See' Chishanga

4.3.1 Carl Mauch: 1871-72

By 1872 Mazorodze was an ageing ruler who, however, readily hosted foreigners who saw his land differently. These could include some Portuguese traders from Tete that came and went to trade their wares for local goods such as ivory.²¹⁷ He was also fully aware of the existence of Adam Render who lived with Bika. The first white person he ever dealt with directly was Carl Mauch through the sheer coincidence that the latter was led by some guides on a route that emerged from behind Mazorodze's residence on top of the Zhou mountain.²¹⁸ This was the first and only route ever to be used by a European into Mapanzure. Thereafter all of them used the route opened up first by the Swiss, Paris and Dutch Reformed evangelical missions and later the BSAC Pioneer Column. This route avoided, in a large measure, the greater portion of Chishanga

²¹⁶ Interview with Poterayi Gon'ora Mhizha.

²¹⁷ Burke, *The Journals of Carl Mauch*. p.211. These were Goanese half-castes who traded with the people in the interior.

²¹⁸ Contrary to E.A. Phaup's assertion that Mazorodze was living at Mashakazhara, oral tradition confirms that Mazorodze never moved out of Zhou and Mauch's account itself describes 'Mapansule's kraal on the top of the highest peak of the region' p.135, which is Zhou 1133.7m in altitude.

which is why it has never received so much coverage compared to other places traversed by literate observers.



Plate 6: The Gadzingo viewed from the direction that Carl Mauch saw it. [Note the Zhou (Mazorodze's residence) at the centre, flanked by the Mashakazhara, Murove and Matiringi.]

Mauch arrived in Chishanga a devastated man. On the 24th of August 1871, he crossed the Tugwi near Chisanati hill and entered Shumba-Chekai's territory by passing through 'Matots' kraal. While there, his porters staged a demonstration against him demanding payment. He was only able to force them to move on after threatening them with his gun. By the afternoon of the 25th, he had camped at Gwanha hill just overlooking the Musogwezi river and could see from there Zhou, the royal residence of Mazorodze. He was to pay the price for his gun totting the next morning when his errant porters disappeared after robbing him of a number of valuables.

Although he was able to get some porters from Mapanzure, he feared not only another robbery but the loss of his own life.²¹⁹ He spent the night alone contemplating and seriously considering giving up his trip. Yet before the seven porters arrived the following morning to get him to Mapanzure, he was once again robbed when he had gone down to fetch water in a nearby stream.²²⁰ However, the people living near the Gwanha gave him 'praiseworthy attention' as he passed through their villages, showering him with rice, meat and beer, a stark contrast to his conditions a day before. By evening they had forded the Musogwezi (although he mistakes it for Tokwane) into Mapanzure's country.

Getting to Mazorodze's was still part of the relief to him although the reception was odd. He had gathered news beforehand that 'Mapansule' (Mazorodze) was an important Banyai chief, which was in many ways a fact, although Mauch himself found this irreconcilable with Mazorodze's physical stature.

It was at Mapanzure that Mauch made contacts with Adam Renders who arrived the following day from Bika's and took Mauch away with him.²²¹ From then on, Mauch stayed at a kopje near Nezvigaro's, journeying between there, the Great Zimbabwe and Bika's, until his final departure for Sena in May 1872. Mauch was to return on a number of occasions to Chishanga during his

²¹⁹ Apparently these porters had been arranged by a one-legged man from Shumba who realized that Mauch had been robbed and went up to Mapanzure to secure help. The previous day Mauch had negotiated with some men from Shumba who demanded more than Mauch could give but agreed in principle to assist Mauch. They did not turn up as promised and it is probably this group that executed the second robbery.

²²⁰ Ibid. p.134.

²²¹ Adam Render had settled in the area three years before (1868) although he and his Boer friends had frequently entered Mashonaland in general and the Charumbira territory in particular from 1848. He had established friendly relations with the Charumbira brothers as well as the Mamwa who promised to cede to him the country between Great Zimbabwe and the Limpopo on behalf of the Transvaal Republic. Eventually he married the daughter of Bika whom he was living with when Mauch arrived.. He was to die in 1873 when he was shot by a poisoned arrow in a war with the Mugabe people. See the testimony of his son H.J. Renders published by Jeannie M. Boggie, *First Steps in Civilising Rhodesia* (Philpot and Collins, Bulawayo, 1940), pp. 196-197.

stay, sometimes to make observations, on one occasion, to meet an old acquaintance George Arthur Philips on the Tugwi and to attend a net-hunting or *mambure* expedition at Masunda's in Chivi via the Godobgwe river valley .²²²

On arrival in Chishanga, Mauch did not hide his appreciation of the local landscape, at once, he was struck by its distinct terrain where the isolated kopjes he had been seeing before crossing the Musogwezi were beginning to form into mountain ranges. He approached the *gadzingo* for the first time from the southeast through Gwampunga and Chamasvosve hills. Despite being a stranger, he was able to see the centrality of Zhou mountain; 'Mapansule's kraal on the top of the highest peak of the region (1193.7m)' and that there was an intended coincidence in the;

....small rivers [that] run from it in all directions which, however, all flow into the Tokwane [Musogwezi] or the Tokwe. Everywhere granite mountains, craggy and wooded and thickly populated.²²³

On leaving Mazorodze's capital for Bika's, Adam Renders took Mauch through Mhizha country tracking through its boundary in the Murara valley leaving Mauch with no direct contact with any of the people there. There is little surprise in that he was never drawn to the attention of the *zviturivadzimu* sacred pools and that the only major iron workings he saw were amongst Bika's men who showed every sign of an organised industry.²²⁴ Beyond that, Mauch's interest and

²²² George Arthur Elephant Philips was a hunter based in Matabeleland who Mauch had known since 1867 when both were companions of Henry Hartley, see editorial commentary by E. E. Burke in *Journals of Carl Mauch*, p.157.

²²³ Ibid. p.135. Geologically this is also the beginning of the concentration of the 'Zimbabwe Granite' [named after its highest concentration near Great Zimbabwe] as it breaks with the metamorphic facies boundary around the Neshuro range. See M.P. Stuart Irwin, 'Geology Report' in *Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society, Chibi Expedition* (1970)

²²⁴ Burke, *Journals of Carl Mauch*, p.137.

excitement were turned towards the Great Zimbabwe ruins when news was broken to him that they were only a short distance away.

He returned to Chishanga at the end of February in 1872 escorted by Bika's son to Zvibgowa to see imprints of 'birds feet' mentioned earlier.²²⁵ Although he dismissed this as simple chemical weathering of porphyritic granite, his attention was once again turned to the beauty of the Chishanga landscape in particular the Musogwezi valley. He wrote:

...the region, nevertheless, deserves to be mentioned as exceptionally pretty, fertile and very well watered. The sides of the ½ -2 mile wide valley of the Tokwane [Musogwezi] are formed partly by more or less spheroidal, mostly bare, granite rock; partly, apparently, the huge remnants of thrown-up kopjes or rands, among which the dark-foliage trees occupy the intervals. Numerous mountain brooks often emerge as small waterfalls from narrow little valleys towards the Tokwe [Tugwi] and, at the bottom of the valley occur nicely grouped woods. I had never expected to find such a pretty region. It surpasses even the little Spelonken in the Transvaal.²²⁶

A thorough view of this spectacle was disturbed by the local population, already very large by this time, which grew suspicious of the 'white man'. This also made Bika's son restless and a quarrel soon broke out between him and Mauch followed by their uneventful departure back to Bika's. From then onwards, his efforts were concentrated at the Zimbabwe ruins and the logistics of his departure two months later.

²²⁵ This can still be found in the area occupied by the Muchenugwa people.

²²⁶ Burke, *Journals of Carl Mauch*, p. 187.



Plate 7: One of the Waterfalls on Musogwezi River towards its confluence with the Musuka and right at the point that Carl Mauch saw and admired it.

4.3.2 The Posselt Brothers: 1889

Mauch's route into Mapanzure followed a beeline more or less straight to his intended destination. This was easy for him because he relied on porters rather than animal drawn wagons, so the route was not dictated by terrain. Before August 1890, the land north of the Tugwi had not been accessible to wagon traffic until the Pioneer Column cut through the Providential Pass to the plains where the town of Masvingo stands today. In 1889, two brothers Willie and Harry Posselt left on an expedition to find the Great Zimbabwe in a move partly influenced by the writings of Carl Mauch. On reaching Chivasa's, a headman under chief Chivi, Harry remained

behind with the wagons while Willie went up to the Zimbabwe with some porters.²²⁷ With porter traffic, indeed the shortest way to Great Zimbabwe was through the mountains of Mapanzure. His porters duly guided him first to Zvibgowa, which had become some sort of tourist attraction since the days of Mauch, to see the footprints engraved in the granite rocks and learnt that they were actual footprints made while the rock was still soft.²²⁸ Zvibgowa lies in the general area associated with sacredness near the point where Musuka joins the Musogwezi river and on Mapanzure's border with the VaRemba of Tadzembwa. Another favourite site in this general area is the Chitinhira hill which towards the rainy season thunders and emits smoke as an indicator of good rains.²²⁹

4.3.3 Frederick Courtney Selous and Theodore Bent: 1890-1891

The British South Africa Company's occupying force, the Pioneer Column was the first group of men to effect the occupation of mainland Zimbabwe. Its march north was entrusted to the leadership of Frederick Courtney Selous, an experienced hunter who was only familiar with northern Mashonaland. However, he had never entered Mashonaland from the south. There was so much anxiety within the occupying force associated with the fear that Lobengula's Matabele armies could attack the column before it reached Salisbury. In addition, competing claims by

²²⁷ W. Posselt, 'Finding the Soapstone Birds at Zimbabwe' in J.M. Boggie, *First Steps in Civilising Rhodesia*, p. 202.

²²⁸ W. Posselt, 'The Early days of Mashonaland and a Visit to the Zimbabwe Ruins', *NADA* 1924, p.74.

²²⁹ Interview with Mapope Tavarera.

Transvaal Boers that they possessed concessions signed by some Karanga chiefs to establish a Republic north of the Limpopo made a Boer invasion a very high likelihood.²³⁰

By the 1st of August 1890 the Pioneer Column had arrived in Chivi after crossing and laagering at the Runde. The following morning an advance party composed of Selous went deep inside Chivi to examine the country and survey a wagon road. They slept over at Gwitima and while there, Selous went up the Zamamba hill the next morning only to discover, much to his relief, that the land across the Tugwi was the Mashonaland terrain familiar to him.²³¹ In this euphoria, he sought to explore the land ahead 'forthwith'. Its rugged nature worried him whether he would find a suitable wagon line but he was already in the mood to appreciate its beauty. He wrote:

It was late in the afternoon when we rode into the entrance of the valley I had seen from the top of Zamamba, just where it narrowed in beneath the shadow of the Inyaguzwi. Down its center ran a fine clear stream of water-the Godobgay [Godobgwe]. This valley we now followed up, always ascending gently and regularly and always running exactly in the right direction, my heart beat with hope that it would lead me right on to the open downs of Mashunaland [sic], and thus prove to be an easy open pass through the only piece of country in which I had anticipated any difficulty in finding a road for heavy wagons.²³²

For Selous, Chishanga was the gateway to the Mashonaland he knew and the Godobgwe river and its beautiful waters, the means of access to the almost divinely guided and predetermined route via the huge pass in Charumbira's country which he aptly named the 'Providential Pass'. In

²³⁰ Hugh Marshall Hole, *The Making of Rhodesia* (London, Macmillan & Co, 1926) p. 266. For a detailed account of the political situation and the events unfolding in this period see Beach, *War and Politics*, Chapter 2. A recent revised account on the situation in Chivi is Gerald C. Mazarire, 'Memories and Contestations of the Scramble for Zimbabwe: Chivi (Mashonaland), c.1870-1892,' in F. Kolapo & K. Akurang-Parry (eds.) *African Agency and European Colonialism: Latitudes of Negotiation and Containment* (University Press of America, Forbes Boulevard, Forthcoming August 2007) pp.59-70.

²³¹ F.C. Selous, *Travel and Adventure in South East Africa* (Rowland Ward & Co., Piccadilly, 1893) p. 375, see also A. Darter, *The Pioneers of Mashonaland* (Books of Rhodesia, Bulawayo, 1977, Facsimilie Reproduction of 1914 Edition) p. 84-85.

²³² Selous, *Travel and Adventure* p. 375.

this happiness that same night, he returned to chose a spot near ‘one of the springs of Godobgay’ to spend the night.²³³ He spent more time in solitude admiring the land between Mapanzure and Charumbira and suddenly

...a weight of responsibility, that had at times become almost unbearable, fell from my shoulders, and I breathed a deep sigh of relief.’²³⁴

Ironically, this was a route that followed the border of Mapanzure and Charumbira which slowly became permanent and was used by all traffic that followed to this day, with the net effect that it deflected attention from Chishanga. Selous was also indeed attracted to the Godobwe springs or *zvitubu* which the Hera elders of Mapanzure have always jealously guarded and which in their associations with them, have in actual fact, never really dried.

The following year in May 1891, Theodore Bent and his wife were to pass through using the same route yet the scenery did not escape their attention either. Bent, however, developed the opinion that all that had been said about this landscape was ‘distinctly overrated’

...it is green and luxuriant in tropical vegetation with the bubbling stream Godobgwe running down it. The hills on either side are fairly fine but could be surpassed easily in Wales and Scotland, or even Yorkshire. In point of fact, the scenery of Mashonaland is nothing if not quaint. Providential Pass is distinctly commonplace, whereas the granite kopje scenery is the quaintest form of landscape I have ever seen.²³⁵

It is interesting to note at this stage the commonality of appreciation of the Chishanga landscape by Europeans. Initially, these were mere ‘readings’ of the Chishanga rivers, hills, terrain and the

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid. p.376.

²³⁵ J. Theodore Bent, *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland: Being A Record of Excavation and Exploration in 1891* (Longmans Green & Co., London, 1896), p. 50.

environment in general, that had posed no threat to the Chishanga people's control and settlement around them. The colonial period began a systematic process of deconstructing these long established and embedded associations that the people of Chishanga had with their landscape.

4.4 Conclusion

When Mazorodze died, he was succeeded by his son Mupandasekwa, of whom little is known about his relatively short reign. Chimbuya succeeded Mupandasekwa and it was during Chimbuya's reign that the BSA Company established its rule on the Zimbabwean plateau. Indeed, even after the pacification of most Shona and Ndebele groups in the 1896/7 war, little affected the situation already obtaining in Chishanga. Chimbuya, like most chiefs in the new Victoria reserve, did not join the risings.²³⁶ Some of the people in Victoria district however, like the contingent of men from Denhere of Gutu participated as 'friendlies', who were part of the relief party that was mobilised by NC Alfred Drew from Victoria to help quell the risings in the Charter area.²³⁷ Indeed, because of its neutrality, Victoria was pivotal, not in the supply of manpower, but that of grain to those areas hard hit by the risings. For this, it was considered to be one of the 'granaries of Mashonaland' in the words of Hugh Marshall Hole, the BSA Company administrator and historian.²³⁸ In recognition of their work in mobilising food supplies for the BSAC troops across the colony, the Victoria NC and Civil Commissioner received due

²³⁶ Alfred Drew, *Historical Fort Victoria* (Salisbury, 1932) n.p.

²³⁷ Ibid, see also Harry Posselt, 'The Rebellion of 1896 and the Relief of Charter from Victoria', *NADA* 1930.

²³⁸ Hugh Marshall Hole, 'The Mashonaland Rebellion' in BSAC, *The '96 Rebellions* (Originally Published as The BSAC Reports on the Native Disturbances in Rhodesia, 1896-97 (1898) Facsimile Reproduction of the Rhodesiana Reprint Library, 1975) p.119.

tribute from the company's administration.²³⁹ Naturally, after the war, most chiefs within the Victoria Reserve became part of the first group to be salaried officials of the new colonial government.

Before the outbreak of the 1896/7 risings however, most people from Chishanga were already adapting to the new political and economic dispensation taking advantage of their proximity to the Pioneer Road and the access it gave them to trade with European transport riders and itinerant traders. This was easy because no land alienation or mass movements of people took place in Chishanga (Old Mapanzure) before 1901. When the boundaries were demarcated, the traditional Mapanzure territory was reduced to 'a quarter of Old Mapanzure' which became known as the new Mapanzure Reserve..²⁴⁰

Attention was paid to cultivable land and the pattern was similar in adjacent reserves with Charumbira reserve constituting a fifth of Charumbira's former territory and Shumba's being a sixth of its former self. This terminology of fractions was widely used in the demarcation process but it remains both vague and confusing for none of these colonial officials ever really appreciated the actual extent of the territories they classified 'old' or 'former'. However, for the purposes of this study, it is interesting to note that Mapanzure's *gadzingo*, being predominantly hilly granite area, was excluded from the new Mapanzure reserve whose boundaries now ran in a straight line from Bika to two miles west of Zhou mountain, then straight down to Mvimvi mountain near the confluence of the Musogwezi and Tugwi rivers.²⁴¹

²³⁹ Katherine Sayce, *A Town Called Victoria Or The Rise and Fall of the Thatched House Hotel* (Books of Rhodesia, Bulawayo, 1978), p.75.

²⁴⁰ N3/24/34 Native Reserves Victoria, NC Fort Victoria to CNC Salisbury, 4 March 1901.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

This was an important turning point in Hera politics and moral geography, signalling the first detachment of the pre-colonial political elite with the landscape that had for long symbolised their power. Slowly, Mapanzure families within the *gadzingo* were driven out of the mountains to settle in the plains much closer to the land controlled by their cousins and long-time opponents, the Muchenugwa based at Chipagwe.

In 1898, the local NC had argued that people should be driven out of the mountains to form large villages of 30 to 50 huts. His intention, however, was to access labour for the mines because he believed if these large villages were placed under headmen, the headmen would only allocate land to men fit for work. This way, they would be forced to go out to work for a certain amount of time if they wanted to keep the land.²⁴² These remained ideas and nothing was implemented as the reserves had to be revised again in 1909, following the pegging of European farms that ultimately led to the taking over of land formerly under Chikwanda.²⁴³ The new reserves under Charumbira, Mapanzure and Shumba-Chekai were reconstituted, all falling under the Victoria Reserve and named 14, 15 and 16 respectively.²⁴⁴ Meanwhile, as applications for European farms in the Victoria district continued to pour in, the Chikwerengwe section of Chishanga or ‘that low lying area on the Tokwe river’, was saved from alienation because the Superintendent of Natives saw it as ‘hardly suitable for farming’.²⁴⁵ By 1911 however, the *gadzingo* had been cleared, leaving only those Hera and the Mhizha to its southern side in former Chikwerengwe district. This was only a temporary reprieve which was brought to an end eighteen years later

²⁴² N9/1/7 NC Victoria to CNC Salisbury, Annual Report for 1901.

²⁴³ This subject has been well detailed by Mtetwa, ‘The “Political” and Economic History of the Duma’, pp. 313-314.

²⁴⁴ L2/2/117/47 Superintendent of Natives, Fort Victoria to CNC Salisbury, 17 March 1909.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

when the colonial administration decided to use part of the area to establish a Leprosarium and converted the remaining land to Native Purchase Area, the subjects of the following two chapters respectively.

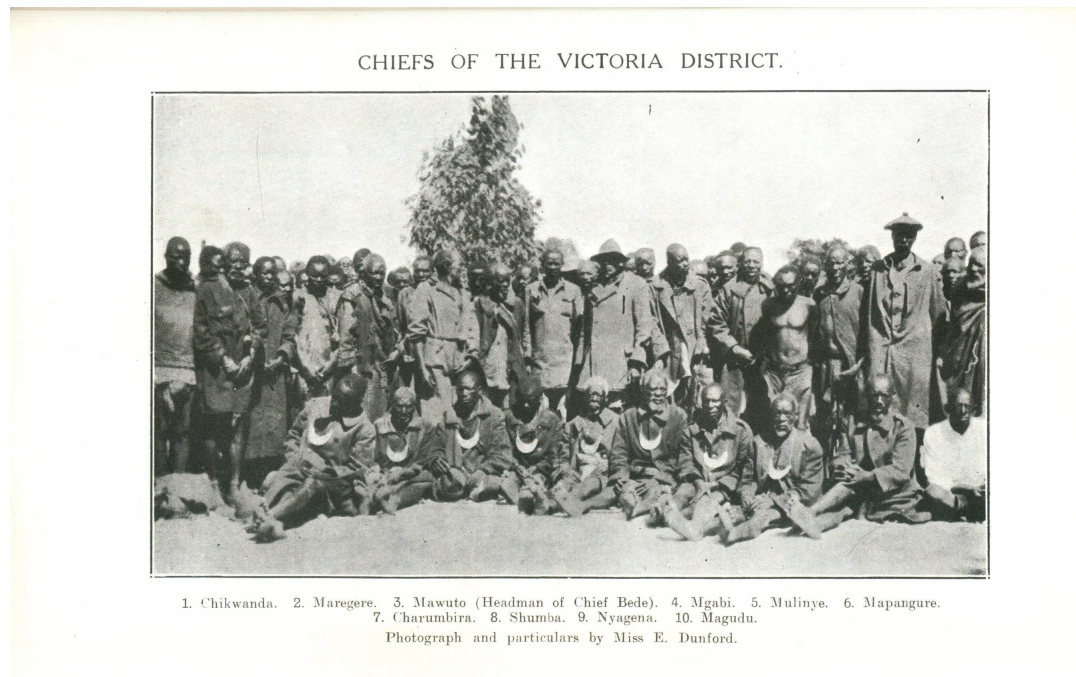


Plate 8: Chiefs and Headman of the Victoria District soon after the Demarcation of the Reserves.

Photo: National Archives of Zimbabwe

Chapter 5

A 'Little England' In Chishanga: The Fate of a British Empire Leprosarium at Ngomahuru 1925 -1946

5.1 Introduction:

The growing literature on colonial medicine in Africa has begun to indicate a shift from broad discussions of the history of biomedicine and the social construction of diseases to emphasise the peculiarities of individual diseases and epidemics as well as the institutions set up to control them.²⁴⁶ This chapter is an addition to these micro-histories in an endeavour not only to broaden the scale of observation of the functions of colonial medicine but to allow these histories to speak for themselves. It essentially is a case of how disease control in colonial Africa was able, at times, to transform the lives and landscapes of African peoples in ways that reflected little about the diseases or the people in question than it did the imperial mindset that informed the administrators.

Today the name 'Ngomahuru' (translated to 'Big Drum') in Zimbabwe is often associated with a mental asylum in the Masvingo province. Perhaps even more with a common joke about a

²⁴⁶ Recent examples of this growing literature with respect to leprosy are; S. Howitz, 'Leprosy in South Africa: A Case Study of Westfort Leper Institution, 1898-1948', *African Studies*, 65, 2, 2006 and S. Shankar, 'Medical Missionaries Modernising Emirs in Colonial Hausaland: Leprosy and Native Authority in the 1930s', *Journal of African History*, 48, (2007), pp. 48-49.

mental patient there who, in a relay race on the annual sports day, disappeared with the baton stick into the nearby bush instead of handing it over to the next athlete. The irony is, however, that Ngomahuru only became a mental institution in 1969, yet it had existed since 1929 as a leprosy hospital or leprosarium. The infrastructure and amenities now at Ngomahuru, including the sports fields, were not designed with mental patients in mind but lepers. Ngomahuru acquired even more international fame in the 1930s when its first Medical Officer Dr. Bernard Moiser and some Leprosy Associations in the United Kingdom and Nigeria lobbied for it to be turned into a British Empire Leprosarium.

This chapter is far much less about the management of leprosy in Southern Rhodesia than it is concerned with what was left at Ngomahuru after the dream of the British Empire Leprosarium failed. Apart from this infrastructural legacy, it is also necessary to appreciate how the people of Chishanga particularly those living around Ngomahuru perceived this unfolding process on their ancestral landscape in which they became mere observers. It is a fact that Ngomahuru meant something totally different to them. Ngomahuru as has already been shown, was a sacred mountain and the land around it traversed by important spirits of the Mhizha. This was a region nourished by rivers drawn from a central watershed controlled by the ruling Mapanzure people and revered not only as their *gadzingo*, but the headwaters of most of the important rivers in the Chishanga country. Establishing a leper asylum there, without the approval of any of these powers or their participation, was both an abomination of this spiritual sanctuary and an affront on the authority of its custodians as much as it was contamination, in a literal and metaphoric sense, of the Chishanga waters.

The politics surrounding the failure of this imperial project are however much more intricate. The government of Southern Rhodesia in principle could only pledge its support if such an ambitious project could be self-sustaining financially. On the strength of this ambivalent government attitude, Moiser acquired some measure of autonomy and expended much effort and time trying to create a natural environment conducive for leprous British citizens to recuperate and less on the management of the disease amongst the African lepers confined at Ngomahuru. Slowly, he did everything concerning Ngomahuru from medical and laboratory work, trying criminal cases, building, pest control, to road and farm management. In short, he slowly came to personify the emergent Ngomahuru Leper Settlement. In the end however, a 'slum' emerged among the African lepers side by side with this 'little England' enough to excite the anxiety of the government which quickly appointed a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the matters there in 1945. The commission was quick to point to Moiser's 'incompetence' but observed quite keenly the contradiction inherent in attempting an 'Imperial' standard Leprosarium inside a cash-strapped Southern Rhodesia. It however underplayed the dilemma of a medical officer such as Moiser and other medical personnel in British colonial Africa often found themselves in, that of advancing 'imperial medicine' in tropical Africa in the face of elaborate bureaucratic control by administrative officers also 'serving the empire'.²⁴⁷ In the long run, the project was never self-sustaining and Moiser got the blame for 'incompetence', in other words, allowing primitive and unhygienic conditions to prevail at such a government institution, short of bringing western medicine into disrepute. Before considering these issues let us understand how the Leprosy establishment ended up at Ngomahuru in the first place.

²⁴⁷ A very illustrative study of this dilemma is M. Ochunu, 'Native Habits are Difficult to Change: British Medics and the Dilemmas of Biomedical Discourses in Early Colonial Northern Nigeria', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, vol. 5 no. 1 (2004).

5.2 Pioneering Work in Leprosy

The Dutch Reformed Church (D.R.C.) that had established itself at Morgenster near the Great Zimbabwe in the 1890s pioneered the work in leprosy that later found a permanent home in Chishanga from 1929 onwards. By way of background, the prevalence of leprosy and other epidemics, had led local people to develop methods of dealing with them and their victims. There are documented cases of chronic sufferers of certain diseases being isolated as means of both ‘disposal’ and maintenance of the ‘social good’.²⁴⁸ A lot of ink has been spilt on the moral debates surrounding such practices to be repeated here, but suffice it to say, for Karanga society- in which Chishanga was an integral part-as long as a disease was not chronic or threatening the lives of other people, sufferers were allowed to mix freely with the rest of the community. A number of taboos sanctioned this behaviour, one being the fear of avenging spirits or *ngozi* arising out of the deliberate wasting of a life. The other, concerned ‘the curse’ of the disease returning to the community or family when a sufferer died as a result of negligence by members of his/her family or their failure to exercise due care and kindness. Very often care of the chronically ill was entrusted to a foreigner or *mutogwa* (i.e. a person not related to the lineage concerned by descent, totemic or other, or someone not originating in the area totally) as a safeguard against these and other spiritual backlashes. Such a *mutogwa* offered security as an alien and was often paid handsomely when the diseased had been either cured or when they died under his care.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁸ G.C. Mazarire, ‘The Social Basis of Evil in Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe with Particular Reference to the Practice of Killing Twins Amongst the Karanga’, *Chiedza: Arrupe College Journal*, vol. 5 no.2 December 2002, p. 61.

²⁴⁹ H. .Aschwanden, *Symbols of Death: An Analysis of the Consciousness of the Karanga* (Mambo Press, Gweru, 1987), pp. 80-85. Interviews with Member Zivanai, Mushonga Village 17 August 2000.

In the area around the newly founded D.R.C. mission at Morgenster, there were indeed reports of locals burying acute cases of leprosy alive. In one case, a leper was sent to Morgenster by the Native Commissioner (NC) of Fort Victoria after being rescued from the grave by a Roman Catholic Priest.²⁵⁰ Work amongst the lepers had begun at Morgenster in 1899 under Dr. John Helm although the Mission attended to individual cases as early as 1892. Later on a leper 'colony' was established at Chikarudzo near the Mission. The idea of a 'colony' was based on the principle of 'segregation' of lepers widely practiced in medical circles in tropical countries at the time. Scholars like Sheldon Watts have suggested that it may have had its inspiration in Biblical thought as elaborated in the Book of Leviticus Chapter XIII that all lepers be segregated and taken away from the rest of the community. Frequently, leprosy was also seen as a moral condition, that is, God's punishment for the evil thoughts and deeds of the sufferers to the extent that 'lepers needed moral upliftment even more than they needed medical care'.²⁵¹ Somehow, the pattern everywhere seems to associate most pioneering works in leprosy with missionaries.

In British colonial Africa the 'arrest' of the disease was often associated with the spread of the civilizing mission and the power of western medicine but more often, with taming the diseased wilderness of empire. Ideas and medicines for leprosy relief in the British Empire were developed in India at the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine where 'chaulmoogra oil and segregation' became a model treatment that was exported elsewhere inside the British empire.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ W. J. van der Merwe, *The Day Star Arises in Mashonaland*, (Fort Victoria, Morgenster Mission Press, 1953), p.29.

²⁵¹ S. Watts, *Epidemics and History: Disease, Power and Imperialism* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1997), p.43.

²⁵² Chaulmoogra oil was obtainable from the *hydnocarpus* tree widely available in India and used by Indian traditional medicine men to treat leprosy. Ibid.

It found application in Nigeria where the British used mission-run leprosaria to extend 'western education and cultural values' into the predominantly Muslim emirates of Hausaland.²⁵³

In Southern Rhodesia, the situation was slightly different. It was a colony run by a Chartered Company for the first twenty five years of its existence that considered it cheaper to leave African welfare issues such as health and education in the hands of missionaries whom it supported with nominal grants-in-aid.²⁵⁴ On the expiration the Charter however, the new Responsible Government preferred to run these facilities more directly and assumed overall control of matters relating to African welfare such as health where leprosy control occupied an important position. Although it drew most of its experienced staff from such pioneering areas as Nigeria, it gradually became difficult for the government to embrace the 'empire model' without straining its own fiscus. This left the 'empire dream' to be pursued by individual officers on the ground without governmental support. Evidence of these struggles between imperial aspirations and administrative practicalities still lie deeply inscribed in Chishanga landscape today at Ngomahuru, where a government run Leprosarium was eventually established. This is partly because the first Government leprologist there, Dr. Bernard Moiser, was himself obsessed with the imperial dream to transform part or all of Ngomahuru, into a British Empire Leprosarium, a home away from home for all British citizens 'who would have contracted the disease elsewhere in the Empire', a 'Little England' that is.

²⁵³ S. Shankar, 'Medical Missionaries Modernising Emirs in Colonial Hausaland: Leprosy and Native Authority in the 1930s', *Journal of African History*, 48, (2007), pp. 48-49.

²⁵⁴ The seems to have been the trend everywhere else in British Colonial Africa, see M. Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991), 78.

5.3 The Leper Colony Moves to Chishanga

Lepers confined at the Chikarudzo 'colony' lived in clear segregation, behind a barbed wire fence and separated from the rest of the people at the Mission. Quite predictably, they all deserted from this *mudarada* or 'prison', as they called it, and for a while leper work was abandoned. Slowly, perhaps after growing some confidence in western medicine, they trickled back voluntarily and work once again resumed under Dr. Helm who was to retire in 1914. It continued even after his departure until the leper settlement was taken over by the government in 1925.²⁵⁵

The circumstances of the Government takeover reflect some of the tensions inherent in the policy shift of the Responsible Government that ultimately brought about the relocation of the Leper Colony to Ngomahuru, some thirty kilometers further south and deep in Chishanga country. Naturally, the British South Africa Company's grant-in-aid support encouraged missionary denominations to compete and expand their efforts to ensure maximum use of this facility which they also used to accumulate converts. The Company was wary of this and reluctant to give in to continued attempts to commit it to more such activities. In the case of leprosy, the Company had already opened a leprosy center at Mtemwa in Mtoko designed to cater for the northern and eastern districts of the colony, while it allowed other missionaries to begin similar work at Mt. Selinda as well as in Belingwe in the southeast and southwest respectively.²⁵⁶ Morgenster was therefore not a peculiar case and in the Victoria province, in the south-central region, its case for a grant-in-aid was particularly put to test by a competing attempt by Catholic missionaries to

²⁵⁵ Van der Merwe, *A Day Star*, p.29.

²⁵⁶ Sr. Mary Aquina, 'A Sociological Analysis of Ngomahuru Hospital', *Zambezia*, vol. 1, no. 1, January 1969, p.70.

establish a similar institution for the segregation of lepers of the Catholic faith. Monsignor Parry the Superior of the Jesuit Missionaries justified the case for Driefontein Leper settlement to the Government Medical Director in 1921 on the basis that lepers at the Morgenster Mission had no opportunity to practice their religion since he did not have enough priests to visit isolated Catholics.²⁵⁷

This situation changed abruptly after the end of Company rule in 1923. The new Responsible Government clearly felt that the missionaries were taking advantage of this facility to abuse government coffers. It immediately took responsibility over most health institutions in the country and became directly involved in the appointment of medical staff. In 1924, the DRC made a number of claims for increments to the daily upkeep of the Leper Settlement, its Staff, the Leprosy patients and the Medical Superintendent, Rev. A.C. Jackson. This involved petty cash for wages, making of huts, buying of grain, cattle for slaughter and paying messengers.²⁵⁸

The requests were seen and interpreted by the government as an attempt by Jackson to award himself an undue salary increase.²⁵⁹ The Company had since 1913 been contributing to the Medical Superintendent of the leper colony's salary to the tune of £200 which was later raised to £220 and £231 subsequently. The new government had in April 1924 raised this to £300. Jackson had pressed for a further increment through Rev. A.A. Louw, his Superintendent, arguing that he had a family of five children, three of whom were at school at the Cape at

²⁵⁷ S482/396/39 *Ngomahuru Leper Settlement*, Secretary to the Premier (J.G Jeary) to CNC Salisbury, 11th September 1924.

²⁵⁸ S1173/244 Medical Director Salisbury to Secretary, Treasury, 8th October 1924. see also Rev. A.C. Jackson, Morgenster to Government Medical Officer, Fort Victoria 8th October 1924.

²⁵⁹ S1173/244 Medical Director Salisbury to the Acting Secretary, Department of the Colonial Secretary, Salisbury, 24th October 1924.

considerable expense.²⁶⁰ The Medical Department flatly denied approving such an increment and sought at once to dispense with Jackson's services. Apart from the expense he posed, the government felt that it had not been consulted over his appointment as Superintendent of the 'colony' in the first place. After the death of Dr. Helm government had instructed that control of the Leper Settlement should be 'under nomination', implying that a suitable candidate had to be recommended to government for approval. It blamed Rev. Louw, the man in charge of Morgenster, for being aware of this position but failing to honour this principle in his unilateral appointment of Jackson. This matter was discussed between the Medical Director Dr. Andrew Fleming, the Government Medical Officer Dr. Henson and the Superintendent Of Natives for Victoria Col. Carbutt, where it was found that Jackson was also not suitable for the work in the interest of the patients concerned since he was not a qualified medical doctor. After his inspection of Morgenster, Fleming wrote; 'Mr. Jackson was temperamentally unsuited for this work and that it was in the interest of the lepers themselves that some change should be made'.²⁶¹

There seemed however, to have existed deeper objections to Jackson 's work on denominational preferences necessitating Jackson to write to the Medical Director in October 1920 consenting to break his connection with the DRC Mission, if so desired, and become an employee of the government entirely. Allegations of his temperament contradicted the picture painted of him by his superior Rev. Louw:

²⁶⁰ S482/396/39 Rev. A.A. Louw, Chairman and Superintendent of the D.R. Mission, Morgenster to the Medical Director, Salisbury, 24 November 1924.

²⁶¹ S1173/244 A.M. Fleming, Medical Director, Salisbury to Acting Secretary, Department of the Colonial Secretary, Second November 1924.

Mr. Jackson has ever had the welfare of the poor unfortunate sufferers at heart, dressing their loathsome wounds personally. He has been a real father to them, doing everything in his power to alleviate their unhappy condition...by planting fruit trees for them, and interesting them in gardening. He also organized a school for them, so that a good many of them have learned to read in the vernacular.²⁶²

Yet the die had been cast, and the take over was imminent. Rev. Louw tried to contest this and proceeded to make a special appeal to Sir Charles Coghlan, the Southern Rhodesian Premier.²⁶³

His response was polite but ineffective. He simply enquired from his Colonial Secretary who responded that he was also not too happy with the 'change that was being made' although he could not explain why.²⁶⁴ This way the Missionaries did gain the political sympathy but lost the bureaucratic battle with the Senior Officials in the Department of Health. The fate of the Chikarudzo colony was sealed and the following year, it was officially transferred to Chishanga to a site on the foot of the Ngomahuru mountain, after which it was named.

Talks of relocating the Leper settlement had started long before the 1920s although the real motivation was never outlined clearly. These efforts began to gather momentum in 1925 after the Jackson issue had subsided and arrangements were being made for him to take leave on retirement. Although Fleming reassured that this was never done through denominational influence at the settlement, he certainly made it clear that the erection of the buildings at the new site were to begin as soon as possible.²⁶⁵ As if to placate Rev. Louw, Fleming wrote; 'It will, I hope, always be remembered that the Dutch Reformed Church at the instigation of yourself and

²⁶² S482/396/39 Louw to Medical Director, 24 November 1924.

²⁶³ S482/396/39 Rev. A.A. Louw, Morgenster to Sir Charles Coghlan, Salisbury 12 December 1924.

²⁶⁴ S1043 *Correspondence 1940-1944* Colonial Secretary, Administrative Office, Salisbury to Sir Charles Coghlan 17th December 1924.

²⁶⁵ S1173/244 A.M. Fleming to Rev. A.A. Louw, Morgenster, 30th January 1925.

Dr. Helm were the first to start a home a treatment center for the native Lepers population of Rhodesia'.²⁶⁶ Louw replied rather grudgingly:

...I am afraid, nothing remains for us but to accept the situation such as it is. I will however, always be sorry that the dissolution was not effected in a different and more candid way, since, as you say yourself, our relations in the past were of such a friendly nature. I trust that wherever the lepers may be segregated in the future, they may still be within reach of one of our missionaries, who could visit them regularly, and minister to their spiritual needs.²⁶⁷

The DRC may have felt badly about this but it seemed to be the trend everywhere and the work of earlier medical anthropologists such as Michael Gelfand seems to suggest, subtly, that the personality of the Government Medical Superintendent, Dr. Andrew Fleming was also to blame. In the years between 1914 and 1917, Fleming had given the Wesleyan Methodists at Kwenda a torrid time. First he refused them permission to move their Mission to a suitable site, then in 1917 he denied their Medical Officer Dr. Sidney Osborne particular entitlements, this resulted in an impasse that eventually led to the closure of the Kwenda dispensary in the same year. Fleming also entered into similar struggles with other mission stations such as St. Faith's in Rusapi, Dadaya near Shabani and others in Umtali.²⁶⁸ It appears however, that the Responsible Government increasingly felt uncomfortable leaving the 'advance of western medicine' outside the realms of imperial administrative control, complete with its formalities, often expressed through reports, whose job was also to project an image of the 'appropriateness of British medical measures'.²⁶⁹ Missionaries in their various denominations had to be beaten into shape and non-conformity was punishable by withdrawal of government support. This foreshadowed

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ S1173/244 Rev. A.A. Louw, Morgenster to A.M. Fleming, 9 February 1925.

²⁶⁸ M. Gelfand, *Godly Medicine in Zimbabwe: A History of Medical Missions* (Gweru, Mambo Press, 1988), p. 72.

For an authoritative description of the dynamics at play and Andrew Fleming's role in it see pp. 76-80.

²⁶⁹ Ochunu, 'Native Habits are Difficult to Change', p.43.

similar action against British medical officers who were initially entrusted to advance the civilizing mission of 'western medicine' but later on denied practical ingenuity on the ground if ever this would bring the 'empire' in disrepute or challenge the position of Britain as the centre of 'research and knowledge production in tropical/imperial science'.²⁷⁰

5.3.1 *The Ngomahuru Leper Settlement*

It goes without saying that the turmoil created by this unpleasant take-over of the leper settlement was also responsible for the rush and poor planning that characterized the emergent new settlement at Ngomahuru which haunted it for the coming 20 or so years. Part of it had much to do with the personal dream of its newly appointed Medical Superintendent Dr. Bernard Moiser to turn it into a British Empire Leprosarium. The settlement moved from Chikarudzo to Ngomahuru in 1926 and Moiser assumed office there in April 1929.²⁷¹

Moiser was a retired Colonial Medical Officer who had taken an interest in leprosy and had several years experience with the disease in Nigeria where he firmly embraced the 'Indian Model' of chaulmoogra and segregation. In Nigeria too, leprosy officials in search of funding from Western sponsors had promoted the idea that well run leprosaria, served as centres of 'enlightenment' for those parts of Africa that lacked progress.²⁷² By well run was implied model village conditions such as those found at the leprosarium in Uzuakoli, Igboland, for instance, complete with plantations, well constructed roads and 'giving practical demonstration of improved methods in agriculture, improving the diet of the people and in every way spreading

²⁷⁰ Ibid. p.49.

²⁷¹ N9/1/27 NC Victoria to CNC Salisbury, Annual Report 1926.

²⁷² Watts, *Epidemics and History*, p. 78.

enlightenment and hope.’²⁷³ It was also this enlightenment ideal that saw beautiful surroundings such as gardens and a well managed environment as having a therapeutic effect on the disease. Moiser, a firm believer in these enlightenment ideas-which he had practiced in Nigeria-sought to apply them to his new job. Within a few years of working at Ngomahuru he was convinced that he was scoring better results than in Nigeria.²⁷⁴

An ambivalent government attitude allowed Moiser a measure of latitude and autonomy to apply his mind at his new job and in this, he found the support of the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association (BELRA) founded by Leonard Rogers in 1923 with the stated aim to ‘rid the empire of leprosy’. This encouraged him to believe that Ngomahuru, or part of it, should actually be turned into a British Empire Leprosarium to cater for British service personnel who might have contracted the disease in their line of duty anywhere else within it. This would be a place ‘to which [British] Civil Servants, who have contracted the disease in the course of their work in India or other Colonies could migrate-not as to a Home for Incurables, but for treatment and cure.’²⁷⁵ In his own words he hoped his preliminary work would:

...induce the Government of Southern Rhodesia, British Empire Leprosy Relief Association and Toc H (an Anglican affiliated Philanthropic Society founded in Nigeria) to take a further interest and give support to a scheme for keeping patients out of England where they make little or no progress towards recovery and give them what appears to be a good chance of becoming non-infectious and even cured.²⁷⁶

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ A.D. Power, ‘A British Empire Leprosarium’, *Journal of the Royal African Society* vol. 38, no. 153 (October 1939) p. 466.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ B. Moiser, (abridged), ‘British Empire Leprosarium’ *The British Journal of Nursing*, November 1938, p. 304. (Originally Published in *The Leprosy Review* 1938, a quarterly publication of the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association.)

B. Moiser, ‘British Empire Leprosarium’, p.304.

As we have seen already, this was of course neither the original intention of the Southern Rhodesian government in taking over leprosy care nor the idea behind its shifting the 'colony' from Chikarudzo to Ngomahuru. However, it did not object to the principle as long as the scheme would be self-supporting. Moiser submitted that the Governments of the countries from which the patients were drawn would be willing to pay the cost of transit and even, perhaps, the board and lodging of their patients. He proceeded to put up an international campaign promoting the image of Ngomahuru as best suited climatically for the 'arrest' of the disease. This image was even portrayed in a survey of the state of leprosy in Africa published the *Journal of the Royal African Society* (later *African Affairs*) to mark the 21st anniversary of BELRA. It surmised:

The disease is of a mild type in Southern Rhodesia. There seems to be something in the climate which is conducive to recovery, for, other conditions being equal and the treatment being the same, similar cases react more quickly and are discharged much sooner at Ngomahura (sic) than in other parts of Africa.²⁷⁷

Ngomahuru, it maintained, was also blessed with a yearly 'south-easterly breeze'. Yet in this campaign and in his mind, Moiser totally overlooked the place of African leper patients and that of the traditional owners of the territory Ngomahuru in the whole picture. This was a mistake that was to haunt his dream of a 'little England' in the middle of nowhere and set in motion a perpetual struggle that pitted him against the government, his African patients and those Africans living around Ngomahuru.

The site chosen for the settlement was a stretch of land 8400 acres in extent that lay right in the middle of Mhizha country in Chikwerengwe just south of the Ngomahuru mountain. It was

²⁷⁷ A.D. Power, 'The Leprosy Problem in Africa' *Journal of the Royal African Society* vol. 44 no. 175 (Apr. 1945), p. 82.

bounded on the west by the Tugwi river with the Govogwe river running through it from the central watershed draining the Chishanga *gadzingo*. This abundant water supply was considered useful for the purposes of the lepers although part of the reason for choosing the site rested on the fact that it was part of undesignated land left out in the delimitation of reserves and crown land earmarked for the Mshawasha Native Purchase Area.

Moiser's imaginative mind was immediately put to work. He had while in Sokoto and Kaduna created two beautiful gardens, an idea which he sought to refine at Ngomahuru where he converted some 15 acres of the Mhizha bush into gardens that were featured in a special article of an international gardening magazine *Country Life*. Ngomahuru was described as the 'Show Place of Rhodesia' because of these gardens.²⁷⁸ This, according to A. D. Power, Moiser had done deliberately, 'not for his own benefit alone, but because he wants his British patients, when they arrive to find homelike surroundings, not just a Bush station.'²⁷⁹ The gardens which were '[o]riginally a small bare patch surrounded by bush', but;

...now cover fifteen acres. In addition to the usual indigenous shrubs like poinsettia, bougainvillea, plumbago, hibiscus, frangipane, flamboyant, jacaranda (so arranged that there is a perpetual riot of colour) English flowers flourish-hollyhocks, carnations, phlox, larkspurs, violets, sweet peas, lilies, sunflowers, marigolds, dahlias, and roses which bloom all year round. Then there are the kitchen gardens and the orchards-oranges, lemon grapefruit, peaches and pineapples, to say nothing of the glorious avenues of flowering trees, brick pergolas, rockeries, crazy pavements and lawns.....All this has been planned with the greatest forethought, not for private enjoyment alone, but for others, and especially for patients.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ B. Moiser, 'British Empire Leprosarium', p.304.

²⁷⁹ Power, 'A British Empire Leprosarium' p.467.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

Indeed it would not be difficult for an English patient to find a new home in Ngomahuru because it was home away from home. The environment should be therapeutic, wrote Moiser in a typical 'enlightened' tone:

...It should not be difficult to visualize the contrast between the feelings of a man in England, who knows he is in the early stages of leprosy, haunted with the fear his neighbours may discover his secret, almost a fugitive and well aware that to remain in England is to seal his doom, with those of one who can throw off his mind such a terrible weight of anxiety, live a normal life, and look his neighbours in the face. This is no imaginary picture, it is an accomplished fact in one case. One man is already there. In the British Isles he had begun to lose weight, his symptoms he became worse, and his outlook became hopeless. On arrival at Ngomahuru he at once took on a new lease of life. His condition improved remarkably. He has found congenial conditions, and much to interest him in the study of wild animal life and the laying out of his garden. 'The days' he says, 'seem hardly long enough to enable me to follow all the pursuits that so interest me.' He is not lone, he has the doctor to talk to and dine with, he does microscopic and other work for him, and he is looking forward to joining his wife and family at home, fit and well, in two or three years time.²⁸¹

This managed to attract a number of British Empire lepers. In 1939 a European patient arrived from India and was soon to be joined by a medical doctor who had contracted leprosy during the course of his work in British East Africa, Kenya. This Dr. Blaker found a 'luxurious' house waiting for him that had been constructed by money from his home government, Kenya.²⁸² Another civil servant from British East Africa as well, Mr. Strong, had yet another equally good house prepared for him. This was happening at a time when government barely had the money for such comforts for its own staff. In 1930 the newly appointed Assistant Superintendent Mr. Trow had to make do with building his own house.²⁸³ Only a while later after the Second World War was the government able to take over these houses and expand accommodation for staff.²⁸⁴

²⁸¹ Ibid. p.468.

²⁸² See File S533/T312/285 Ngomahuru Leprosy Hospital, Fort Victoria, 1929-1948.

²⁸³ S1173/245 Medical Director, R. A. Askins to Director of Public Works, Salisbury, 17th September 1930.

²⁸⁴ S482/396/39 Secretary to the Prime Minister, Salisbury to Chief Secretary, The Secretariat Nairobi, 21 July 1945.

While this spectacle was taking shape the African side of the leper settlement was developing in its own way into another site altogether. It started off with about 300 lepers who were also a source of labour for the construction work. Of these only about 40 were capable of any manual work. Much of this labour however, was channeled to establishing plantations which were intended to change the look of the area from surrounding indigenous bush.²⁸⁵ A contractor took over the construction work at the end of 1930 and built 44 houses of Kimberley bricks with pole and thatch roof. These became a compound consisting of four villages. The first with 20 housing units was reserved for incoming or newly discovered cases of leprosy, the second with 12 units for those with open wounds or 'nodular' cases, another 6 units were converted into a compound for visitors and the last 6 for observation purposes.²⁸⁶ Within the settlement specific lines of separation were already developing, the compound for incoming cases was placed on the northern side of Govogwe river, the river that divided the settlement in two parts. In this arrangement the first 'village' of 'nodular' cases stood alone, while in the other village of incoming cases consideration was given to tribal and sex differences along the following lines; i.) Single indigenous ii.) single foreign, iii.) married indigenous iv.) married foreign. The single unmarried girls lived in the married quarters.

The patients were allowed to have visitors who were housed in the visitors compound and not permitted to stay longer than a week.²⁸⁷ This according to Sister Mary Aquina was a very positive aspect in preserving the families of the patients since their spouses frequently visited and

²⁸⁵ S1173/246 Assistant Forest Officer Salibury to Medical Superintendent, Gomohuru Leper Settlement 6th August 1929.

²⁸⁶ S1173/245 Moiser, Ngomahuru to Medical Director, Salisbury, 6 October 1930. Three years later these dwellings were infested with cockroaches necessitating immediate attention. See S1173/249 Ngomahuru Hospital, Miscellaneous; correspondence between Moiser and various advisors on how to deal with cockroaches between 23 February 1933 to 14th March 1933.

²⁸⁷ S1173/248 B. Moiser, 'Routine' Ngomahuru Leprosy Hospital 26th August 1932.

even allowed to stay within the limited period in non-occupied huts.²⁸⁸ Apparently each village had its own 'chief'.²⁸⁹ Megan Vaughan has argued that this spatial arrangement had been developed by Missionaries who saw leprosy as offering them an opportunity to produce new and ideal African communities devoid of all the African features that would impede the advance of Christianity. A specific leper identity was constructed which projected 'liberation' although such an identity was often compromised by the need for control and order in the leper institutions. These leper colonies, so created, sometimes reinforced or invented ethnic identities and customs within themselves.²⁹⁰ Moiser seems to have embraced this model at Ngomahuru and a compound or *komboni* slowly came into life, which transformed itself into a slum in the 1940s. Like the Westfort Leper Institution in Pretoria, Ngomahuru also became a mirror image of the developing racial order of the Southern Rhodesian state. South Africa however went a step further by placing lepers of different ethnic origins in separate government run leprosaria.²⁹¹

Ngomahuru was never really thought of by the administration as a research centre although it often was looked up to for the provision of medical solutions to the leprosy problem. In reality there was never enough money allocated for even its basic day to day requirements and sometimes even the supply of medicine was quite inefficient.²⁹² The British Empire Leprosy Relief Association frequently chipped in and supplied 'Alepol' (chaulmoogra oil) the leprosy drug which was being applied on an extensive scale in the initial stages of the campaign against

²⁸⁸ Aquina, 'A Sociological Analysis of Ngomahuru', p.77.

²⁸⁹ Power, 'The Leprosy Problem in Africa', p.82.

²⁹⁰ Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills*, p. 79.

²⁹¹ Howitz, 'Leprosy in South Africa', p. 272.

²⁹² S1173/247 B. Moiser, Ngomahuru to Medical Director, 20 May 1931, See also S1173/249 B. Moiser to W. Proctor of Messrs Lennon Ltd. Regarding the shortage of Medical supplies.

the disease.²⁹³ They kept a keen interest in the developments at Ngomahuru, paying frequent visits and keeping updated reports.

Ways had been found to inject doses of chaulmoogra oil into the patients and from 1929 this 'Alepol' was the common drug used at Ngomahuru with some levels of success yet in some cases there were no signs of improvement under it. Although it was possible at Ngomahuru between 1929 and 1933 to discharge some 260 patients on this treatment, it was slowly being accepted in the medical field in general that chaulmoogra was of little use and seldom more than a 'confidence trick' as most leprosy cases healed on their own.²⁹⁴ The injections were also painful and often caused swelling, induration and abscesses in the patients. Plain Esters were then put on trial and found to be better than Alepol which for Ngomahuru was both expensive and insufficient. In some cases a mixture of both was even better. Later on Iodised Esters were introduced and they proved to be far much better because they were painless and free from after effects. They were also preferred by the patients themselves so that plans were put in place to manufacture them locally through the Government Chemist at Salisbury. All patients were examined four times a year with the microscope and were only discharged after showing continuously negative results for two years from smears taken from various parts of their bodies. European patients however, were attended to separately at a small central treatment station, fitted with a laboratory with the services of a qualified nurse and Dr. Moiser.²⁹⁵

²⁹³ S1173/247 R. Cochrane, Secretary, British Empire Leprosy Relief Association to Medical Director Salisbury, 1st October 1931.

²⁹⁴ S1173/249 B. Moiser, 'Conclusions after 4 years of Work' 22 March 1933. For this reluctant admission by BELRA see Watts, *Epidemics and History*, p.79.

²⁹⁵ B. Moiser, 'British Empire Leprosarium', p.304.

The discharge process itself was also mired in bureaucracy. The Medical Superintendent did not have the authority to discharge patients from the leper settlement on his own, such authority was obtainable only through the annual statutory board which met once in October. The practice generally was to discharge patients after so many months of freedom from bacilli. In 1930 however, some 50 patients considered fit for discharge could not do so until such a board met.²⁹⁶ This meant that there was often a troupe of ‘burnt out’ cases hanging around in the compound with little else to do than participate in the social life of the ‘Komboni’.

Moiser was beginning to realize the contradiction imminent in the combination of a British Empire rest place and an African leper colony. While this happened the two projects continued to grow side by side awkwardly enough to excite the interest of the Southern Rhodesian government which immediately ordered an inquest in 1945. It was struck by the ‘miserable’ condition of the African Lepers which stood in stark contrast to the elaborate and ‘luxurious’ lifestyles of both European Lepers and staff.²⁹⁷ Before we turn to this however, it is necessary to examine how the local people living around Ngomahuru perceived the Leper Settlement.

5.3.2 ‘Nyasha’: *The Meaning of Ngomahuru in Chishanga*

Nyasha is a Karanga word meaning ‘compassion’. Lepers were known in common Chishanga parlance as ‘vaNyasha’ and locals began referring to the new leper settlement at Ngomahuru as ‘Nyasha’.²⁹⁸ The disease itself is known as *maperembudzi* (literally hyenas and goats) which the Karanga anthropologist Hebert Aschwanden has suggested to be derived from the spots

²⁹⁶ S1173/245 Supt. Gomohuru Leper Settlement, Great Zimbabwe to Medical Director, Salisbury 21 July 1930.

²⁹⁷ S482/396/1939 *Report of the Ngomahuru Hospital Commission*

²⁹⁸ S1173/245 Moiser, Ngomahuru to The Medical Director, Salisbury, 6th October 1935.

associated with both animals (spots being an important symptom of leprosy).²⁹⁹ However this reference to 'Nyasha' was seen by colonial administrators as a pointer to the popularity that the asylum at Ngomahuru had acquired since its coming in 1926. In his annual report for 1931 the local NC put it;

The fact that it [the leper settlement] is usually referred to as 'Nyasha' i.e. 'kindness' [sic] speaks well for the methods employed by the Medical Superintendent. The larger proportion of patients are volunteers. Till very recently it was believed that leprosy was incurable. The results achieved have done much to alter this view and though lepers are still found living in their villages the fact that they have not presented themselves for treatment is due to laziness rather than disbelief in treatment.³⁰⁰

There were obvious differences between the 'Nyasha' of Ngomahuru and the 'Mudarada' of Chikarudzo fame. The association of the word 'nyasha' with leprosy however predates this. For instance the totemic oath or *mhinganidzo* of the traditional Mapanzure-Hera political rulers of this territory singled them out as 'vaNyasha' or people who tabooed handling shells of the snail or tortoise for fear of becoming lepers. It had more to do with local attitudes to the disease and its sufferers than anything else.

However, this should not gloss over the ambivalence of African societies in general in their attitudes towards lepers which ranged from this 'compassion' to sometimes treating a leper as an 'absentee', one whose fate was sealed once s/he contracted the disease. Frequently some leper patients would approach Moiser as did one group of men in 1932 with the news that their wives had been taken by other men and they stated that 'it was common belief amongst Africans that a leper may be considered as virtually dead and that his property may be freely purloined and that

²⁹⁹ Aschwanden, *Symbols of Death*, p. 79.

³⁰⁰ N9/1/32 NC Victoria to CNC Salisbury Annual Report for 1931.

it was not criminal to do so.’³⁰¹ It is however difficult to make generalizations on this statement since Moiser does not give the identity or origin of these men and Ngomahuru was always cosmopolitan with local and foreign African inmates.

Judging by the methods employed by Moiser to handle matters at Ngomahuru, it was not his work as suggested by the NC but society’s moral responsibility to show ‘compassion’ or ‘kindness’ to a leper in Karanga culture that was implied in the name ‘Nyasha’. It was also safeguarded by a network of myths that if such ‘nyasha’ was not proffered to a leper, one risked being a leper him/herself one day. European doctors and administrators so used to the ‘segregation’ therapy inherent in the ‘Indian Solution’ were very often appalled by the manner in which local people freely mixed with lepers without fearing infection. Megan Vaughan once again draws our attention to the contradiction in the attitudes of western medical personnel, particularly missionaries, to the stigma against leprosy in African communities. Where they encountered it, she argues, their role was to rescue the sufferers but in societies where leprosy was not stigmatized at all, they were horrified at the level of intermixture between the diseased and the non-diseased.³⁰²

Moiser himself was firmly opposed to this intermixture and personally felt that beer drinks were responsible for the spread of the disease. ‘Beer drinks are a national institution in the country...,’ he wrote, ‘...they occur frequently and lepers are invited and are treated in no way differently from other guests. I have come to the conclusion that these beer drinks are the main cause of the

³⁰¹ S1173/248 B.Moiser to Superintendent of Natives, Fort Victoria 1 March 1932.

³⁰² Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills*, p.80.

dissemination of the disease and have suggested that lepers should be rigidly excluded, and given their beer in other places by themselves'.³⁰³

The Southern Rhodesian government through the Leprosy Suppression Ordinance had thoroughly embraced the policy of segregating lepers by compulsion and a circular issued by the CNC in 1931 singled out Ngomahuru amongst all the leper institutions in the country as the place where all those lepers who were liable to desert should be sent.³⁰⁴ The apprehension towards 'native beer' in general and the vices of 'kraal life' in particular was abundant amongst Native Department officials who frequently saw beer and women as the principal reasons inducing African men to stay at home and not go out and seek work. In this Moiser found an ally in the local NC one A.P. Jackson who felt that brewing and or possession of beer by Africans threatened the growth of education through 'kraal schools'. The children attending these schools, he argued, could not be expected to benefit from the religious and moral education they got if they were obliged to return to the 'degenerate home life created by their drunken parents'.³⁰⁵

It is significant to note however that, though Ngomahuru was also considered by government as a place of 'voluntary segregation' Moiser could not count on such 'volunteers'. Instead he had to rely on surveys (read 'raids') in the neighbourhood and in districts within the Victoria province to identify cases that would be brought to Ngomahuru.³⁰⁶ On the ground this seemed to be driving more lepers into hiding and within Ngomahuru itself he had to contend with desertions. To contain these the Native Commissioners who themselves kept registers of diseases in their

³⁰³ B. Moiser, 'British Empire Leprosarium', p. 304.

³⁰⁴ S1173/247 CNC's Office, Circular no. 12 1931.

³⁰⁵ S325/515 NC Victoria, Annual Report for 1936.

³⁰⁶ S1173/249 B. Moiser, 'Conclusions after 4 Years of Work', 22 March 1933.

districts came in handy. They identified such deserters and any new cases and sent them back to Ngomahuru. In between these duties the NCs were relied upon to 'broadcast' the good public image of 'Nyasha'.³⁰⁷ Nothing could be more contradictory and it goes without saying that 'Nyasha' needed no such public relations exercise, it was gradually losing its meaning at Ngomahuru and grew to refer to the people deserving 'compassionate' treatment within the institution than to Ngomahuru Leper Settlement itself.

Indeed Moiser struggled to sustain the 'Nyasha' image at Ngomahuru and despite all the positive reports of progress he wrote, he began to acknowledge that in actual fact the hospital seemed to be acquiring a bad name.³⁰⁸ This was not helped by growing rumours that 'a prison exists' at Ngomahuru. These probably stemmed from the picture of the institution itself as some form of confinement but more likely from the fact that in 1931 a case presented itself when it became necessary to confine a leper patient who had been sentenced to one month's imprisonment for theft by the Victoria magistrate. There was no place to do so except a storeroom, and this was used for that particular purpose. Later on disciplinary concerns arose especially as there were a number of thefts and assaults by patients that indeed required disciplinary action yet there existed no means to carry out any sentence that might be passed.³⁰⁹

Moiser himself did administer some punishment to errant patients. In his absence however, this created problems since nobody else was able to do so yet the patients, noticing this, behaved themselves in a manner that required corrective action, without which the hospital deteriorated into chaos. Faced with this scenario in 1938, Mr. P.F. Pienaar, a European steward left in charge

³⁰⁷ S1173/245 Moiser to Medical Director, Salisbury, 6 October 1930.

³⁰⁸ S1173/247 B. Moiser, Ngomahuru to Medical Director, 30 November 1931.

³⁰⁹ S1173/245 B. Moiser to Magistrate, Fort Victoria, 13 October 1931.

of the hospital while Moiser was on leave had to call in the services of the Native Department so that the NC had to come in to try some of the cases. The Native Department objected to the idea that Moiser could continue trying cases at Ngomahuru as some kind of chief unto himself without reffering matters to the Victoria Magistrate.³¹⁰ Ultimately it was arranged that a magistrate visits Ngomahuru regularly and a police constable became permanently stationed there.³¹¹

Part of the responsibility for such an image lay with the position Moiser carved out for himself in pursuit of his grand ideas. He literally personified the institution and this legacy was difficult to erase even after his departure. Researching some forty years later the anthropologist Sr. Mary Aquina was able to see the extent to which the position of Medical Superintendent remained the most important office in the entire life of the Ngomahuru leprosy project. He was not merely concerned with the health of the patients and their social needs and problems, she says, but was their highest court of appeal in disputes between patients and staff and between the staff and the government. He was the patients' only link with the outside world.³¹² Moiser slowly became answerable to himself in a way that led to direct clashes with the people who traditionally controlled the area in which Ngomahuru Leper Settlement was located as well as other government officials.

The Mapanzure chiefs' aversion to 'these people with wounds' being settled in the midst of their country had much to do with the failure to consult them when the Leper Settlement was

³¹⁰ S1173/245 P.F. Pienaar, Steward Ngomahuru Leper Settlement to the Medical Director Salisbury, 14th June 1938.

³¹¹ Aquina, 'A Sociological Study of Ngomahuru', p.73.

³¹² Ibid. p.71.

established in the first instance.³¹³ They could at least have had a say on where it would be located. However, these 'ideal' environs of Ngomahuru in BELRA vocabulary also happened to lie right on the route followed by the 'Govogwe,' an important river draining the waters of the Hera *gadzingo* into the mighty Tugwi. Meanwhile, the Crown Land around the Leper Settlement had been earmarked for the establishment of African farm holdings in what became known as the Mshawasha Native Purchase Area. Most of the Mapanzure people had been cleared from the *gadzingo* watershed in order to stop them 'interfering' with the sources of water when the allocation of the farms commenced in 1936. Three years later there was a problem, the NC had to notify the Chief Native Commissioner that;

The provision of water here constitutes some difficulty as natives will not use water from the Tokwe downstream from the Ngomahuru Leper Settlement for fear of infection.³¹⁴

There was every reason for this. The African compound at the settlement had developed into a slum. A Commission that went to investigate the situation at Ngomahuru as late as 1945 observed that inmates of the compound still used the bush for the toilet. As a result, the large area of bush in the immediate vicinity of the African lepers' huts was 'heavily polluted excreta making it a health hazard and increasing the risk of infection of non-leper employees through faecal carriage of leprosy'.³¹⁵ In another case, the commission observed that bath water from the dwellings of lepers flowed freely around the compound with some of it running off into the river and some being used to irrigate vegetable gardens. In both instances the environment was conducive for the spread of leprosy bacilli such as for instance B. Lepra which could survive for

³¹³ Ibid. p.81. The Leper Settlement was established at Ngomahuru when Chimbuya was chief, he died in 1928 and his successor Magwirokona also died in November the following year. Shumbayaonda the successor is known to have consistently questioned this settler arrogance.

³¹⁴ S325/518 NC Victoria, Annual Report for 1939.

³¹⁵ S482/396/39 Report of The Ngomahuru Hospital Inquiry Commission, 1946, Salisbury, 20th May 1946.

a very long time outside the human body. Equally it could be transmissible through the consumption of some the vegetables such as lettuce or tomatoes that could be sometimes eaten raw.³¹⁶ In local eyes, the Leper Settlement ‘contaminated’ not only the sources of Chishanga waters but even their outlet.

In spatial terms the settlement was also imposed on Chishanga, Chief Mapanzure’s territory and within Mhizha religious sphere of influence in the pre-colonial district of Chikwerengwe. It took over land belonging to and displaced a Mhizha group of the Matewe house in the Gwangwadza region that also held custodianship of the Ngomahuru, an important mountain named after the Venda sacred drum ‘ngoma lungundu’ and its spiritual abode.³¹⁷ Behind the Ngomahuru mountain was a Hera group of the Jeka-Masase house that was forced to clear off and settle near the border with the traditional territory of Chief Charumbira. A fence was erected to separate the Leper Settlement from the surrounding Crown Land and emergent Purchase Area. It had three gates which were manned by gate-keepers to prevent patients from straying and to keep everybody else out. The people living around the settlement were turned into ‘squatters’ who could only continue staying there on permits that allowed them to pay rent to the government.³¹⁸

In effect however the fencing of the settlement closed the direct route of access to the arteries of communication as well as points of sale for peasant grain usually sited along the main ‘pioneer’ road which had been accessible only through the route where the Leper Settlement was now standing. This was true especially of Birney’s store at the Tokwe Grange Farm. Moiser took it

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Interview with Shadreck Matewe and Poterai Gon’ora.

³¹⁸ Some of the squatters however became employed by the Leper Settlement and used the moneys they earned to save for the initial deposits to purchase farms in the Mshawasha NPA .

upon himself to police the use of the road as he intended it to be ‘a private road for the hospital’ that would be closed to any other traffic.³¹⁹ His argument was that the medical department was the one paying for the repairs to the road engineer’s department. The road was also being used by the Inspector of Dip Tanks and Cattle, by the NC as well as by private cattle dealers.³²⁰ He was able to keep the road closed for most of the 1940s forcing Africans to transport their grain through the difficult route negotiating the gradients of the steep Marupe hill until 1944 when it was opened after the intervention of the Provincial Native Commissioner.

By this time however fatigue was slowly creeping in Moiser’s dream of a British Empire Leprosarium which he had begun to realize was not shared by anyone apart from himself and his colleagues at BELRA. It had only succeeded in projecting him as a chief of a miniature empire with all the disparities a Southern Rhodesia emerging from the World War II did not want i.e. administrative disorder and signs of medical incompetence. He became the victim of winds of change and was sacrificed on the imperial altar when an inquest was conducted into the state of affairs at Ngomahuru.

5.4 The Ngomahuru Hospital Inquiry Commission of 1945

In 1945, the Southern Rhodesian Government set up a commission to investigate the happenings at Ngomahuru because of the image it portrayed of the local management of such an important disease in British tropical Africa. The Commissioners were at once struck by the odd co-

³¹⁹ S1173/250 B. Moiser, Ngomahuru to Medical Director, Salisbury, 13 November 1934.

³²⁰ S1173/250 B. Moiser, Ngomahuru to Medical Director Salisbury, 18th March 1935.

existence of 'slum' and 'luxury' in an island closed to the world around it. It was for them an institution much more conducive for the spread of leprosy rather than its arrest. Its report was detailed and covered all issues relating to Ngomahuru and leprosy from the professional (i.e. medical), administrative to welfare matters. In all these it squarely blamed Moiser for virtually everything, and ultimately recommended that for the good of the institution and for the interest of leprosy management, it were best that he were relieved of his duties.

First it charged Moiser of propagating the false impression that Ngomahuru was climatically best suited to 'arrest' leprosy. This had neither been proven nor was it altogether possible but the Commission felt that it was 'propaganda' that was also responsible for 'spreading the false impression within the Victoria district of the complete safety of persons in contact with lepers which would result at some future date in cases of leprosy'.³²¹

Ngomahuru could not be a British Empire Leprosarium, the Commission maintained, because it lacked the resources and the infrastructure to run it. The obsession with this agenda on the part of Moiser was responsible for the confusion visible even in the layout of the whole institution. Everything was everywhere, instead of having administrative and hospital blocks at the centre of the institution this was not the case and as such it increased capital expenditure on sewerage, water supply roads and other services. As for the virtual absence of toilet facilities for African lepers at Ngomahuru, the commissioners thought it was due largely to Dr. Moiser's belief that 'such accommodation in the case of natives is unnecessary'.³²²

³²¹ S482/396/39 *Report of Ngomahuru Hospital Inquiry Commission 1946*, Salisbury, 20th May, 1946.

³²² Ibid.

The Commission was concerned with the laxity with regards to keeping lepers apart from non-leprous patients who came to Ngomahuru for treatment for other ailments. Commissioners on their visits to Ngomahuru observed such people ‘freely mixing’ with leper patients, and that they were treated and examined in the same premises as lepers. The routine treatment of the lepers itself proceeded under the most unhygienic conditions; a typical site of the procedure was related by the commission thus;

...the ulcers and other open wounds of the lepers which required dressings were attended to in an open shed the equipment of which consisted of a steel 40 gallon drum over a fireplace from which water is dipped into another drum to which permanganate of potassium was added. The commission found the absence of sufficient sterilizing equipment and the operational area to be surgically dirty. The whole procedure did not in the remotest degree, correspond with what could be considered as even reasonable adequate treatment, and could only result in aggravation of the condition from which the patient suffered. All this was done by a trained nursing sister under the supervision of Dr. Moiser. Dr. Moiser himself treated the European patients while the routine treatment of African lepers was done African orderlies.

Although very scathing to Moiser, the Commission made far reaching recommendations which completely changed the physical outlook of Ngomahuru in the long run. They were quickly implemented in the following decade but not however altogether to be enjoyed by the lepers they were meant for. In 1963 Ngomahuru ceased to be a leper institution and six years later it took in its first batch of Psychiatric patients from Ingutsheni Mental Hospital in Bulawayo.

Some of its allegations against Moiser were sometimes misplaced for instance, the Commission saw the failure of the dairy project started at the institution as a result of Moiser’s unwise management. This was however never intended as a ‘dairy’ when Moiser began it in 1929. After realizing that the lepers required an average of two beasts per week, he decided to keep some on the site for this purpose with the added advantage that when some of the cows amongst them calved, they provided a constant supply of milk for the lepers’ children at a crèche he had

established for them.³²³ This was an initiative he took because of the latitude the government had allowed him. The Commission however recommended that a proper dairy be 're-established' bringing in a herd of cows and the necessary dairy installations. In addition to this would be other farming activities under a manager given a 'free-hand' from bureaucratic control of the Health Ministry.

In view of the proximity of lepers and non leper patients visiting Ngomahuru, the Commission recommended that an Out-Patients Department be established within the institution but far away from the dwellings of the lepers. However, for the lepers, the commission submitted that 'there should be provision for the use of both European and non-European patients such amenities as these patients might be induced to make use of.' This meant a 'central hall', 'rooms in which schools might be conducted, and which should house a library and perhaps a canteen.' Provision was also made for 'playing fields'.³²⁴

The Commission also understood that Ngomahuru was an institution whose staff ought to be encouraged to research on Leprosy as a disease. It was aware that the Beit Trustees had made an offer to provide the capital costs of equipping a laboratory for research in Leprosy. However it recommended against the acceptance of this offer for the following reason;

the difficulties connected with research are so great, that the capital expenditure on a laboratory would only be justified if specially trained staff could be employed on this work. The cost of such staff, and the prospect of success, militate, in the opinion of the commission, against the acceptance of the offer.³²⁵

³²³ S1173/245 Dr. B. Moiser, Medical Superintendent Gomohuru Leper Settlement to Medical Director, 27th November 1929.

³²⁴ S482/396/39 *Report of the Ngomahuru Hospital Inquiry Commission*

³²⁵ Ibid.

Beit Trustees money could only be used for other 'facilities' that staff at Ngomahuru could be inclined to use in the course of their work such as 'laboratory equipment, apparatus, books, contemporary literature, etc.' or 'contribute towards this work by way of cost of the special equipment, and perhaps by an annual grant towards recurrent expenditure for literature apparatus etc.'. This was a subtle attack on another of the premise on which BELRA and Moiser's idea of the British Empire Leprosarium rested, research. Research could only be pursued in the metropolitan medical institutions in Britain and disseminated to those medical officers working in the 'field' to experiment in the colonies and not vice-versa.

The Southern Rhodesian government took the Commission's recommendations seriously and immediately sought to put in place the necessary changes. Water supply to the settlement topped the list and two pumps were quickly installed at the Tugwi river drawing water from the Manyare Dam. The money promised by the Beit Trustees did come but instead of building a better laboratory it was converted to the building of a hall which served both as a recreational facility and a school. Sports fields were erected, and a football club formed together with other voluntary associations such as the Girl Guide and Boys Scouts movement. Christmas and other feasts at Ngomahuru became associated with athletic contests, concerts and public celebrations which gave rise to the annual Open Day which runs to this day. These recreational activities also began to involve other members of neighbouring communities.³²⁶

³²⁶ Ibid., p.79.

5.5 Conclusion

The pursuit of medicine in British colonial Africa was at best an imperial project. It was part of the ‘civilizing mission’ through the triumph of western medicine by all means necessary. While in the early stages of the colonial enterprise it was necessary to run colonies ‘on the cheap’ by relying on philanthropic and religious missions to take responsibility over African welfare issues, it was also imperative that such movements continue projecting the ‘imperial’ ideal and the benevolent nature of British colonialism. Frequently the administrative machinery was deployed to keep this in check and maintain conformity and brook no criticism to Imperial shortcomings. In Southern Rhodesia this was a strategy used against Missionary societies and government medical officers who were often disillusioned and confused at the end. The Dutch Reformed Church and Dr. Bernard Moiser are typical examples of this process with regards to the management of leprosy in the Victoria district. This was responsible for both the decision to bring a leprosarium to Chishanga and to the structure and lay out of Ngomahuru as it is known-and joked about-today. Surprisingly Moiser was no stranger to this treatment, while in Nigeria he conducted a private study on sleeping sickness causing Tsetse Fly which he published back in Britain in 1913.³²⁷ Similarly after being ‘fired’ from Ngomahuru, he not only challenged the Commission’s findings in a newspaper article but went on to write his own manuscript ‘Investigation into Leprosy’ which is today stored in the Wellcome Library in London.³²⁸

³²⁷ This is a very important suggestion by Ochunu, ‘Native Habits Are Difficult to Change’ footnote 69, the actual findings were published as B. Moiser, ‘Notes on a Few Photographs Illustrating the Haunts and Habits of *Glossina tachinoides* in Borno, Northern Nigeria’, *Bulletin of Entomological Research* 4, September 1913.

³²⁸ Manuscript MS3591 Bernard Moiser (1879-1965) ‘Investigation into Leprosy 1946-8’, The Wellcome Library, London.

Despite this contradictory legacy and the departure of Moiser, Ngomahuru had an afterlife, mostly shaped by the recommendations of the commission which were sadly not enjoyed by the lepers it were meant for, at least not for long enough. In the 1950s, the government took over the earlier mentioned leper settlements in Mt. Selinda and Belingwe and in 1962 all the lepers at Mtemwa were brought to Ngomahuru bringing the total number to close to 500 patients. Mtemwa became a rehabilitation center for crippled ex-lepers. Thereafter, a number of lepers were returned to their home territories after the break up of the Central African Federation in 1963.³²⁹

Attempts to establish a T.B. hospital between 1963 and 1969 so far have gone unrecorded although what remains are untapped reminiscences of former workers and patients.³³⁰ In 1969 the remaining few leper patients were sent to Biriwiri hospital in Chipinge and that same year the premises were converted to accommodate the outflow of psychiatric patients from Ingutsheni Hospital. The first 27 patients arrived with one male nurse and three orderlies. A stream of 'long stay' patients continued and there was a slow but steady increase which had reached 247 patients and a total of 120 staff of all categories.³³¹ The coming of the psychiatric patients changed little of the order and function of the system already in place during the leprosy days. Apart from loosening the tight control and quarantine measures in place, local people could now access the hospital easily and roads and facilities became available to public use. Yet patients still lived in the enclosed villages, now reduced to three. Patients who are well on their way to recovery and may soon be discharged, occupied single rooms in two room blocks. There was a communal dining room and provisions were also made for such patients for instance in Villa 1, to cook for

³²⁹ Aquina, 'A Sociological Analysis of Ngomahuru', p.70.

³³⁰ Ibid., p.70.

³³¹ 'Ngomahuru Open Day was an Eye-Opener' *Fort Victoria Advertiser* Friday, May 21 1982.

themselves and feed in small dining rooms of about six people. The other two villages were run on similar lines. Each villa was cared for by the patients, assisted by the staff, tending the rockeries and flower gardens and keeping their own vegetable plots in typical Moiser tradition. Later on some ex-patients with no homes to return to were resettled nearby within the fence of the settlement.

After Independence Dr. Naomi Kazmy, the provincial psychiatrist, came to Ngomahuru in 1983 and saw Ngomahuru transform into a full psychiatric hospital that same year. She was captivated by the location of Ngomahuru in its wooded and mountainous environment and struck by its history. In a speech on Open day in 1983 she referred to the name of the Hospital 'Ngomahuru' which meant 'Big Drum' and remarked 'the Drums always beat for this hospital, the big drum will never stop, its beats in praise of the dedicated staff'.³³² Maybe someone had at last seen the ancestral connection.

³³² 'Dedicated Attention for Psychiatric Patients', *Masvingo Advertiser*, Friday January 13, 1984.

Chapter 6

‘At Home’ in Mshawasha [West] Native Purchase Area and the Moulding of A ‘Chishanga Consciousness’ Among Farmowners 1931-1945

6.1 Introduction

The Ngomahuru Leper Settlement was imposed on Chishanga during a period of economic hardship set in motion by the Great Depression of 1929-30. The state had responded to this with legislation that would foreclose competition with, and offload the economic burden on Africans, first, with the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and then the Maize Control Act the following year. One of the major provisions of the former was setting aside land available for purchase by Africans as part of the principle that land should be accessible to all races in the colony. The Native Purchase Areas (NPAs) as this land came to be known, were designed to do just that. In Chishanga, the Crown Land south of the *gadzingo* and outside the Ngomahuru Leper Settlement became incorporated into such a scheme of farmholdings beginning in Mandere within Chief Shumba-Chekai's territory. This is the reason why it was named Mshawasha Native Purchase Area after the traditional Shawasha territory taken over by Shumba-Chekai's Duma as discussed in Chapter 3.

The whole scheme of farms however, stretched into areas traditionally belonging to Nyajena and some parts of Charumbira. The Chishanga and Charumbira sections were renamed collectively as ‘Mshawasha West’, those in Nyajena as ‘Mshawasha Central and those within Shumba-

Chekai as 'Mshawasha East-End'. From the beginning there was always a struggle by the farmers in this 'Western' section to shrug off the associations with 'Mshawasha' and to project a distinct 'Chishanga' identity because administrative developments within the Native Land Board, a body appointed by government to process applications and allocations of purchase lands, allowed, by some measure of coincidence, enough latitude for local Hera and Mhizha families already residing in Chishanga to purchase their ancestral lands. This way, a strong degree of continuity with the traditional past was maintained in a remarkable way that managed to sustain the image, however nostalgic, of old Chishanga.

6.2 The Place of Native Purchase Areas in Zimbabwean Historiography

Native Purchase Areas have attracted the interest of scholars across disciplines in the last thirty or so years. In 1975, two important works appeared specifically on this subject. The first, a book by A.K.H. Weinrich, saw Purchase Areas as constituting a radical break in the connection between rural peasants in Rhodesia. She projected the interests of 'reserve' and 'purchase area' farmers as almost always potentially antagonistic, riddled with competition and jealousies based on access to land. Reserve farmers who may have owned the land now under purchase area were seen as harbouring negative sentiments against the new farm owners of the Purchase Areas and on their part, the former were seen as resenting tribal control and identifying themselves with European farmers. In short, they perceived themselves as an emergent rural petit-bourgeois class.

To this end, they excluded reserve farmers from their unions and there was no ‘mobility’ between reserves and native purchase areas because of this social differentiation.³³³

The second study by Oliver Pollack tries to identify the nature of people who settled in the Purchase Areas and comes up with a list of categories among whom is a group of Africans who invariably, ‘found that their ancestral lands had become white land’. The Purchase Areas, he argued, offered attractions to those who could afford to turn down government relocation.³³⁴ Through extensive use of oral interviews with some of the pioneer farm owners in Marirangwe Purchase Area, Pollack is able to locate not only the elitism of this class of farmers expressed through the African Farmers Union, but the extent of government indifference to them.

Weinrich’s ideas found a following many years later in the work of Norma Kriger who, in her study of Mutoko, finds institutional and other differences between Budya Purchase Area farmers and those residing in nearby reserves as responsible for the use of the war by these peasants to square up against each other and settle, as it were, class scores.³³⁵ Kriger dwells on the resentment of African peasants residing in Chimoyo chiefdom in Mtoko district to their counterparts in the nearby Budya Native Purchase Area. They had been evicted to give way to the former, ‘only to observe [their land] unoccupied and unsurveyed’. Likewise, she adds, the Purchase Area farmers ‘reciprocated’ the negative sentiments of the Chimoyo peasants.³³⁶

³³³ Weinrich, *African Farmers in Rhodesia* pp. 168, 60-63, 164-170.

³³⁴ Oliver Pollack, ‘Black Farmers and White Politics in Rhodesia’ *African Affairs*, vol.74 no. 296 (1975) p. 265.

³³⁵ Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe’s Guerilla War: Peasant Voices* (CUP, Cambridge 1992) p.70.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

Terence Ranger who had expressed interest in the subject in the early 1970s when he wrote *The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia*, returned a decade later to suggest that Native Purchase Areas were formed in response to the growing class of 'reserve entrepreneurs'. These were mostly men who mechanised their agriculture by adopting the plough and used this to cultivate more land than others. They raised fears within the Native Department authorities that they would 'finish up' land for other less enterprising Africans and ultimately opened up the whole discourse on conservation that found expression in the 'centralisation' exercise of the late 1930s and early 1940s discussed in detail in the following chapter. In Ranger's words, 'these heroes of progress, earlier converts to the gospel of the plough now figured as destroyers of the environment.'³³⁷ As Allison Shutt reminds us, apart from fulfilling its obligation to avail land for purchase by Africans, the Southern Rhodesian government, through the Land Apportionment Act considered Purchase Areas a *quid pro quo* to those Africans desiring more land and had the resources to purchase it.³³⁸ Centralisation aimed at equitable distribution of arable and grazing land to reserve farmers and as result of it, many of these 'reserve entrepreneurs' lost land and were forced into the Purchase Areas if they were to thrive.³³⁹ Both Ranger and Shutt are able to demonstrate, in considerable detail, the resistance by reserve peasants to the establishment of Purchase Areas in their midst in Tanda and Marirangwe Purchase Areas respectively.³⁴⁰ Shutt quotes incidents directly emanating from Mandini in Mshawasha and singles out the 'overcrowded Victoria reserve' as having a greater occurrence of such cases.³⁴¹

³³⁷ Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe* (James Currey, London, 1985), p.69.

³³⁸ Allison Shutt, 'We Are the Best Poor Farmers', Chapter

³³⁹ Allison Shutt, 'Purchase Area Farmers and the Middle Class of Southern Rhodesia c.1931-1952' *International Journal of African Historical Studies* vol. 30 no. 3 (1997) p. 570.

³⁴⁰ Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, pp.87-88 cites a classic case involving headman Mparura's people who assaulted a would be Purchase Farmer in Makoni. Headman Mparura was summoned by the NC and warned, Shutt, 'Purchase Area Farmers' p. 569.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.* pp. 569, 573.

In her oft-quoted work, Angela Cheater saw Msengezi Purchase Area being transformed into a 'polyethnic new society' in which traditional or customary expectations played a little part in the new relations of production or local government.³⁴² This was possible, as she rightly observed, because the original settlers of the Msengezi farms came from all over the country. Her study, however, locates custom and tradition playing an important role amongst the farming families themselves in the inheritance of the farms by new generations of the farmers' children after the death of the original owners. Inheritors often tended to keep the extended family on the farm against the prevailing laws governing purchase areas, because of moral obligations and specifically what Cheater calls the fear of provoking 'ancestral anger', that is, offending the dead owner of the farm by evicting his other children. Cheater's study also thoughtfully provoked, instead, the whole debate on generational issues in purchase lands which motivates this study.

A common thread that runs through most of this work on Purchase Areas is that, as shown by the examples of conflicts amongst peasants cited above, the purchase area scheme symbolised an important discontinuity with tradition. It fostered, by resettling a specific class of Africans, a new culture of yeomanry, devoid of tribal control and wholly focused on production and the pursuance of these ideals as a class. A purchase area could no longer be a chiefdom nor could any of its farmers make a connection between their land and its ancestral occupiers. Yet it is accepted, as Pollack and Shutt demonstrate, that the government eventually felt threatened by the purchase area farmers, some of whom harboured nationalist aspirations, and it ultimately worked to thwart them. This in turn accounted for the deterioration of the NPAs and their reversion to tribal tenure and tendencies for such schemes as 'Mshawasha West' to maintain the

³⁴² Angela Cheater, 'Formal and Informal Rights to Land in Zimbabwe's Black Freehold Areas', *Africa* 52 no. 3 (1982), p. 81.

continuity of the identity of traditional Chishanga. In this chapter, it will be shown that a combination of the 'timing' of settlement of the 'western' or Chishanga section of the Mshawasha Native Purchase Area and the subsequent neglect of all purchase areas in general, allowed overwhelming settlement by local people. Secondly, it was the subsequent hostility to, and neglect of the Purchase Areas in general which permitted the 'new' old Chishanga purchase area farmers to continue with more or less the same 'tribal tenure' that their ancestors had practiced. Although they were not immune to the class aspirations engendered by the new freehold tenure commonplace in other purchase areas, in their gatherings and engagement with the government, they always championed a 'Chishanga' case.

6.3 'Self-Peasantisation' and The 'Men of Cattle' in Chishanga

Ranger has persuasively argued that after the brutal repression of African resistance in the 1896/7 risings, local Africans decided to adapt to, rather than resist, the introduction of the formal colonial economy. They were able to achieve this through what he terms 'self-peasantisation', a process involving 'deliberate and painful' adoption of a wide array of strategies designed to maximise the profits of peasant production.³⁴³ This could be through various innovations in the areas of labour division, agricultural mechanisation, strategic relocation of residence and perhaps, where possible, as in the case of the 'reserve entrepreneurs', extension of cultivable lands. The realisation of this need to adapt lies at the core of Ranger's widely debated concept of 'peasant consciousness'.

³⁴³ Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, p. 31.

Let us explore the implications of this for the Africans in the former Chishanga on the eve of colonial pacification and the introduction of the colonial economy. We have already suggested in the conclusion to Chapter 4 the interest that the local people displayed in trading with transport riders and traders taking advantage of their proximity to the Pioneer Road which had become their 'locus of opportunity'. It is possible to draw a few points from Ian Phimister's pioneering interest in peasant production in Victoria district as a whole. He argues that from 1898 Africans from this district had been able to service the newly opened Selukwe mines both as labourers and especially as peasant producers. This developed into brisk business that ultimately led to their 'prosperity', a subject that generated a lot of correspondence in the Victoria Native Commissioner's office. This 'prosperity', successive Native Commissioners always argued, was another reason why the African men of Victoria district did not go out to seek work. Phimister believes that the opening of the Gwelo-Salisbury railway line in 1902 and the Gwelo-Selukwe line in 1903 ended this Victoria peasant prosperity because it enabled the supply of cheaper produce from other areas passed by these lines other than Victoria, which was not even linked to a railway head.³⁴⁴ Local Africans were thus left with only two options; to go into migrant wage labour or to sell their stock.

Phimister further argues that even the extension of the railway to Fort Victoria between 1911-14 failed to resuscitate the peasant trade of the Selukwe days not least because, at that time, most of the land within a small radius of the Fort Victoria town had been alienated as white farms but that it was no longer easily accessible except to those Africans living on the farms on rent agreements. This way, the 'effort price' of peasant participation in production had been raised to

³⁴⁴ Ian Phimister, 'Peasant Production and Underdevelopment in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1914, with Particular Reference to the Victoria District', in R. Palmer and N. Parsons (eds.) *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1977), pp. 262-263.

an ‘irreversible’ stage which could not restore the previous position of Victoria peasants in the pre-1902 period.³⁴⁵

Phimister’s study is important to us in the sense that it is able to account for trends within Victoria district relative to the economies of scale at play. It is able to show the varieties of options available to the Victoria peasants and their adaptation whenever their livelihood came under threat. It is also important to note that Africans did not abandon the grain trade altogether but saw livestock sales as offering them better opportunities. There is a lot of evidence within the district indicating increases in the number of stock and their value on the market in this period.³⁴⁶ Chishanga farmers appeared to have been swimming with this tide but also weighed their options and chose to invest in stock. Apparently, many of them had begun to use the profits of the prosperity period to buy stock and establish *miraga* or cattle colonies herded to other people on a usufructural basis. It was these emergent ‘men of cattle’ in the interwar years who had the wherewithal to purchase the new farms by converting their stock into cash for the initial deposits. Mbonga Musiiwa recalls that her father, Chikozho, and his cousins Njeru and Madhumbu, had accumulated a lot of cattle which they placed in *miraga* in neighbouring Chivi but sold them to each raise deposits for their farms in the late 1930s.³⁴⁷

There was a much more compelling reason for the Chishanga peasants, especially those settled south of the former *gadzingo*, to turn to cattle after failing to resuscitate the once prosperous grain trade. It was shown in the previous chapter that from 1929 Dr. Bernard Moiser not only

³⁴⁵ Ibid. p.264.

³⁴⁶ See for instance LO4/1/20 Report of the Civil Commissioner Victoria for the Year Ending March 1905 and N9/1/11 NC Victoria to CNC Salisbury, Annual Report for the Year Ending 1908.

³⁴⁷ Interview with Mbonga Musiiwa.

fenced off Ngomahuru Leper Settlement and closed all means of access to the Pioneer Road, but intended, even the one main road to the Tokwe Grange and Birney's stores on this 'Pioneer Road', to be a 'private road'. Between then and the end of the Second World War this was a contentious issue that necessitated a number of meetings between the Chishanga peasants and various government departments. Not only were the peasants forced to use the steep road avoiding the Leper Settlement behind the Marupe hill, but lorries of the Railway Motor Services refused to go beyond the Marupe for the same reason.³⁴⁸ With the Maize Control Act, Chishanga peasants were forced to place their grain in a local pool which was sold collectively at below market prices. In the end they opted to sell to each other or barter for stock at prices they would regulate or alternatively, sell to the Dutch Missionaries at Morgenster Mission for slightly less.³⁴⁹

The Native Purchase Area scheme was introduced to Chishanga under these economic conditions when local farmers had experimented with all options available to them and those that were enterprising enough had begun to see some future in cattle. The 1929-1930 Depression dealt the initial blow to the opportunities of the emergent cattle barons of Chishanga by dropping the prices of their stock further, but the post-Depression era brought with it the administrative disdain of the 'reserve entrepreneur' mentioned earlier and the 'cattle barons' were added to the list. It also brought with it the discourse of conservation inherent in the policy of 'Centralisation' which championed, above all else, destocking. If Native Purchase Areas were the dragnet of those 'reserve entrepreneurs' wishing to cultivate more land, it also became one for those 'men

³⁴⁸ S1044/11 J.W. Mossop, Land Development Officer, Mashonaland South to PNC Victoria, n.d. Moiser was only compelled to re-open the road by the provisions of the Road Traffic Act 257 which the PNC Victoria reminded him in an order in March 1944. see S1044/11 PNC Victoria to Medical Superintendent Ngomahura Leper Settlement 8 March 1944.

³⁴⁹ S1044/11 Resume of Meeting Held with Mshawasha Landholders by the Native Land Board on Thursday October 9th 1941.

of cattle' who still wanted to keep their cattle. Ranger has persistently argued that it is only after failing to exercise the various options available for the pursuance of their prosperity that peasants become 'conscious' of themselves as a class and this way, they came up with strategies to extricate themselves from bondage. For him, it was such consciousness that drove the peasants of Zimbabwe to support liberation fighters of the 1970s war of Independence. This partly finds application in Chishanga as early as the introduction of the Mshawasha Purchase Area though it is difficult to apply it with any measure of certainty during the guerrilla war. Instead of a plain and simple 'peasant consciousness', I argue that it were the same factors that brought about a 'consciousness' among the farmers of the former Chishanga who saw their new farms first and foremost as 'home' before they could be part of a Mshawasha 'yeomansland'. It was born out of the commonality and continuity of economic and ethnic identities of the farmers in the reserve and the new purchase area as well as the lack of confidence in government's commitment to the whole Native Purchase Area project. All this was made possible by the coincidence of the time that the NPA scheme was introduced to Chishanga.

6.4 'Pointing Homes' in Mshawasha West Native Purchase Area

Allison Shutt articulately relates the turning points in government policy towards Native Purchase Areas. More importantly to this study, she is able to show that in contrast to the original conception of the NPA scheme as meant for 'progressive' African farmers, there was a growing administrative dislike of 'urban' applicants who had been more well disposed to purchase farms than the rural farmers. It was this group of 'urban' applicants who had populated the first few Purchase Areas as Marirangwe and Msengezi and made them, to borrow Angela

Cheater's term, 'polyethnic'. It was also these urban African farm owners, such as Aaron Jacha and the Samkange brothers, who were beginning to engage the government with nationalist grievances. As a result the government deliberately decided to reserve Purchase Areas for rural Africans.³⁵⁰ Shutt argues that from 1937 onwards the Native Land Board introduced a number of changes designed to curb the number of urban applicants such as mandatory 'personal occupation' of the farm to reduce absentee landholders. At the same time it introduced 'leasehold tenure' in a move designed to entice those already occupying land designated as purchase areas 'communally' to buy farms.³⁵¹ In addition to all this, it also reduced the sizes of the farmholdings from the 300-350 acres of Msengezi and Marirangwe to between 200 and 250 acres.

Although the Native Land Board received applications and granted land in Purchase Areas in the Victoria district-including Mshawasha 'East-end'-as early as 1932, no land was actually occupied in Mshawasha 'West' before 1937. This was partly due to the shortage of staff, particularly land surveyors, and the fact that in the Victoria district, the few officials that were available began working in Mshagashe and Dewure Native Purchase Areas. Mshawasha 'West' only recorded progress of actual settlement after 1940 with the appointment of J.W. Mossop as the resident Land Development Officer (LDO). It is therefore important to note that this was after the NLB's policy shift in favour of local settlement, something that was implemented in earnest in the former Chishanga.

Indeed, the NLB had begun surveying landholdings in Chishanga and receiving applications from prospective buyers as early as 1932. A Land Commission visited Chishanga at the end of

³⁵⁰ Shutt, 'Purchase Area Farmers and the Middle Class' p.576.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

1931 and heard complaints surrounding the problem of movements caused by the Leper Settlement. In 1932 Mr. Craig, the Government Surveyor erected his camp near the Musogwezi river to start pegging farms and hold meetings with locals to encourage applications for land. One such meeting was held with Chishanga farmers on the 29th of September 1932 where Craig instructed that all those desiring land should apply to him through the necessary application forms.³⁵² This was the period when the average size of a holding was around 120 Morgen or approximately 300 acres and one could secure a holding by a first payment of £6-8 and subsequent instalments of £4 per annum over a number of years up to 15.³⁵³ At this meeting, which also served as a public relations exercise for the scheme, it was announced that the first 26 plots had been surveyed and were ready for occupation and present at the meeting were some 16 approved applicants and 3 new ones.

It should be appreciated that at this stage in the development of government policy on NPAs, it was intended that the project fosters a class of yeoman farmers rather than create retirement 'homes' for those Africans with money, neither should it recreate ethnic or tribal clusters. From the beginning such tendencies were watched closely and in the Victoria district, they were beginning to manifest themselves in the pioneering Mshagashe Purchase Area in Zimuto. In 1935 an alert Lands official, J.L. Reid, reported 'a number of families or clans resident on the ground...' who had '...already apportioned land among themselves'.³⁵⁴ Such 'syndicate purchases' were severely checked allowing a cosmopolitan settlement by the 'urban' class of

³⁵² S138/81 Superintendent of Native Fort Victoria to CNC Salisbury, 10th October 1932

³⁵³ S1044/9 W.N Stead, Superintendent of Natives Fort Victoria to F.A. Readman, Esq. Arkesdeen, Fort Victoria, 8 June 1934.

³⁵⁴ S924/G10/4 J.L. Reid to Assistant Director of Native Lands, 24 October 1935.

Africans in Mshagashe. This was possible because Mshagashe was almost fully settled before the policy change of 1937.

There were, however, some inconsistencies in the policy against 'syndicate purchases'. At the same meeting with Chishanga farmers in 1932, Craig advised 'all the Basutho' to go to Dewure Native Purchase Area in Gutu which had been specifically reserved for them. A recent study by Joseph Mujere offers refreshing insights on the motivations behind secluding such 'advanced natives', as the Basotho or Fingo were often considered by the government. It shows how they were initially projected as models of progress just as it is able to trace the corresponding dislike for them in later years in the same manner that 'urban' Africans were treated.³⁵⁵ More interesting, however, was the NLB's depiction of Mshawasha (and Mshagashe) as peaceful zones which should be kept away from unruly elements as was shown in the way the board treated an application for land by Albert Lobengula, the son of the vanished Ndebele King Lobengula.

The Rhodesian government had been keen to see Albert and his brothers leave Rhodesia at all costs to divert the attention of the Ndebele from resuscitating the monarchy. Towards the end of 1933, Albert had been in a number of problems including joblessness, bankruptcy and a conviction for stocktheft which saw him spending some two months in prison. The government bargained with him to give up his rights at the Queens Kraal or 'Queen Native Location' in Bulawayo in exchange for a farm in the Fort Victoria area.³⁵⁶ This did not go down well with the authorities there who felt that not only would the presence of Albert disturb the peace of the

³⁵⁵ See J. Mujere, 'Vhunjere via Bheterere', MA Dissertation, Department of History, University of Zimbabwe 2006

³⁵⁶ R.S. Roberts, 'The End of the Ndebele Royal Family', Unpublished Seminar Paper, Department of History, University of Zimbabwe, April 1988, p.5.

Mshawasha or Mshagashe areas but that it would bring with it ‘foreigners’. The Superintendent for Natives for Fort Victoria wrote:

I think it a great mistake to allow a mob of Matabele with their anti-European ideas to be allowed to settle amongst a respectable law-abiding people in the Mshawasha area. Surely it is unwise to allow natives of this class to reside in a place where their influence may have far reaching effects in the future. Their farm may well become a centre for disaffection and a shelter for the ill-disposed, and surely the feelings of the local natives should be considered.³⁵⁷

It is not clear whether these sentiments were expressed out of paternalist sympathy for the ‘people of Mshawasha’ or this was part of the general laager mentality fearing a possible rising instigated by the Ndebele people. For Mshawasha, it was argued that due consideration should be given to the financial position of prospective local buyers, most of whom were struggling to make the initial deposits. They required approximately 10,000 acres of land for their farms which was considered inadequate and some 50 or so people had made the part payments which were kept by the SON in his Temporary Deposits. Albert could only go to Dewure where he would be amongst ‘people who speak his language’ (the Basuto) or to Jenya Prurchase area in Chibi which was considered dry and remote from modes of communication such as the railway line and where only two people had taken up farms.³⁵⁸ Eventually, Albert changed his mind and did not opt for a farm after all.³⁵⁹

Thereafter, applications trickled in and approvals did take place and at the end of 1933 the first farms of the Mshawasha Purchase Area were occupied near Mandere in the territory formerly under Chief Shumba-Chekai. It was here that the most spectacular clashes between peasants

³⁵⁷ S1044/9 Superintendent of Natives, Fort Victoria to CNC, Salisbury 18th June 1934

³⁵⁸ S1044/9 SON Victoria to CNC Salisbury, 18th June 1934, see also NC Fort Victoria to CNC Salisbury 26th July 1934.

³⁵⁹ Roberts, ‘The End of the Ndebele Royal Family’, p.5.

being pushed off the land and the new purchase area farmers were witnessed. In one case in 1934, a group of young women were caught in the act poisoning a water source in a newly pegged farm. Despite this they responded with threats to the new farmer.³⁶⁰ The first approved applicants from Chishanga or 'Mshawasha West' appeared in 1936 as shown in the comprehensive list for the whole Mshawasha NPA compiled by the Assistant Director of Native Lands as reproduced below.

As mentioned earlier, none of these approved applicants occupied any farm in Chishanga before 1940. Part of the problem lay with the Mapanzure chiefs who had been moved two miles away from the Zhou in the relocations of 1901.³⁶¹ In 1928 Chimbuya (Mapanzure III) died and was succeeded by Magwirokona (Mapanzure IV) who died the following year.³⁶² They were both buried with the other chiefs in the *gadzingo* and ceremonies had just been held a year or two before Craig and the survey team arrived.³⁶³ The new chief, Shumbayaonda (Mapanzure V), was appointed amidst this apparent crisis of death amongst the Mapanzure chiefs. There were growing fears that the *gadzingo* would be violated by the new farms and certainly there was some consternation to the prospect of Mapanzure people buying their own sacred land.

³⁶⁰ See S1044/9 Statement by Nkondo to Cpl. Smith attached to C&L to ANC Fort Victoria, 5 October 1934.

³⁶¹ See 'Concluding Remarks' to Chapter 5.

³⁶² S235/508-9 NC Fort Victoria to CNC Salisbury Annual Reports for 1928 and 1929.

³⁶³ Interview with Chief Vhuramayi Vushangwe Mutukwa (Mapanzure IX)

Table 1: *Names of Applicants for Land in the Mshawasha Division [Adapted From S1044/10 Asst. Director of Native Lands to Govt. Land Surveyor 18th April 1936.]*

Name RC no. and Address	Amt. Paid	Date of Application
Chikozho X9793 Mazarire	10 pounds	24/2/36
Chipeta, X7713 (cant trace) Mtilikwe Reserve	5 pounds	22/7/36
Chirashanye X604 C/o J. D. Moller, DR Church Murawi School, Fort Victoria (ok)	6 pounds	12/10/32
Ephraim, 4297 Nuanetsi C/o A.C. Jackson, D.R. Mission Makamure's Kraal School (ok)	10 pounds	20/5/33
John Tinago X1255 Victoria Morgenster Mission	10 pounds	30/8/34
Joseph, X1223 Victoria Victoria Reserve (ok)	6 pounds	19/6/31
Joseph Mloyi, 2622 Bulawayo BSA Police, Fort Victoria (ok)	3 pounds	27/9/35
Joshua X2950 Victoria Morgenster Mission (ok)	6 pounds	28/1/35
Mahonye @Forage @Willie 59, Melsetter Morgenster Mission (ok)	6 pounds	25/10/34
Majinyore Tasarirawona X4744 Victoria (ok) Tasarirawona's Kraal	14 pounds	31/8/33
Manema, X810 Victoria Morgenster	10 pounds (wants east side not now being done)	27/3/31
Mapawureni @ Apren, X2473 Makoni Chidoku's kraal, Makoni District	10 pounds (not seen)	5/9/35
Mapupu X2634 Victoria (ok) Morgenster Mission	15 pounds	19/6/31
Mike Benjamin, 18482 Chibi (ok) Morgenster Mission	5 pounds	22/7/31
Mukonza X9645 Victoria (ok) Victoria Reserve	20 pounds	22/7/31
Muneri X4289 (ok) Nyajena Reserve	7 pounds (east of division not being done)	22/7/31
Munhundiani @ Joseph 9175 Bikita (ok) Bikita Reserve C/o Morgenster Mission	6 pounds	19/1/35
Pedzesayi 18389 Victoria (ok) Leper Settlement	6 pounds	19/10/35
Rangazukai B1057 Chibi (ok) Mandiba's Kraal Chibi	5 pounds	1/7/33
Tafireyi @Eliazere X1047 (ok)	6 pounds	11/4/35
Tawuya X7122 Victoria (ok) Mshawasha Division	5.10.0	29/6/31
Tinago, X1211 Victoria (ok) Morgenster Mission	3 pounds	30/8/34
Ziyamurgwi, 2858 Melsetter (ok) C/o J.H. Speis P O Box 35, Fort Victoria	10 pounds	23/8/34

Craig was forced to hold another meeting specifically with Shumbayaonda and his people on the 1st of November 1932 to clear the air. Some 80 people attended and Shumbayaonda was the first to argue that ‘the land was his so why should he purchase it further?’³⁶⁴ After some deliberation it was agreed that the *gadzingo* will not be surveyed, after all it had been excluded in the survey plan because it was not only hilly and unsuitable for cultivation but it was the watershed of the rivers that serviced the farmholdings. Craig however informed the gathering that those who were desirous to purchase farms should simply ‘point’ to him the areas they wanted.³⁶⁵ This became a *modus operandi* and today a common cliché in the memory of the instance of the coming of the NPAs.

Craig only went to peg farms in Chishanga, or ‘west of the Musogwezi’ (as it was described in official correspondence) in April 1936 based on the above list of approved buyers.³⁶⁶ He toyed with the idea of establishing an irrigation scheme on the Musogwezi river which delayed the laying out of farms with a frontage on the river, so that the change of policy in 1937 took place when no farm had been occupied in Chishanga. Naturally, most people eventually ‘pointed’ out their areas to Craig and acquired them, so that Njiri pointed to Marungudzi, Chimwango to Chomukamba, Njeru and Chirichoga to Bedzavanhu, Chikozho to Mafurinye and the list went on. When W.J. Mossop came as the new LDO in 1940, the pace of allocations was increased but ‘pointing’ was an already established tradition. In the Mossop era however, people had also come to accept that the NPA scheme was inevitable and instead of resisting, they adapted to it and sought, instead, to secure the farms as their ‘homes’. They cooperated amongst each other to

³⁶⁴ S138/81 Superintendent of Natives Victoria to CNC Salisbury 2 November 1932.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., See also Shutt, ‘Purchase Area Farmers’ p.571 who saw this strategy of allocation being responsible for promoting ‘syndicate purchases’ in Mshagashe.

³⁶⁶ S1044/10 Assistant Director of Native Lands, AC Jennings to D.L. Reid Esq. Government Land Surveyor, 18th April 1936.

raise the required deposits. There are many instances of such solidarity including the one involving Makovere, a Mhizha, who applied for an extension of time to make his deposit arguing that he had to render assistance to his father Njiri to make his first installment.³⁶⁷ Makovere, who had been one of the first grantees in November 1932, had not paid anything and his offer was due to expire at the end of February 1933. He was granted an extension to the end of September that same year but was again unable to raise the necessary deposit by which time it was recorded as lapsed.³⁶⁸

Slowly, 'syndicate purchases' by local Hera and Mhizha people buying their homes were the order of the day in 'Mshawasha West' and, so too was the emergence of clusters of relatives occupying, basically, the same land their ancestors had occupied for the past century. What changed were simply the terms of occupation and the reduction of mobility which had been allowed by the previous mode of occupation centred around shifting cultivation. So it was that, with a few exceptions, the majority of farm holdings were occupied by the Hera people followed by the Mhizha and a small fraction taken by 'foreigners'. Apart from the autochthons, there also emerged other syndicates because a few people from outside were also granted land in the former Chishanga. Syndicates of relatives and friends, for instance, and these often show that they preferred to 'point' farms close to each other. In 1941 two Zimuto brothers Johnsay Chemhuru and Ben Zimuto bought farms 121 and 112 respectively opposite each other.³⁶⁹ Zviyemugwi Dhliwayo (111), Obert 'Mapakasine' Chisedze (123) and Manhingi Mbundira (126), constitute a cluster of Beta (termite) totem kinsmen of Ndaou origin settled close to each other to this day. There were also groups in common employment such as evangelists or kraal

³⁶⁷ S1044/9 Acting Superintendent of Natives Victoria, to Assistant Director of Native Lands, 23 May 1933.

³⁶⁸ S1044/9 Asst. Director of Native Lands to Act. Superintendent of Natives, Victoria 2nd October 1933.

³⁶⁹ Interview with Mrs. Nyaradzo Chinyenyani

school teachers of the Dutch Reformed Missions at Morgenster and Chibi such as Gara Rangazvukayi (133), Eliazel Tafireyi Marindo (128), John Pedyo Tinago (350), Maroveke Mapupu (51) and Ephraim Mboweni (54)(see table above) and it was possible among these to share group and, perhaps, class interests. Most of them did have relatives within Chishanga already, for instance, Eliazel Marindo who was a son in law of Tindiri Munyarari Gapare, a Hera, who had secured his ancestral land at farmholding 105. As can be seen from the table, Marindo's application was launched from Munyarari's farm and he was granted a farm overlooking the Tugwi river but not too far from Munyarari's.³⁷⁰ Marindo in turn invited his brother Maronga who took up farm 129 immediately next to him.³⁷¹

'Pointing' farms invariably came with its own problems both to the surveyor and the allocated alike. In one case an approved applicant, one Joseph Munhundiani from Bikita claimed Mshawasha holding 41 which had been offered to another applicant Purazeni, a local. He argued that he had priority of residence at the plot and that he had been offered the plot earlier on in 1935.³⁷² He lost it to the local man. In others, land initially surveyed could be absorbed into other plots when the actual allocations took place.³⁷³ By the 1940s land allocations were in full swing and the emergent 'syndicate' farms well in place, set apart only, in some places, by new roads and small 'reserve' lands or *zvivhande*. The road networks were confined to surveyed strips which would give access to water sources and dip tanks. As for the *zvivhande*, it was common practice for surveyors to set aside land for future use in the purchase areas to erect schools,

³⁷⁰ S1044/10 Asst. Director of Native Lands to Govt. Land Surveyor, 18th April 1936.

³⁷¹ Interview with Boniface Marindo

³⁷² S1044/9 NC Fort Victoria to Asst. Director, Native Land Board, Salisbury, 30 October 1936.

³⁷³ S1044/9 Asst. Director of Native Lands, Salisbury to NC Victoria 28th September 1936. Applicant Magwizi who had been initially approved for Mshawasha 27 had to be reallocated when after this holding had been incorporated into Mshawasha 28.

churches and any other eventualilty. It can be seen from the map below the land between the Tugwi river and the 'Crown Land' area northwest of what now is Chitekedza Gwande's farm (116) on the Mamvura river was termed Reserve H, that between farms 86 and 135 on the boundary with Mukorsi River Ranch Reserve N and lastly Reserve P being a small area close to the drift at Musogwezi near Craig's camp.³⁷⁴ There were other smaller pockets of land left where holdings adjoined each other.

Appendix 1 shows the final list of farms and their original owners in Chishanga after the allocations were complete. By attempting to identify the owners, it demonstrates that local people overwhelmingly dominate foreigners with the *shava*-Hera people, particularly those from the former Chikwerengwe province of the Mapanzure chiefdom of Chishanga, taking a bigger share of 31.3%. The Mhizha take 8.4%, the Sipambi of Charumbira 3.6%, Shava Nhire 2.4% and Ngara Wamambo 7.2%, making a total of 45% locals in their ancestral lands. Foreigners occupying 55% of the former Chishanga are either new arrivals with no common rallying point. If anything, the Purchase Area Scheme concretized Hera and Mhizha ownership of their ancestral lands through freehold tenure. In the following section detailing the government land authorities' struggles with 'squatters' it will be shown that they never were able to transform this land ownership into 'individual tenure', because at the heart of this struggle was the farm owners' commitment to maintain their extended family ties.

³⁷⁴ S1044/11 Govt. Land Surveyor D.L. Reid to LDO W. Mossop 3 March 1942.

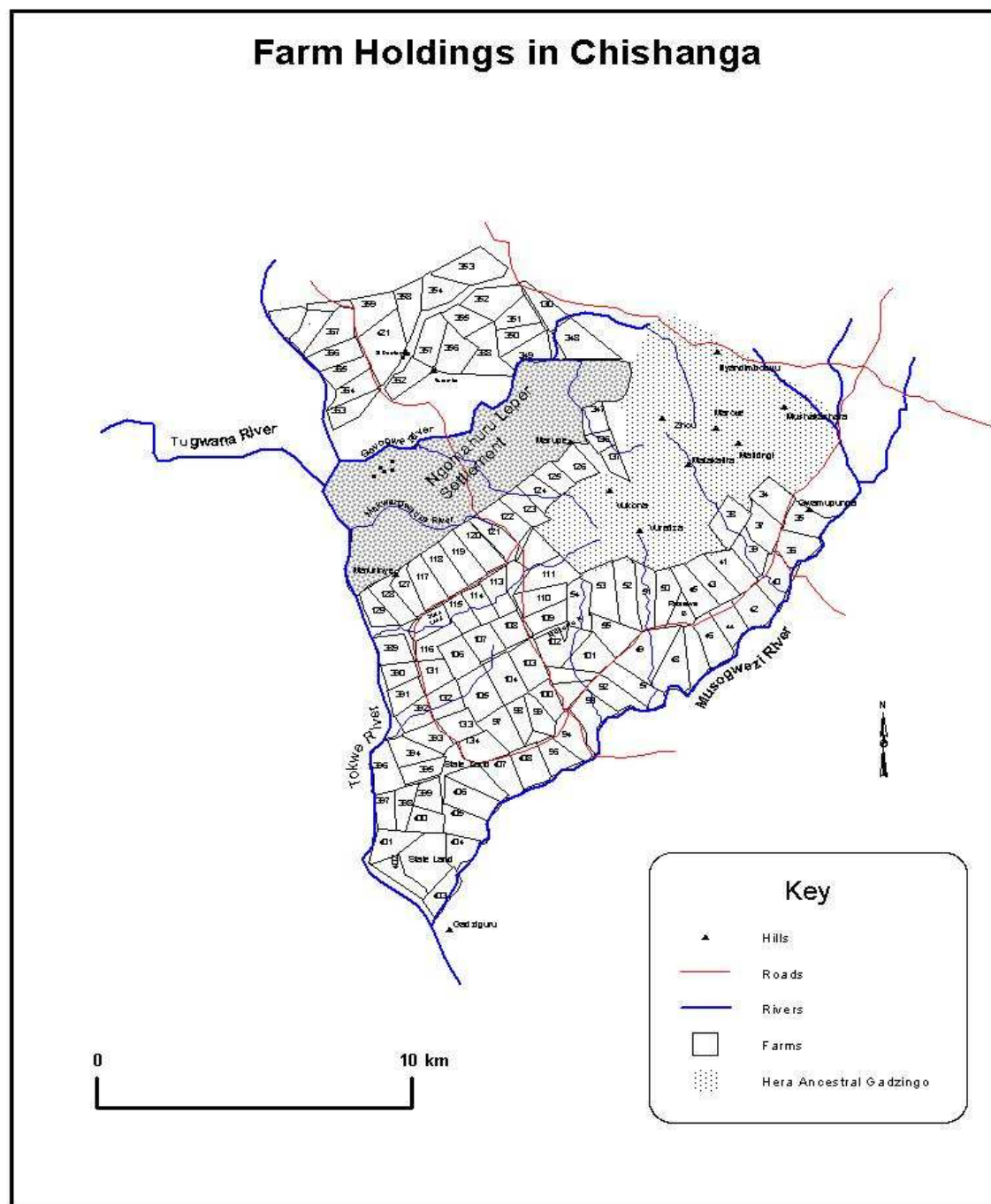


Fig. 6. 1: Farm Holdings in Chishanga

6.5 ‘Squatting Relatives’ and Dispersal in the Purchase Area in Chishanga

In the 1940s, a perfect plan was nowhere near being achieved as portions of surveyed and demarcated holdings existed side by side with pockets of clusters of local people living variously around these plots as ‘squatters’. Although most of them eventually became farm owners with time, these people were a source of a serious problem that the government had to deal with. With the growing alarm of deterioration in the reserves, which will be discussed in full in the next chapter, the government became concerned that these new farm owners conserve land. To this effect the new regulations of the NLB after 1937 made offers of farms conditional to accepting to take conservation work. Among the conditions embodied in Clause II of the agreement were that ‘the landholder ought to take all necessary steps to protect the land from erosion and deterioration from various causes’ and more importantly, as a condition of the offer that, ‘only members of a farmer’s own family and immediate dependants will be permitted to reside on the holding’, and any unauthorized persons who would be found to be living on the land would be required to move out. The purchase price also included the cost of soil conservation which had been or may be carried out by the government for the protection of a maximum of 10 acres of arable land.³⁷⁵

In 1943, Dr. Moiser of the Ngomahuru Leper Settlement complained to the Acting Native Commissioner of Victoria that ‘squatters’ were cultivating right up to the fence of the Leper Settlement and getting into contact with the lepers. These were people who had been pushed out

³⁷⁵ S1044/11 Extract from Offer Letter to Muneri, 4th March 1942

when the Leper Settlement had been established in 1929 but did not go too far off. The Native Department succeeded in driving a few to the Reserve but most remained around Ngomahuru under permits.³⁷⁶ The Hera house of Jeka was able to establish a new village near Chibaya but slowly they trickled back from the reserve and extended their lands to cultivate as near to the Ngomahuru fence as they could possibly get. In the course of demarcating the new farmholdings of Mshawasha, Mossop had frequently been involved in unending running battles with them.³⁷⁷ Later on in the year, the PNC intervened to bring in some order to this area by drawing up a list of 'Approved' and 'Disapproved' squatters. Approved squatters were those who were either approved applicants for landholdings in the purchase area or those, for any other good reason, who were permitted to occupy and reside on 'crown land'. They were issued with cards with a registered numbered permit.

Only registered permit holders could be recorded as rent payers in the crown land register in the PNC's office. All the other squatters automatically became 'disapproved' and had to be removed. However the Native Land Board was still quite prepared to have some of the squatters remaining on those portions of crown land remotely situated and which were unlikely to be surveyed into farms in the near future.³⁷⁸ Table 2 lists the number of 'approved squatters' resident in this area at the end of 1943:

³⁷⁶ S1044/11 J.W. Mossop, Mshawasha to Director of Native Lands, 30 July 1943.

³⁷⁷ S1044/11 Director of Native Lands to PNC Fort Victoria, 4 August 1943. Interview with Mbonga Musiiwa.

³⁷⁸ S1049/11 AC Jennings, Director of Native Lands to the PNC Fort Victoria, 9th August 1943. A List of 'approved' and 'disapproved' squatters is supplied in S1044/17, 1943.

Table 2: List of ‘Approved Squatters’ with Permits in Chishanga

Permit No./ Name	District	Area in Acres	No. of Stock
1. Ismael	Victoria	10	20
2. Mudadigwa	Victoria	8 ½	Nil
3. Musasa	Victoria	14	20
4. Chigowe	Victoria	10 ¼	20
5. Chindamasa	Victoria	8	20
6. Tuge	Victoria	12	20
7. Karonga	Victoria	10	20
8. Mudangaza	Victoria	16	20
9. Zinyakatira	Victoria	18	20
10. Tagwira	Victoria	16	20
11. Taruwona	Victoria	10	20
12. Tachiwona	Victoria	8 ¾	20
14. Makaranya	Victoria	12	20
15. Chikoti	Victoria	11	20
16. Gwatipedza	Victoria	12	20
17. Chikwaya	Victoria	11	20
18. Mbayargo	Victoria	11	20
19. Tagwireya	Victoria	20	20 also has 15 children
20. Magomana @ Timon	Victoria	10	20
21. Kwashi	Victoria	12	20
22. Mafuba	Victoria	12	20
23. Makusha	Victoria	10 ½	20
24. Majoni	Victoria	12	20

Naturally, most of these ‘squatters’ were often relatives of the new farm owners or had entered into rent agreements.³⁷⁹ As most farms had not been fenced, it was difficult to implement the regulation that mandated the expulsion of a farmowner’s extended family. The ticket system introduced by the PNC came in handy. Mossop used this to launch raids on households prompting people to drift into the unsurveyed *gadzingo* zone. Most of those affected were the

³⁷⁹ Ibid. The difference in size of the holdings was according to the number of wives and minor children each squatter had. Some kept changing the terms of their stay for instance Mudadigwa decided to give up his application for land because he wanted to live with his son Ismael who had also applied. Others like Tuge, Zinyakatira and Tavagwisa occupied areas that were considered badly eroded and had to be relocated. This group included such people as Mudangaza Mupandasekwa who eventually got a farm. Chigohwe the later occupant of farm holding 391 kept shifting from one point to the other even if he had been allocated 10 ½ acres and was only contained by a warning. While this group of farmers was stationed on the land there were others whose families were on the land while they were in employment elsewhere or were still at large. Mhike Mavhengere was in the later category but eventually got holding 360.

Mhizha families originally settled around Ngomahuru before the establishment of the Leper Settlement. They found sanctuary in former Mhizha lands and sacred sites at Marungudzi, Marupe and Gwangwadza, some of which had been bought over by their relatives. Mossop considered this land a 'trouble spot' particularly the area between farm holdings 136 and 137 allocated to Njiri Gon'ora (a Mhizha) and Ndudzo Matsveru (a Hera) respectively. It also stretched to the area immediately north and west of holding no. 130 allocated to a new settler Isaac Rioga, although its was formerly Mhizha territory.

Mossop tried all sorts of tricks to evict them or discourage their settlement to the extent of persuading the education department not to approve any kraal schools in this section of the Purchase Area. The 'squatters' responded with their own tricks and the most common argument they used was that they were either harvesting the previous year's or had already planted the next year's crop.³⁸⁰ Whenever the LDO's raids were anticipated they vacated their homes during the day and left them in the care of children or the elderly. In one of his 'raids', Mossop encountered 'Machingora' [Machingura], an old and partly blind elder brother to Gon'ora, the new owner of Farm 136. He had been moved from Marungudzi hill in 1941 when a new road was constructed to go behind the Leper Settlement to undercut the steep gradients of Marupe hill, he then moved with his family and seven head of cattle to cultivate some 9 acres close to his brother's farm when it was alienated.³⁸¹ Here, Mhizha filial solidarity against relocation was displayed when Njiri argued to Mossop that he was his 'brother's keeper' as he was evidently handicapped.³⁸²

³⁸⁰ S1048/8 J.W. Mossop to PNC Victoria 1943.

³⁸¹ S1049/8 J.W. Mossop to PNC Fort Victoria 28 August 1943.

³⁸² Interview with Poterayi Gon'ora and Vatete Machingura.

Other interesting cases of ‘solidarity resistance’ to eviction by the new farm owners and their ‘squatting’ relatives can be revealed. When Ziranya, a Hera, had settled immediately west of the new Marupe road and his cousin Ndudzo’s holding (137), Mossop confronted Ndudzo to evict him but Ndudzo replied that he did not know the extent of his holding since his beacons had not been cut, so he was not at liberty to send people off.³⁸³ Ndudzo however, had his own problems. He had secured his farm in August 1942 under one of the newly introduced annual lease agreements. He had all sorts of financial problems including bad debts with some patients in the Leper Settlement.³⁸⁴ He was increasingly turning to rent payers as a source of living and by 1949 he was unable to service his lease installments. The Department of Lands, then interested more in conservation than anything else, descended heavily on him with numerous warnings for his bad farming. It was then decided to terminate his lease in 1949 by which time he was expected to leave the farm. He remained put until 1953 when the Governor’s Warrant of Eviction was issued on him forcing him to transfer to Zaka, where the NC there could only accept him without his relatives and stock. On his holding he had four families paying rent to him. They were all at once required to move out of the holding before the end of August 1953.³⁸⁵ Interestingly the farm, which is the furthest into the *gadzingo* and, sited at the foot of important Hera burials in Vukona Hill, was taken over by Chinoda Muhera an important Hera spirit medium and diviner.³⁸⁶

³⁸³ S1049/8 J.W. Mossop to PNC Fort Victoria 28 August 1943. This file contains many other cases of particularly Mhizha families who had moved into this zone.

³⁸⁴ S1048 Medical Superintendent, Ngomahuru Hospital to NC Victoria 31 July 1945.

³⁸⁵ S2806/1968 D.A.B. Moodie to Secretary for Native Affairs, 22 November 1951, and NC Victoria to PNC Southern Mashonaland 9th January 1953.

³⁸⁶ Interview with Chinoda Muhera.

The following are extracts from a wide ranging and nostalgic interview with Munhumeso Manenji relating the dispersal of his Muchibwa house:

After we heard that the *mapurazeni* (farms) were coming we all left Chishanga in the summer of 1931...we came and stayed here in Sese (Chivi) at Gwindingwi near the confluence of the Tugwi and Mamvura rivers as Muchibwa's *buri* (large family). It was my father Manenji his brothers Maburuse, Gwatiringa, Chikwama, Vengesai, Mashora and Chikozho. There were others who came with us...our brothers in law Bwoni, Magova and Maruvire...we stayed 1932...33....34...and 35 we were called back when they said 'come back to your country and apply for *mapurazeni* (farms)'.

...we returned to our *matongo* (old homes), my family was at that *ruware* in Maronga Marindo's farm (129), Chikozho near what is Eliazal's homestead now (128), Chikwama and Kunavanhu at Chamapete (117), and Gwatiringa at the edge of (127) towards Mamvura river.

...Then they said those who do not want to buy should go away...so Gwatiringa went to Mapanzure reserve with his son Svondo, all the children of Maputire went to Run'ai (Chivi), that is Vushe, Muzvidziwa and Munyonga. Masvora decided to go to Makwari (Mukorsi River Ranch) with our cousin Mbovora Gapare and Maburuse joined us in our move to this place, Zhara (Chivi).

...Chinyavada's children went to Maringire and Chasiyatende and my brother Marume decided to join them and they all left with our nephews, the children of Chishoko. My other brother, Kutadza, *then decided to sell his cattle and buy a farm* (359). [my emphasis]

...As for Muzhandamuri, it's a matter of time, I can take you to his home in Nyaningwe, he is in Shokoreyi's village.

....They all call me to their *biras*...my father is still buried in Marindo's farm (129) and *I was talking to his son Boniface to arrange that we pour a little beer there soon.*³⁸⁷ [My emphasis]

There are many more stories of dispersal of families than can be repeated here, Poterayi Gon'ora related a similar dispersal of most Mhizha families such as Guku, Chibwe and Musevenzo who moved to Maringire in Chivi.³⁸⁸ Kadiviregwiziguzere Gapare also discussed the mass movement of Gapare families to Nyikavanhu and Chivi under Mutero and Manyemhesa respectively.³⁸⁹ The common trend with all these 'diasporic' Chishanga families is that their dispersal radius is very small, at most 40 kilometres from their original homes, as they preferred

³⁸⁷ Interview with Munhumeso Manenji. See also genealogy of the Muchibwa house in Appendix 4.

³⁸⁸ Interview with Poterayi Gon'ora Mupota

³⁸⁹ Interview with Kadiviregwiziguzere Gapare

to move into neighbouring reserves in Mapanzure, Nyajena and Chibi reserves. They have been able to maintain contact with the families they left in the farms of Chishanga and frequently visit them. These visits are more often pilgrimages to ‘home’ and through periodic *biras*, as suggested in Munhumeso Manenji’s testimony above, they have been able to maintain contact with their roots and the graves of their forefathers and avoid Angela Cheater’s so-called ‘ancestral anger’. Much as the farms became ‘homes’ to the autochthonous farm owners, they also became mausoleums and places of pilgrimage for the displaced families.

Lastly, Mossop was also committed to seeing that all those who were allocated farms physically occupied their holdings. Mapipi Chikukwa was a teacher at Chibaya, a Dutch Reformed Mission kraal school close to the area that he eventually obtained. However, pressure was piled on him to leave his work as a teacher and concentrate on his newly acquired holding. He had, according to Mossop, caused him endless trouble and a lot of correspondence with the Rev. J.D. Moller of Morgenster, who wished him to continue teaching since his holding was only 3 miles from Chibaya school. The problem was that he continued to cultivate the usual land at the school whilst his family and various relations carried on the farming operations at the farm. Eventually he lost his permit and his employment was terminated in January 1944 and had no option but to concentrate on the farm.³⁹⁰

Mbizvo ‘Gutu’ Tagwireyi was working as a security guard inside the Ngomahuru Leper Settlement together with one Chaseva, but their families were living in the controversial ‘squatters’ area. Mbizvo was later allocated Farm no. 117.³⁹¹ He at one point temporarily vacated

³⁹⁰ S1044/11 J.W. Mossop to Director of Native Lands 18 March 1944.

³⁹¹ S1049/8 J.W. Mossop, Mshawasha to PNC Victoria 5 November 1943.

his crown land holding on condition that it was not issued to someone in his stead.³⁹² Others like Mafuba completely refused to accept the conditions under which he was allowed to remain on crown land and quit to the Nyajena reserve.³⁹³ Indeed, most of the approved squatters eventually became farm owners in the late 1940s and 50s.

This transitional period was characterized by a lot of turmoil and anxiety amongst the new farmers at a time when the Native Land Board pressed for conservation work to be carried out by compulsory labour from the now, relatively depleted population of the farms. Gangs of men were conscripted to construct roads and dip tanks but some time in early 1941, one such gang ‘rioted’ at Chingombe dip tank near Musogwezi. These and other developments prompted the Native Land Board to visit this particular section of the Purchase Area in October 1941 to meet with the new farm owners of Mshawasha. On the 9th of October a delegation of board members composed of the CNC Mr. Simmonds, A.C. Jennings, the Acting Director of Native Lands, Craig the Land Inspector, Johnstone the NC, Rev. Hebert Carter, a certain Mr. Franklin and Mossop, the LDO, arranged a meeting attended by some 40 landholders to come and air their grievances.³⁹⁴

A fairly candid exchange took place. In the absence of markets and poor prices for their stock, it did not make sense to be a farmer, one plotholder argued. Beasts now cost between £4 if sold in the countryside and £7 if sold in town. The board replied that it was impossible to expect to get high prices for their stock and blamed everything on the tendency of the farmers to sell their ‘scrub’ stock leaving behind the good ones, yet there were always ‘good prices for good

³⁹² S1044/11 A.C. Jennings to PNC Victoria, 8th February 1944.

³⁹³ S1044/11 J.W. Mossop to Director of Native Lands 17 February 1944.

³⁹⁴ S1044/11 Resume of Meeting Held with Mshawasha Landholders By the Native Land Board on Thursday October 9th 1941.

cattle'.³⁹⁵ Another plotholder, Pedzisai of Farm no. 94 submitted that conservation work was too hard to be achieved in the short time that the government was insisting, with a little patience and, with time, it would be achieved anyway, a view shared and reiterated by many other plotholders at the meeting. 'Hardwork' the Board responded to plotholder Muchini, 'was a farmer's privilege' and the Rev. Hebert Carter added that the land was heritage which had to be passed on to posterity in a better and not worse condition, so conservation work was as necessary as it was unavoidable. Yet, so far as forced labour was concerned, the board agreed that it was 'undesirable' but individual plotholders ought to be prepared to pay more for dipping and other essential services if they had to be paid for. Meanwhile the farmers should cultivate as much as they could 'protect, manure and work properly'.³⁹⁶

The issue of evicting relatives provoked a lively debate after one farmholder questioned why his three adult brothers and his father should move from his farm. The board argued that Mshawasha holdings were considered too small to cater for more than one family and its stock, all the young people should, in the board's view, be usefully employed as workers or soldiers in the current war facing the country. Lastly, the farmers of this block complained that 'the Chishanga portion of Mushawasha' was deliberately being denied schools, something that was certainly a *de facto* official position in the desire to control the squatter problem.³⁹⁷ One interesting thing that this meeting was able to show was that although the NLB viewed Mshawasha NPA as one single entity, farmers within this particular section already perceived themselves as still belonging to a geographic configuration known as Chishanga and shared an identity through which they were able to articulate their grievances as one. This consciousness of belonging loosely translated to a

³⁹⁵ Ibid. Response by Mr. Franklin

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

‘Chishanga Conciousness’ that had slowly, but effectively managed to incorporate even the new farmholders that had originally come from outside the old Chishanga. In the end the board had to go down to Chin’ombe to investigate the alleged forced labour at the dip and, more importantly, to make an undertaking to approach the Dutch Reformed Missionaries to bring schools to Chishanga. The CNC stressed the need to form a Native Council as the one that now existed in Mshagashe through which the farmers could air their grievances. Now that Mr. Mossop had been appointed LDO, farmers were also encouraged to work through him.³⁹⁸

6.6 The Southern Rhodesia Native Association: Mshawasha Branch and The Growth of a ‘Chishanga Consciousness’

There is nowhere else more appropriate to trace a fledgling ‘Chishanga Consiousness’ than in the sentiments expressed by Mshawasha (West) farmers through their Branch of the Southern Rhodesian Native Association (SRNA). The Mshawasha branch of the SRNA championed a Chishanga consciousness. The moral economy of Chishanga defined the path that these farmers easily associated with and moulded the manner in which their identity was to be articulated. For them, Mshawasha NPA was still Chishanga, with largely the old tribal links still very much in place as the pegging of farms was nowhere near complete. The name Chishanga was often used to invoke this identity and to articulate a shared concern from which everybody, including the other drew upon.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁸ Based on the Proceedings of the meeting.

³⁹⁹ Sabelo Jeremiah Gatsheni-Ndlovu Personal Communication, Johannesburg, 14 July 2006.

The Southern Rhodesian Native Association had a long life before it became represented in Mshawasha but its coming was directly a product of the meeting with the Native Land Board mentioned above, and slowly, it became the mouthpiece through which the Mshawasha Landholder aired their views. The Fort Victoria branch was founded on 5th August 1926 and by the 1940s, it had sub-branches in Umvuma, Gutu, Mshagashe and Mshawasha. It was dominated mostly by the Purchase Area farmers. The district president, Jeremiah Gono owned a farm in Mshagashe Purchase Area. It is in place to compare the priorities of Mshagashe branch to that of Mshawasha to make the point clearer. Here, it should be borne in mind that Mshagashe Purchase Area was older than Mshawasha, having been fully settled before the policy shift of 1937, as a result, it was more cosmopolitan in composition. We saw earlier on that the NLB blocked any tendencies towards ‘syndicate purchases’ in Mshagashe and that this had promoted settlement by the ‘urban’ farmers. Evidently, their aspirations tended to be elitist; becoming the object of patronage of the local Native Commissioner, who regarded them as having ‘school boy’ ideas. They spent a lot of their time collecting money for the war effort and mobilizing people to undertake conservation work, in particular, the construction of the much hated contour ridges.⁴⁰⁰ They, like their counterparts in early purchase area schemes such as Marirangwe, identified with the concerns of an urban middle class elite.⁴⁰¹

The Mshawasha Branch of the SRNA only became active after the meeting of the 9th of October 1941 as elaborated above. It generated a lot of literature consistent with the concerns of the local

⁴⁰⁰ S1043 Jeremiah Gono to NC Victoria 25 July 1938 for a list of Mshagashe farmholders willing to construct contour ridges, and, NC Victoria to Jeremiah Gono, Mshagashe 24 January 1940 for an interesting scene when they go to hand in the £8.16.6 they had collected for the War effort and the NC was too busy to see them. I am grateful to Jo Fontein for drawing my attention to this early work of the Victoria Branch of the SRNA.

⁴⁰¹ Allison Shutt, ‘Pioneer Farmers and Family Dynasties in Marirangwe Purchase Area, Colonial Zimbabwe, 1931-1947’, *African Studies Review* vol. 43 no. 3 (2000) p.63.

farmers and championed a specifically Chishanga case. By some coincidence, its influential leadership owned farms in Chishanga. The Chairman was Njiri Zhou one of the three Mhizha descendants who managed to buy the ancestral Marungudzi lands. His Secretary was Ephraim Mboweni, a Shangani settler, who was a teacher before and bought a farm in the former Chikwerengwe district of Chishanga. Ephraim wrote most of the letters and was fairly efficient in following up matters. Immediately upon being established, the branch's executive took up its issues with Mossop whom the board had asked them to speak through. They complained of the inefficient means of paying their installments and other bills. The practice was that a certain Chikonye would come up to collect 2/6 as the instalments, yet this Chikonye was not known to Mossop. Meetings were just called, at times, without due announcements. There was need for an official messenger to announce messages from the government and to give advance notification of meetings. Lastly, there were rumours doing the rounds that the landholders were not allowed to sell crops to any traders who usually came to purchase grain in the area. They requested that any such regulations should be made clear to them 'as they do not wish to do anything against the law.'⁴⁰² Mossop was compelled to offer answers and to relay this information to the NC including the fact that he did not have a 'Chikonye' as an intermediary for receiving moneys due as installments and making commitments to ensure the NC's office embarked on timely collection of taxes as well as due notification of meetings.⁴⁰³ No doubt, however, Mossop's work in the area was rendered inefficient by the fact that he had to rely on a single messenger, one Mhute, who conducted his business on foot until the government bought him a bicycle in November 1941.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰² S1044/11 SRNA Mshawasha Branch to LDO, Mossop 31 March 1942.

⁴⁰³ S1044/11 Mossop's 'Answers' on the same letter.

⁴⁰⁴ S1044/11 J.W. Mossop to Asst. Director of Native Lands, 11 November 1941.

In the middle of 1942 the SRNA held a number of meetings with farmholders in pursuit of the idea for a school to serve ‘the Chishanga section of Mshawasha’. It emerged that the farmholders wanted a Boarding School run by government and not by missionaries. They wrote to seek advice on the matter from Mossop and to see him personally since they wanted the school to start the following year.⁴⁰⁵ Mossop, who was engaged in Mshagashe at the time, however, prevaricated and advised them only two months later to apply formally through the NC giving full details of what they required and the position of the proposed school site.⁴⁰⁶ What they got instead was a D. R. C. Mission kraal school site along the Mamvura river on an area of 6 acres with an instruction to the Mission Superintendent to contain all the activities of the school to that area.⁴⁰⁷ In the following two years the Mission established Gwira and Mukosi schools in Mshawasha Purchase Area at the behest of the NLB.⁴⁰⁸

Meanwhile, despite the failure of efforts by the SRNA to get a boarding school in Chishanga, which was a reflection of their growing aspirations as a class, there were underlying struggles between individual plottolders over the naming of the D.R.C. school they got in the end. These struggles reflected the traditional perceptions of historic ownership of territory in Chishanga. Few names were proposed in the meetings, Marirangwe, Gweshindi and so on, until it was decided to name it Mamvura after the stream close to the area where it was allocated.⁴⁰⁹ The school had also metaphorically crossed the Mamvura stream amidst the aforementioned struggle, because initially, it had been built across it but when the LDO came he changed the site to the

⁴⁰⁵ S1044/11 E. J. Mboweni, Mshawasha to J.W. Mossop, Mshagashe 26 June 1942

⁴⁰⁶ S1044/11 J.W. Mossop, Mshagashe to E.J. Mboweni, Mshawasha 28th August 1942.

⁴⁰⁷ S1044/11 J.W. Mossop to Director of Native Lands, Salisbury, 28 November 1942

⁴⁰⁸ S1044/11 see AC Jennings, Director of Native Lands, Salisbury to Rev. H.D. Murray 13th April 1944.

⁴⁰⁹ Interview with Mupota Gon’ora Mhizha

opposite side of Mamvura. People found solace also, in the history captured by this movement in the name Mamvura.⁴¹⁰

These farmers accepted that they would never get a government boarding school as aspired and even as they saw the missionaries as the only and unavoidable answer, they still championed their desire as a case for the Chishanga section of Mshawasha. Thus, although studies of the SRNA have often denied them any level of consciousness, this group showed an extreme level of consciousness of belonging not only to a Purchase Area but first and foremost, to a particular section of the purchase area known as Chishanga, thus even for subsequent grants, correspondence does display this awareness, for instance, in describing the site for Bangomwe school in 1945, the Rev. JD Moller had to be explicit to the NC;

The site, as marked on the sketched map, is on the center line in *Chishanga*, between the two rivers Musuka and Musogwezi, to the north of Mapansuri (sic) stoor of Mr. Traicos⁴¹¹ [my emphasis]

Bangomwe was later authorized by the Department of Native Education in 1947 on an ‘aided basis’ with two teachers.⁴¹² Other schools beyond Chishanga such as Nyamafufu never had such explicit descriptions and those coming entirely as a result of the initiative of other denominations due to denominational competition like the Roman Catholic’s St. Damian at Vuramba, were described by their physical location within the Mshawasha NPA relative to either the

⁴¹⁰ Interview with Clr. Julius Chemhuru

⁴¹¹ S1049/5 Rev. J.D. Moller to NC Victoria 15 October 1945

⁴¹² S1049/5 Letter of Authorisation For Bangomne School, Department of Native Education 3 May 1947.

neighbouring Chibi Reserve or by the mountain nearest the school.⁴¹³ By 1948 Gwira was operational and competing with Bangomwe for enrolment in the south.⁴¹⁴

The SRNA also managed to gather together the farmers to make a follow up on the issue of the closure of the road through the Ngomahuru Leper Settlement. It sent a letter to Mossop following the inconvenience faced by the farmers in getting their grain to the market in 1943. Because of inaccessibility through the Leper Settlement, Mossop arranged that the holders bring their grain to the eastern gate of the Leper Settlement where the Railway Motor Service (RMS) lorries would fetch it to Fort Victoria, but as indicated before, the RMS refused to go beyond the Marupe so that the grain had to be moved, once again by donkey carts, to Isaac Rioga's farm (130).⁴¹⁵ It was the persistence of the SRNA through letters and petitions that ultimately led to the PNC Victoria's order to reopen the Ngomahuru road to vehicular traffic with immediate effect.⁴¹⁶

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to document the key factors that allowed the continuity of the idea of Chishanga amongst its people despite the changes brought about by colonial evictions. To begin with, these movements sought to completely erase pre-existing associations with any idea of Chishanga, a process begun by the evictions from the *gadzingo*, followed by the evictions to pave way for the establishment of the Ngomahuru Leprosarium. The NPA scheme totally imposed a new name for Chishanga, calling it 'Mshawasha West' and transformed its established

⁴¹³ S1049/4 Letter of Authorisation For St. Damian School. Department of Native Education 28 June 1945.

⁴¹⁴ See S1049/5 Schools Inspector, Fort Victoria to NC Fort Victoria 18th December 1948.

⁴¹⁵ S1044/11 J.W. Mossop to PNC Victoria n.d.

⁴¹⁶ S1044/11 PNC Victoria to the Medical Superintendent, Ngomahura Leper Settlement 8th March 1944.

families into 'squatters'. Had the NPA scheme come earlier than 1937, this erasure would be complete, but the decision by the NLB to encourage the purchase of farms by local people ensured that most of these families bought their ancestral farms and kept their large families within them. To this extent, the NPA scheme strengthened rather than it weakened claims to a broader pre-colonial Chishanga identity. The farms became 'homes' to their owners before they could be economic units that the colonial state wanted them to be. Thus, in every aspect of change that these new farmers found themselves in, they always clamoured to be recognised, first and foremost, as the people of Chishanga.

Chapter 7

Compulsive State Interventionism in Chishanga and Threats to the *Rambotemwa* Sacred Forest 1943-1962

7.1 Introduction

While the Mshawasha Native Purchase Area was assuming shape, the 1940s heralded a policy shift within Rhodesian administrative circles from persuasion to compulsion. This occurred in the larger context of the fears of the growth of the African population in the reserves on the one hand, and the deteriorating environment on the other. Inspired by a philosophy of ‘discipline without oppression’, the Rhodesian state slowly adopted authoritarian measures to keep Africans within the reserves contented with what little land they had. Its deterioration was blamed on the Africans’ bad farming practices and communal forms of tenure which could be transformed to be more productive by scientific methods of agriculture based on individual title to land. This provided justification not only for intervention, but for the use of force in achieving this end so that the era of ‘centralisation’ and ‘demonstration’ begun in the 1920s, with an emphasis on the aesthetics of linear settlements or ‘lines’ and ‘demonstration plots’, gave way to legislation that departed from this concern with ‘maintaining’ the reserves to one that emphasized their development to increase ‘carrying capacity’.⁴¹⁷ This came a little late to Chishanga and authorities never got it right the first time they enforced it necessitating yet another exercise at a time when the Victoria Reserve as a whole was considered ‘the most overpopulated and

⁴¹⁷ E. Kramer, ‘A Clash of Economies: Early Centralisation Efforts in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1929-1935’, *Zambezia* vol.25 no. 1 (1998), p. 85.

overstocked reserve in the colony.’ Slowly, the influx of squatters evicted from European farms and the Mshawasha Purchase Area compounded the problem to the extent that issues of environmental control and maintaining the fertility of the land crystallized into notions of local legitimacy that culminated in the clash emanating from state threats to clear the *Rambotemwa* sacred forest and converting it into grazing area. Opposition to this interventionism was also seen as a statement against the eroding legitimacy of various chiefs whose chiefdoms were not only treated in this exercise as constituents of Victoria Reserve but were also abolished and reduced to headmanships under Chief Shumba-Chekai. Although opposition to this era of coercive experimentation with African Agriculture gained momentum with time, it was not as violent as in other areas in the colony. Instead, by the time interventionism was abandoned in 1962, chief Mapanzure was increasingly elevated in stature.

7.2 Centralisation and Conservation Work in Chishanga 1929-1947

The concept of ‘Centralisation’ had long been the Rhodesian government’s preferred mode of African settlement before its official enforcement in 1929. Put simply, it involved placing arable and grazing lands in blocks separated in between by a dwelling zone arranged in a straight line. Centralisation had its roots in the Native Agriculturist and American Methodist Missionary A.E. Alvord’s ‘demonstration’ schemes of the early 1920s, but Native Commissioners had, since the 1890s, been always keen to persuade the local people to move from fortified settlements in hills and settle in ‘lines’ in the plains. Alvord’s scheme, however, was largely based on persuasion where, for instance, the order and beauty implied by the demarcation of grazing, arable and dwelling areas was enough, through its beauty, to convince the local population to accept it.

Indeed in Selukwe Reserve where 'Centralisation' was first launched, Chief Nhema who initially opposed it, was persuaded to accept it by his own people's enthusiasm for it.⁴¹⁸

Centralisation was an integral part of the 'Technical Development Phase' in Rhodesian agrarian reform involving, among other things, 'demonstration' (since 1927), 'destocking' (1945-59) and ultimately 'land husbandry' (1951-62).⁴¹⁹ It occupied an important place in the transformation of government's policy from persuasion to compulsion as it failed to keep up with the growing numbers of Africans flocking into the reserves as a result of the implementation of the Land Apportionment Act. Indeed, there is a marked difference between the Centralisation of the 1930s and that of the 1940s. This is a view shared by JoAnn McGregor in her study of Shurugwi (formerly Selukwe), the district where Alvord pioneered 'Centralisation'. She makes the interesting observation that pre-1935 'Centralisation' laid no particular emphasis on conservation than it did on order. Model villages, as we saw for Ngomahuru, occupied an important role in the imperial agenda of advancing civilization. Yet it seems it was only after Alvord's visit to the USA in 1935 that he became convinced of the importance of soil conservation to which he turned his attention in subsequent 'Centralisation' work.⁴²⁰

McGregor submits that 'centralisation' had no conservation value in itself yet it suited the Rhodesian administration, already committed to the policy of land segregation, to use the discourse of 'centralisation' as a vehicle to implement conservation. In addition, the alarm of overcrowding and overstocking in the reserves gave rise to a sense of urgency which in turn

⁴¹⁸ Ibid. p.94.

⁴¹⁹ M. Drinkwater, 'Technical Development and Peasant Impoverishment: Landuse Policy in Zimbabwe's Midlands Province', *Journal of Southern African Studies* vol. 15 no.2 (1989), p. 287.

⁴²⁰ J. McGregor, 'Conservation, Control and Ecological Change: The Politics and Ecology of Colonial Conservation in Shurugwi' *Environment and History* vol. 1 no. 3 (1995), p. 263.

justified compulsion.⁴²¹ With time this fed into what Eric Worby has seen as post-second world war ‘development’ discourse which emphasized duty and discipline as the new instruments of African self-improvement.⁴²²

There could, however, never have been a clean break in the implementation of ‘centralisation’ before and after 1935 for this ‘order and aesthetics through persuasion’ approach was still pursued in earnest in other districts even after 1935. For instance, in Makoni the local NC still espoused these ideals as late as 1938 although he also saw it as a means of ‘control’.⁴²³ Once again, the timing and sequence of centralisation in Chishanga and neighbouring communities is as critical as it was during the pegging of farms within the Chishanga section Mshawasha Native Purchase Area. Like all government land policies before it, ‘centralisation’ was implemented in the wider context of the Victoria Reserve as a whole and like the NPA scheme, it began in the northern parts in Zimuto. Zimuto experienced the pre-1935 aesthetic centralization and as will be shown below, stood as a model that was to be looked up to by future Land Husbandry Act officials in their assessments of Chishanga and other areas of the Victoria Reserve a decade later.

Certainly, the Native Purchase Area had absorbed the greater part of the ‘reserve entrepreneurs’ and their extensive ‘wasteful’ cultivation which ‘centralisation’ was also designed to curb. Yet, overcrowding in Mapanzure and Charumbira reserves was the inevitable consequence of the establishment of both the Ngomahuru Leper Settlement and the Mshawasha Purchase Area just as it was of the eviction of squatters from neighbouring European farms. Government’s response

⁴²¹ Ibid. p.266.

⁴²² E. Worby, ‘Discipline without Oppression: Sequence, Timing and Marginality in Southern Rhodesia’s Post War Development Regime,’ *Journal of African History* no. 41 (2000), pp. 102, 105.

⁴²³ Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, p.73.

to this influx of Africans was two-pronged and area specific to Chishanga's constituent parts characterized by centralization in the Mapanzure reserve and neighbouring Charumbira on the one hand and the launch of Intensive Conservation Areas (ICA) in the Mshawasha Purchase Area.

Centralisation was stepped up in 1943 amidst alarmist reports of soil erosion and the siltation of local rivers. The introduction of soil conservation measures became the first signal of the shift to compulsive state intervention in Victoria Reserve in general and in Chishanga in particular. The planning for this programme was entrusted to the LDO, while the implementation was left to the Soil Conservation Officer who worked with a group of Soil Conservation Overseers. Gangs of 'Form boys' were employed from amongst locals who were paid rations and cash rates dependent on how easy the ground was to work. The Overseers were by and large instruments of control. They were themselves servants of the state without any degree of individual flexibility apart from fulfilling the primary concern to conserve the soil. A document of instruction circulated to the overseers told them that the government was buying their time and it was up to them to see that it 'got what it was paying for.' 'Your increment is dependent on good work and may be refused if your work is not satisfactory', it read, 'No excuse will be accepted for absence without leave, undersized ridges, neglecting to use the form, or the daily marking of tickets'.⁴²⁴

The Department of Native Agriculture responsible for implementing this work was concerned to see it done at the least possible cost so that labourers were soon expected to offer their labour for free.⁴²⁵ The turn to forced labour or *chibharo* intensified with the increased emphasis on contour

⁴²⁴ S1044/11 Instructions to Soil Conservation Overseers n.d.

⁴²⁵ Interview with Mapope Tavarera

ridges or *makandiwa*. It has often been argued that centralization, in all its stages, enhanced the status of local headmen through privileged access to land and that an alliance between these headmen, some Christian progressives and the Native Department was possible to the point of facilitating this state interventionism.⁴²⁶ Similarly, headmen held the final say on who would go for *chibharo*. Yet for Chishanga 'headmanship' still bore the legitimacy of the pre-colonial order which was very little disturbed by the various local movements as shown in the previous chapters. It was still grounded in the old 'house' political networks that transcended the boundaries of the Mapanzure reserve and the Purchase Area. These connections often worked against any spirited effort by the soil conservation officers to 'divide and rule' them. In addition, the requirement to use local draught power particularly cattle in conservation work and the absence of any form of payment infuriated people who began to engage in various forms of resistance involving among other things willful damage to ridges. The headmen who were expected to report such cases and see that the damage was repaired 'within seven days' often took the lead. Taking advantage of the absence of the resident LDO most 'form boys' deserted culminating in complete work stoppage in the summer of 1947. It was only possible to resume work the following year after Mossop returned as LDO and only after his introduction of mechanical equipment such as ox-drawn Martin Ditchers which reduced the labour costs per acre at the same time that rations and pay were made available at better rates.⁴²⁷

The Native Purchase Areas were not spared from this conservation flurry either. We discussed in the previous chapter the new requirement in 1937 to make the issue of farms conditional upon the occupant's commitment to undertake conservation work. Later on the introduction of the

⁴²⁶ Ian Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe 1890-1948: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle* (Longmans, London, 1988), p.143.

⁴²⁷ S1044/17 Soil Conservation Quarterly Return April-June 1948, 26th August 1948.

Natural Resources Act made provisions for Intensive Conservation Areas (ICAs) where farmers of a specific area agreed to voluntarily undertake conservation work in return for enhanced subsidies from government.⁴²⁸ While a similar programme existed for settler farmers, the Department of Native Agriculture designed a programme for intensive conservation for Native Purchase area farmholders based on a system of crop rotation and manuring. Its success, it was argued, would be dependent on the adequate instruction of participating farmers. In Chishanga the farms that were earmarked for intensive conservation were Chikwavava Rashirai (131), Isaac Rioga (130), Njeru Gapare (119), Munodawafa Samuel (115), Tindiri Munyarari (105), Mapupu Maroveke (51) and Mavhuna Chivurayise (41). The rest of the other farms were ordered to cease cultivation on specific acreages calculated on the basis of the number of stock available on the farm. Calculations were done using a formula that allowed only 4 animal units to manure 1 acre of land. With the standing requirement that the farmers had to manure a quarter of their land holdings, it followed that the total number of animal units on each farm should correspond with the acreage that could be cultivated.⁴²⁹

Lastly the other issue that came with this new conservation drive and was used to justify centralization and force was the siltation of rivers in Chishanga owing to soil erosion. It was alleged that all the rivers running from Charumbira in the north-west were silting up 'in excess of 9 inches of the top of the standard'. 'Not one of these streams is now permanent though many were originally perennial streams' wrote the Provincial Agriculturist referring to Ngondo and

⁴²⁸ See McGregor, 'Conservation, Control and Ecological Change', p.267.

⁴²⁹ S1044/11 Provincial Agriculturist, Victoria to LDO, Victoria South, 17th February 1948.

Godobgwe rivers, and fears were raised for Karaka and Ngondo dams. The former according to this report had been transformed from a 'fine stretch of water' to 'a small pool'.⁴³⁰

Blame was squarely placed on the people of Charumbira who were 'refusing' to leave their areas and enter proper 'lines' that had long been demarcated for them. Some of them were grazing their stock and cultivating land to the East of Lochiel Farm and other European farms to the West taking advantage of broken down boundary fences. With the subsequent repair of these fences there was nowhere left to graze except in the mountains approaching the farms of Chishanga. This hill and mountain grazing took place on what was considered steeper slopes than what is normally found as the land fell rapidly from Chigaramboni Mountain plateau which was basically an escarpment area.⁴³¹

This conservation regime was rooted in a much more complex process set in motion by the recommendations of the 1944 Godlonton Commission on Native Production and Trade which by and large inaugurated two decades of experimentation with African agriculture.⁴³² The key instrument of the Commission's recommendations was the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951, a piece of legislation designed to scientifically quantify standard land allocations and stocking rates per given area before issuing them out to Africans on individual tenure. In the long run, it hoped to create distinct rural and urban African dwellers. In essence, it did not seek to increase or maintain the amount of land available for use by Africans but to develop it to increase its

⁴³⁰ S1044/17 Provincial Agriculturist, Victoria to PNC Fort Victoria, 20th November 1947

⁴³¹ Ibid.

⁴³² A.K.H. Weinrich, *African Farmers in Rhodesia: Old and New Peasant Communities in Karangaland* (IAI, Oxford University Press, London, 1975), p.25

‘carrying capacity’.⁴³³ Before modern science could be applied to achieve this however, it was necessary to have some order on the ground through ‘rationalisation’, that is, the reduction or reorganisation of the tribal administrative units in place.⁴³⁴ Mapanzure and Charumbira were victims of this ‘rationalisation’ when their chieftainships were abolished and reduced to headmanships under Chief Shumba-Chekai in 1948 and 1951 respectively.⁴³⁵ This was a more direct affront on the authority and legitimacy of the Mapanzure chieftainship to the extent that Kunyanhu Gwenhamo the incumbent chief, feeling spited by this demotion even after his people’s eviction from the *gadzingo*, refused to accept the new title and the chieftainship went into limbo until 1961.⁴³⁶ To add insult to injury, despite their ‘demotion’ both Mapanzure and Charumbira were expected to sit in the Land Husbandry Assessment Committees that presided over destocking and further division of their ancestral lands into individual arable units.⁴³⁷

7.3 The Land Husbandry Act In Chishanga

The centralization efforts of the 1940s had revealed a desperate ecological situation in Mapanzure Reserve. It was known in official circles as the most ‘overpopulated and overstocked reserve in the colony’. Successive destocking exercises had been punitive but succeeded little in alleviating the problem than they did in antagonizing the African population. The local NC frequently looked beyond the reserve for solutions and had no choice but to turn his hopes to the

⁴³³ E. Kramer, ‘A Clash of Economies’, p. 85.

⁴³⁴ J. Alexander, *The Unsettled Land: Statemaking and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe 1893-2003* (James Currey, Oxford, 2007), p.45.

⁴³⁵ S2929/8/5 Delineation Reports For the Mapanzure and Charumbira Chieftainships, 1965.

⁴³⁶ Ibid. Delineation Report of the Mapanzure Chieftainship and Community 1965, See A.K. H. Weinrich, *Chiefs and Councils in Rhodesia: Transition from Patriarchal to Bureaucratic Power* (Heinemann, London, 1971), p. 79. Mapanzure features in Aquina’s pseudonyms as Chief Mhofu.

⁴³⁷ S2808/2/4 Minutes of the Committee Meeting NLHA Victoria Province, 20th July 1957.

nearby Mshawasha Native Purchase Area for additional land. His requests to the Native Land Board were snubbed because it was felt that Mapanzure could manage with a system of controlled grazing. A model for rotational grazing already existed in the pioneering Zimuto Reserve and this was recommended for Mapanzure in 1951. It involved erecting grazing strips demarcated by stone beacons or sisal bulbuls. These strips formed grazing camps that would be rotated to give each a chance to recover while alternative ones were grazed. This programme had some operational problems. First, it relied on local voluntary labour to construct the grazing strips and this was not always forthcoming. Secondly, stock could not be moved about easily due to the prevalence of foot and mouth disease and naturally, the grazing strips could not be found in all the quarantined areas. Lastly, the success of the scheme depended on its reception and the compliance by locals, particularly herdboys. A rigorous awareness campaign was launched spearheaded by the Provincial Agriculturist who went around all kraal schools to inform children what was intended.

The NC used the grazing programme to justify his request for more land arguing that a more efficient grazing scheme would obtain if it was spread evenly to the south-western portion of the Reserve. He had in mind the Crown Land of the *gadzingo* left unoccupied since the 1901 evictions as well as those following the establishment of the Ngomahuru Leper Settlement and the Mshawasha Purchase Area. This was an area where the Mapanzure reserve farmers were already straying their cattle. He launched an application for a stretch of land from Gwampunga hill to Sproggen's farm with a width of approximately 2 miles, which began a long drawn out

struggle with other government departments on the one hand and the Mapanzure traditional leaders on the other.⁴³⁸

The first to object were the Natural Resources Board (NRB) who were concerned about the stocking rates and soil erosion in the hilly *gadzingo*. The Board's chairman suggested that instead of this land, an additional pastoral area should be made in the adjoining Mshawasha Native Purchase Area instead. This suggestion was thrown out by the Chief Land Officer (Native Area Administration) on the grounds that it would be unfair for African Purchase Area farmers to lose their land to reserve farmers. He wrote;

Natives purchasing land in the NPA renounce all their rights in the Native Reserves. Native landowners would therefore have a very justifiable complaint should reserve natives be given grazing rights in the purchase areas.⁴³⁹

In any case, there had already been far too much encroachment on the Purchase Area by the Mapanzure reserve farmers other than by the Mshawasha landowners themselves. The NRB was concerned that if settlement and/or grazing were permitted in the *gadzingo*, it would fuel the erosion already in place because this land was a watershed. At the same time, the Ministry of Native Affairs did not want to set a precedent by giving out extra land when its policy at that time was to increase the carrying capacity of land already in use. Its voice was added to the matter thus:

...while admitting that the native always has criticisms of vacant land, on which cattle might graze, lying idle and therefore accepting in principle, the suggestion of the NRB that Mshawasha Division should be utilized for grazing stock belonging to natives in the Victoria reserve, the Minister felt that the question ought to be considered as to what effect this *privilege*

⁴³⁸ S2806/1968 *Land Fort Victoria and Mashaba 12 July 1940-23 Nov. 1956* Acting Provincial Agriculturist T.A. Morton to NC Victoria, 9th August 1951, see also, Section 8.4 in the following chapter.

⁴³⁹ S2806/1968 J.N. Reid, Chief Land Officer, Native Areas Administration to Asst. Secretary, Native Economic Development, 6th September 1951.

would have on future destocking in the Reserve. In other words, if we allow natives of the Victoria Reserve to have more grazing, will it not give them the impression that grazing will always be found for them and that there will be no need to destock?⁴⁴⁰

In another development, as the matter of additional grazing land was being debated, Mossop, the resident LDO, decided that the Mapanzure sacred *rambotemwa* forest could offer the answer to the grazing problem if it were cut down and converted to grazing land. He proceeded to erect a timber curing tank in the forest in preparation for a logging blitz. Mapanzure elders got wind of this and actually saw, to their horror, the cutting of the sacred trees underway. They launched a big protest prompting the NC to order Mossop to ‘stop work at the *rambotemwa* immediately’.⁴⁴¹ The elders were not satisfied and demanded guarantees that ‘no clearing now, or in the future will take place’.⁴⁴²

The implementation of the Land Husbandry Act represented a serious shift from government’s accommodation of traditional custom to one that directly challenged it as long as it stood in the way of the scientific application of conservation principles enshrined in the Act. To the Mapanzure people, it represented a serious affront on traditional authority. Not only had the chieftainship been abolished, but the sanctuary of its patrimonialism and a symbol of this tradition, the *rambotemwa* was now being threatened. Billy Mukamuri has shown us how much *rambotemwa* sacred groves feature, even in modern rural politics, not only as idioms of traditional conservation but of power in the context of land shortages. He cites cases in Mazvihwa (Mberengwa) where chiefs have ‘manipulated’ the *rambotemwa* to suit immediate

⁴⁴⁰ S2806/1968 CNC Salisbury to Asst. Secretary, Native Economic Development, 25th January 1952.

⁴⁴¹ S1044/17 *Native Agriculture 1943-1948* NC Victoria to LDO Southern Mashonaland, n.d.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

demands for land and its distribution.⁴⁴³ There is no doubt the Mapanzure *rambotemwa*, now grown to some 1043 acres in size, still symbolized chiefly power in the local context and this direct threat on it represented a gross violation of that chiefly authority. Yet A.K. H. Weinrich believes that the incumbent chief Mapanzure Kunyanhu Gwenhamo's traditional stature and legitimacy was not affected by these developments. She argues that Gwenhamo (Mapanzure VII) was the last surviving son of the great Mapanzure chief Mazorodze (Mapanzure II) who gave the chieftainship its present form and character as described in Chapter 4. It had been one of the most stable chieftainship in Rhodesia with no succession dispute for over four generations and, lastly, Gwenhamo himself was possessed by the two important Hera spirits of Ndyakavamwa and Mutunha. For Weinrich, this unique position of the chief and favourable ecological conditions bolstered his position to the extent that he did not feel threatened by government and often stood firmly behind its policies.⁴⁴⁴

Weinrich's analysis is weighed down by gross oversimplifications which, sometimes, fly in the face of evidence as well as some of her own assertions. She acknowledges that at the time of her fieldwork in Mapanzure in 1964-5, Mapanzure people showed 'strong emotional ties with the past and [were] proud of their old customs'. This was made possible, she argued, by the fact that they settled in their present territory before any of their immediate neighbours arrived (i.e. Charumbira and Shumba-Chekai) so they 'considered themselves owners of the land'.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴³ B. Mukamuri, 'Ecological Religion: Local Politics and Conservation in South-Central Zimbabwe' in P. Virtanen (ed.) *Management of Natural Resources in Zimbabwe* (University of Tampere, 1991) p. 161.

⁴⁴⁴ Weinrich, *Chiefs and Councils*, p.78.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid. p78.

However as we have seen, Mapanzure reserve was far from enjoying any favourable ecological conditions. In addition, the people's strong attachment with the land had been threatened by colonial evictions since 1901 just as the 'centralisation' exercise of this period was causing further movements. Indeed, for a people still strongly attached to their custom after being moved from their own *gadzingo*, cutting of their *rambotemwa* would never have brought them any closer to a government masterminding this onslaught on their tradition. Least of all, they would not respect a chief supporting these ideals.

What remains an indisputable fact in Weinrich's analysis however, is that Mapanzure was considered a 'progressive' chief by the government if not a collaborator. This on its own calls for an independent analysis especially if the NLHA itself seemed to threaten everything traditional where his authority rested. It should be considered that apart from 'rationalising' the chieftainships, the Land Husbandry team in Victoria Reserve had worked from the premise that centralization had been improperly done. It had laid undue emphasis on arable land at the expense of grazing hence the chronic grazing problem that was now being experienced. The result was that the reserve had to be resurveyed once more in 1950, with major readjustments of land allocations that became the basis of a landuse map used in the implementation of the Act the following year. This involved dividing the whole Victoria Reserve into 5 blocks (see Fig. 7.1) from which divisions of individual 6 acre plots were made in contoured land juxtaposed with standard proportions of grazing.⁴⁴⁶ Blocks A and B fell mostly under Charumbira's area overlapping with Mapanzure's near Musingarabwi, Block C fell under Mapanzure from the *rambotemwa* forest while D and E fell directly under Shumba-Chekai.

⁴⁴⁶ S2808/2/4 Report of the Senior Land Development Officer, Victoria South Reserve, R. Sheppy, March 1956.

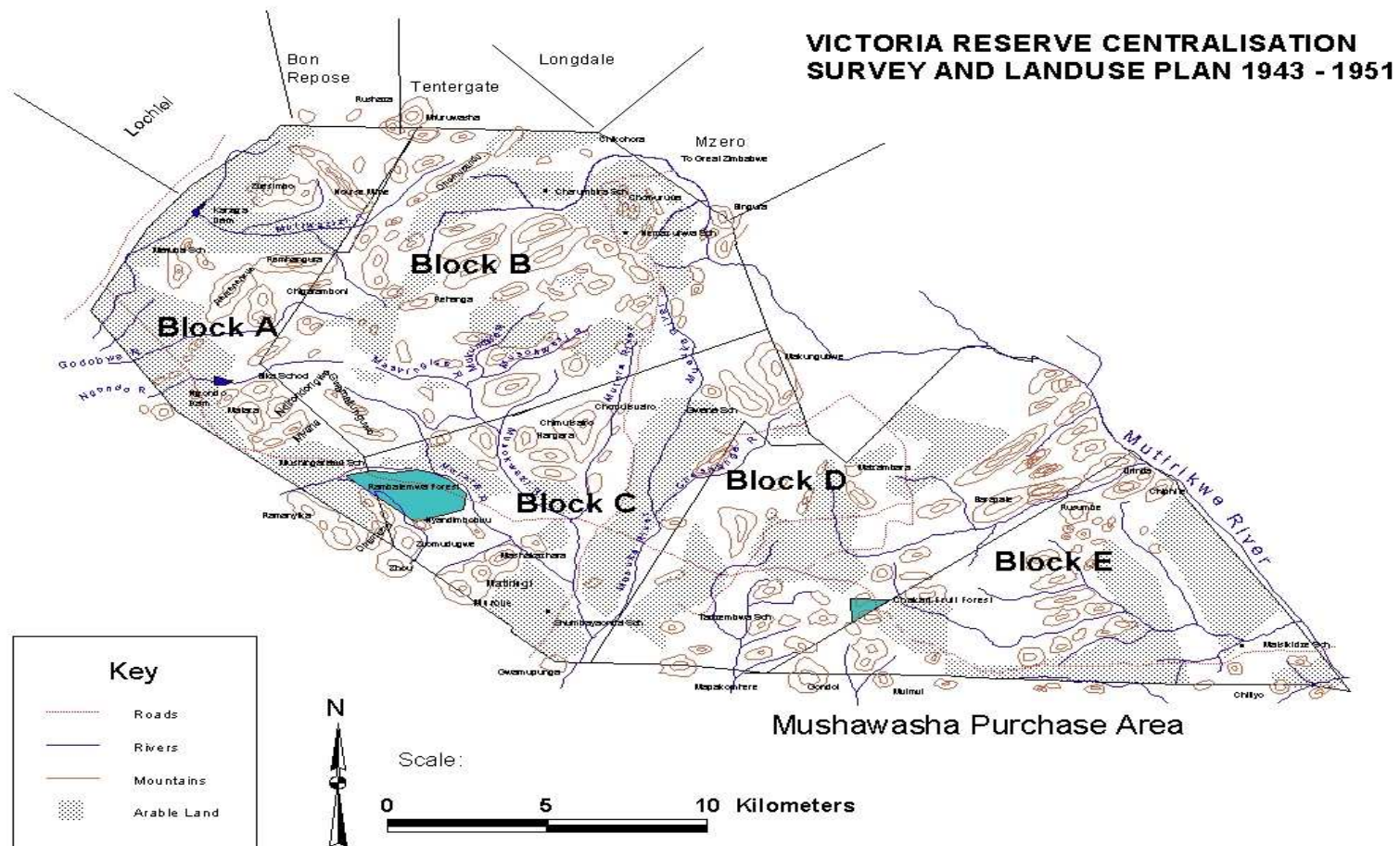


Fig. 7. 1: Victoria Reserve Centralisation Survey and LandUse Plan 1943-1951
(Modified from S2808/2/4 Report of the Senior Land Development Officer, Victoria South Reserve, R. Sheppy , March 1956)

At first, the implementation of the Act in Chishanga seemed quite smooth, at least from the reports of the officials on the ground. In the first five years, it was reported that most of the landholders had adhered to the land allocation as planned and only 5% had extended their plots. Those who had followed proper farming, it was reported, 'were able to make a reasonable living', but others, seen as not interested in intensified agriculture, had turned to urban work to make up the balance. The only cases of failure were blamed on the growing tendency of polygamy. The alarmist reports of the late 1940s soon gave way to reports of a contented people who, according to the Senior LDO;

...reap and enjoy a very reasonable and prosperous turnover.... they fully realize the value of their lands and do not hesitate to put protection work to save the soil...they also gave little trouble with grazing rotation when it was introduced and get over to rotation each year on date without warning or pressure from us...

And above all else,

...Chief Mapanzure was *always very cooperative* in all development work and second to him was Charumbira.⁴⁴⁷ [my emphasis].

This situation changed when the NLHA Assessment Committee came in April 1956 and the tempo reverted once again to one of alarm. This committee, composed of various government officials and all the chiefs of the reserve worked amidst several disagreements between its African and European members, especially on procedure. First, the chiefs protested against the stocking rate. Victoria reserve was still considered overstocked by some 1,804 animal units despite the drastic reductions in stock numbers following the destocking exercises between 1947 and 1949. However, notwithstanding the favourable reports of the grazing rotation that had been introduced in 1951-52 whose success was considered to be principally due to the co-operation of

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

the stockowners, the Committee still considered the state of the pasture to be bad. It stuck to the figure of 1 beast per 10 acres or 7,460 animal units for the whole reserve. Chief Shumba-Chekai, the only recognized chief in the Victoria reserve after 'rationalisation' (Mapanzure, Charumbira and Mugabe having been reduced to headmanships under him) was the first to express his disappointment with the work of the Assessment Committee. The areas that the committee inspected were the worst, he argued, those not inspected comprised the best grazing. If this had been done, it would show that the carrying capacity of a beast to 6 or 8 acres was the most ideal.⁴⁴⁸ 'Headman' Charumbira challenged the committee's recommendation that the standard number of animal units per household should be 5 head. As far as he was concerned, his area deserved 8 head because the fertility of the arable allocations could not be maintained with a lesser number.⁴⁴⁹

The battle over carrying capacity dominated the meetings of the Committee with government officials insisting that it should be reduced on the grounds of the heavy population pressure of the whole Victoria Reserve (considered to have 106 people per square mile against the ideal of 30 people per square mile) and the present state of overstocking. Finally, it was agreed that 5 head should constitute a single animal unit and that the standard area of arable land should be '6 acres for a man and his wife.' This committee also recommended the construction of a dip tank between Mataruse and Mapanzure to relieve the pressure of stock traffic since most of the erosion in the area was seen to be caused by stock using the tracks to the dips. It also recommended and approved townships for Mapanzure and Charumbira, as well as feeder roads

⁴⁴⁸ S2808/2/4 Minutes of the Assessment Committee For Victoria Reserve, 17 April 1956.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

linking various points in the reserve with the main Beitbridge-Fort Victoria highway and the Mshawasha NPA.⁴⁵⁰

Representatives of the Natural Resources Board re-tabled the issue of the *rambotemwa*. They now advanced that if it was to remain inaccessible because of 'local superstition', then an exceptionally large area of land should be set aside for alternative afforestation within the Reserve.⁴⁵¹ The Forestry department which had established semi-exotic plantations in 3 of the 5 blocks of the reserve between 1951 and 1953, felt that their projects were registering slow growth due to the prolonged dry spell between 1951 and 1956. Amongst these plantations were Govogwe in Block A which was 6 acres in size, Musuka in Block B consisting of some 35 acres and Bingura in Block C measuring about half an acre. The *rambotemwa* still remained the biggest forest, hence the attention it continued to attract as a source of timber and the Forestry Officer continued to justify his case for its disposal on the basis that it lacked proper management.⁴⁵²

The rise in demand for timber in the reserve was a result of the increase in the number of burnt brick houses which were erected as a result of 'centralisation'. This, the authorities maintained, was responsible for the decrease in bush cover. However, it was seen as a temporary situation which could be remedied by careful forestry planning once these movements were over. An afforestation exercise was expanded further to plant a further 50 acres of Eucalypts in each of the

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ S2808/2/4 Forestry Officer, Native Areas, Victoria to The Administrative Officer, NLHA, Causeway, 2 May 1956.

⁴⁵² S2808/2/4 Report of the Forest Officer, Native Areas, C.L. Furness, February 1956

five blocks of the Victoria reserve at the rate of 5 acres per block per annum for ten years in addition to the already existing exotic forest colonies mentioned above.⁴⁵³

These recommendations of the Assessment Committee were sent to the Director of Native Agriculture who quickly arranged a visit to Victoria Reserve in June 1956 to personally assess the situation. After holding talks with the PNC, the local NC, LDO and Provincial Agriculturist he held a contrary opinion. First, he found the recommended carrying capacity (7,460 animal units) to be too drastic and unrealistic. Even if enforced, the conditions in the reserve would still deteriorate further, he thought, particularly the fertility of the arable area. In addition, government could not expect to count on the co-operation of the people after such heavy destocking. As far as he was concerned, the best way to increase carrying capacity was to introduce nitrogenous fertilizers and at his behest the Assessment Committee had to sit again, this time to work out a more reasonable improvement programme meant to support 10,000 animal units. The committee was reminded that Victoria was not a peculiar case with an overstocking rate of only 37% when Gutu Reserve, for instance, straddled above 45%.⁴⁵⁴

The Director of Native Agriculture's intervention, ironic as it were, was a rare high profile criticism of a fundamental weakness of the mathematical method of the NLHA. It showed that the game of figures, worked out on paper had no practical application on the ground just as it challenged the effectiveness of the scientific method in improving carrying capacity. This way, it saved the whole Victoria Reserve from a punitive exercise that would have ultimately led to chaos. One important exposition of this criticism was the system of rotational grazing introduced

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

in 1951 and hailed as the best in the country. It had not led to an increase in carrying capacity nor did it ensure the maintenance of that which already existed. Instead, it was a huge failure as the Administrative Officer of the Land husbandry act was quick to admit;

It would seem, that in spite of the doctrine that has been preached in recent years of the effectiveness of rotational grazing and the vital necessity of carrying it out, we must be careful not to delude ourselves or the natives that it is in itself the answer to our stocking problems and to improving carrying capacity.⁴⁵⁵

When the Assessment Committee reconvened later in 1956, they remained defensive. They submitted that grazing rotation could have worked with fences instead of using stone beacons and sisal bulbul. However, grazing could be improved if local people produced their own stockfeed in fodder blocks based on planned distribution.⁴⁵⁶ Similarly, a pasture improvement programme could be effected by mechanical extension of an extra 2500 acres of fodder cropping incorporating Nappier fodder inter-planted with cowpeas over 5 to 10 years.⁴⁵⁷ All these suggestions depended on the availability of more land in Victoria reserve yet there was none. By that same token, they were rendered useless. The situation was complicated further by stocking ratios which were not uniform across the Reserve ranging from 1 beast to 3.1 or 3.3 acres in some and 1 beast to 9 acres in others. Another re-centralisation was contemplated but was resisted by the Undersecretary for Native Agriculture and Land Husbandry R.L.C. Cunliffe on the grounds of the unavailability of land. It would also involve yet another rationalization exercise following movements and adjustments to chief's areas in an area where 'tribal spheres of influence' had already been well established to conform to the initial centralization. The only

⁴⁵⁵ S2808/2/4 Admin. Officer NLHA Causeway to The Under Secretary, native Economic Development, 21st June, 1956.

⁴⁵⁶ S2808/2/4 D.Espach, Provincial Agriculturist, 'Fodder Block: Victoria Reserve', Attached to Minutes of A Meeting held on 30 June 1956.

⁴⁵⁷ S2808/2/4 Minutes of the Meeting to Consider the Minute of the Administrative Officer NLHA, 12 June 1956.

way re-centralisation could be undertaken was if it had the full support of the people.⁴⁵⁸ Again, it did not.

As the dilemmas of the Assessment Committee mounted, it was forced to meet more frequently and, this time, the opinion of the chiefs became more valuable. The Undersecretary of Native Agriculture and Land Husbandry then decided that instead of re-centralisation, the Assessment Committee must reconsider the assessment of Victoria Reserve on a zonal basis. Thus for his purpose, Block A became Zone 1, Block B Zone 2 and Blocks C,D and E were considered together as Zone 3.⁴⁵⁹ The Committee, now consisting of the NLHA team, Chief Mutoda Shumba-Chekai, and 'headmen' Gwenhamo Mapanzure and Charumbira toured the reserve on the 6th of August 1957 and deliberated the following day. They were unanimous that nowhere else in the Colony had they seen any land or grazing in such shocking condition. Conditions in this zone were far worse than in Mtoko reserve or Umtasa South. It was on the verge of a complete breakdown, as the Acting Director of Native Agriculture remarked, nowhere else had members seen steep hill slopes so fully, or extensively grazed.⁴⁶⁰

The chiefs took the opportunity to raise their concerns. 'Headman' Charumbira, with the worst area (Zone A) blamed everything on the fact that there was better grass in the nearby European area because of the vast amounts of unutilized land there, whereas, there were too many people and stock in his native area which had to 'share the grass even with the insects'. When the issue of siltation of Ngondo dam was discussed, Charumbira argued that the erosional damage was an

⁴⁵⁸ S2808/2/4 Administrative Officer, Native Agriculture and Land Husbandry, Causeway to the Director of Native Agriculture, 31st October 1956.

⁴⁵⁹ S2808/2/4 Provincial Agriculturist to Undersecretary Native Agriculture and Land Husbandry 14th August 1957.

⁴⁶⁰ S2808/2/4 Minutes of the Second Meeting of Assessment Committee of the Victoria Reserve Held on the 7th August 1957.

‘act of God’ and not the pressure of population and stock. He pointed out that there were no more people and cattle today than there were before. He felt that the trouble was that the people were too much together and were not spaced out as in the old days.⁴⁶¹ New stocking units were set once again for all Zones but this time, implementation would depend, not on the increase in land or its carrying capacity, but the movement of about 50% of the population and stock to an area outside the Victoria Reserve.⁴⁶² Charumbira, Shumba-Chekai and Mapanzure had no objection to this solution so long the movement would be made without breaking up family units. This decision, they could only endorse after consulting their people.

There were several direct consequences of these Assessment Committee meetings which became the legacy of the Land Husbandry Act in Victoria Reserve in general and Chishanga in particular. The first was the displacement of approximately 300 families who were moved with their grain and 1250 head of livestock from Zone A of the Victoria reserve to Matibi II reserve.⁴⁶³ These families were moved at their own expense to Chilonga irrigation scheme in Matibi II which was in the process of being established.⁴⁶⁴ Quite significantly for Chishanga, part of this area lay in a frontier shared between Mapanzure and Charumbira’s traditional territories. One section of it had been occupied by the Hera house of Jeka-Masase who had been moved from Ngomahuru in 1929 when the Leper Settlement was established. This time they were not only moved again from historic Chishanga to Chilonga but erased from the local history.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² S2808/2/4 Secretary, Natural Resources Board to Undersecretary, Native Agriculture and Land Husbandry, 18 September 1957.

⁴⁶³ S2808/2/4 Secretary NRB to Undersecretary Native Agriculture and Land Husbandry 19 November 1957.

⁴⁶⁴ S2808/2/4 Memorandum from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Minister of Native Affairs 13 December 1957.

⁴⁶⁵ Interview with Mbonga Musiiwa.

Secondly, the deliberations of the Assessment Committee as well as the differing opinions of the NRB, Forestry Department and the Department of Native Agriculture ironically paved way for negotiations to return the *gadzingo* to the Mapanzure reserve in a process discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. It served the interests of all the parties involved. The government wanted this land to alleviate the land problem, while on their part, Gwenhamo Mapanzure and his representatives used these discussions to bargain for the return of the *gadzingo* as an important section of their ancestral lands, the ‘centre’ of Chishanga. The Director of Native Agriculture threw open this line after a deadlock over the *rambotemwa* issue. He proposed to make representations to the Native Land Board to obtain a lease of the western portion of Mshawasha NPA unsuitable for the pegging of farms where cattle could be grazed on a ‘lagisa’ (or free-range grazing) basis. So far as he saw it, this area, or *gadzingo* as it were, was not suitable for Native Purchase Area farmers and he thought that people in Block A would warmly receive an offer to herd their stock in the area.⁴⁶⁶ This proposal effectively silenced loud calls by government representatives in the committee, including the Assistant Director of Native Agriculture, to overcome ‘local superstition’ and clear the sacred forest for additional grazing.

Thirdly, widespread opposition to the implementation of the Land Husbandry Act fed into the rhetoric of emergent nationalist parties who used the grievances against the Act to drum up support. Reports of stoning diptanks, freedom ploughing and attacks on government officials were increasing by the day especially following the formation of the National Democratic Party (NDP) in 1961. In the same year in Victoria Reserve, Chief Nyajena and his messenger were assaulted for cooperating with the NC over destocking and the NC himself was heckled at a

⁴⁶⁶ S2808/2/4 Minutes of the Committee Meeting NLHA Victoria Province, 20th July 1957.

cattle sale.⁴⁶⁷ Similarly, Chief Shumba-Chekai became a full-fledged nationalist who did not hesitate to voice his ideas. The irony was that he was elected the first president of the newly established Chief's Council in 1962 at a time when his people were physically assaulting government officials with sticks and overturning their vehicles in the mounting opposition to the NLHA.⁴⁶⁸ These disturbances were partly responsible, nationally, for the retreat of the state from direct intervention in African affairs in favour of abdicating rural authority to chiefs and councils under the guise of 'community development'. More directly, for Chishanga, this facilitated the return of the Chieftainship to Mapanzure after 13 years and provided an atmosphere that Kunyangu Gwenhamo was able to exploit the overtures made by the Director of Native Agriculture in 1957 to avail not only extra grazing land but in essence the return of the ancestral *gadzingo*.

All this occurred in the context of the state retreat mentioned above which led ultimately to the abandonment of the Act in 1962. The fear of losing the loyalty of the chiefs as a result of African opposition to the act prompted the appointment of the Robinson Commission's Working Party 'D' which was mandated to make recommendations on the same.⁴⁶⁹ After widespread consultations with Chiefs and DCs across the country, it warned that failure to return power to the chiefs would force them and their followers to support the nationalists. Not only did the Commission recommend that chiefs be given powers over land allocation but it urged the government to open up formerly unalienated Crown Land for 'tribal settlement' as a form of

⁴⁶⁷ N. Bhebe, 'The Nationalist Struggle, 1957-1962' in C.S. Banana (ed.) *Turmoil and Tenacity: Zimbabwe 1890-1990* (College Press, Harare, 1989), p. 97.

⁴⁶⁸ A.K.H. Weinrich, *Chiefs and Councils in Rhodesia*, p. 101.

⁴⁶⁹ Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, p.67.

reassurance to the chiefs.⁴⁷⁰ In its consultations with the chiefs of Victoria reserve, it experienced face to face, the excesses of the maverick nationalist Chief Shumba-Chekai who stated that his purpose was to return home with land to his people. He influenced the opinions of other chiefs present at the meeting when he made claims to European areas that fell under his territory in the pre-colonial period. He charged;

What about my 1,200 people? There is one area under my control, Makosi River Ranch [sic], where only cattle are kept and no people. Are cattle more important than people? There is a mission farm which is very big–Morgenster. There is one area, Mambeza, which is a very big European farm. It was my area and people were moved off this area.⁴⁷¹

His views were supported by Chief Murinye who was surprised that the Working Party had not brought any good news of land for them. Chief Charumbira also voiced concerns over how missionaries, whose primary mandate was to preach, eventually got title to land without the knowledge of chiefs who were custodians of the land and who knew their boundaries. Chief Mapanzure was conspicuous by his silence over this matter, being content to utter only a single statement confirming that headmen also had the power to allocate land traditionally.⁴⁷² Yet as will be demonstrated in the next chapter, it was Mapanzure who eventually got his land back while the other Victoria chiefs got none. Shumba-Chekai's political activities were soon to be checked by the banning of political parties in 1964.⁴⁷³

In a surprising turn of events in 1965, Mapanzure met his *dare* to deliberate over what they had been resisting all along, the cutting of the *Rambotemwa*. According to Mapope Tavarera, the

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid. p.69.

⁴⁷¹ 5.2.8R/82725 'Working Party D, District Survey, Victoria, Annexure B, Record of Meeting of Working Party 'D' Committee with the Chiefs of Victoria District, 15 January 1962. I am grateful to Prof. Jocelyn Alexander for passing on her notes from this file.

⁴⁷² Ibid.

⁴⁷³ Weinrich, *Chiefs and Councils in Rhodesia*, p.103.

meeting was convened to seek a solution to the overcrowding in the reserve. The only land apart from the *gadzingo* that seemed vacant was the *rambotemwa* itself. The *dare* decided to send a delegation to the Matopo shrines of *Mwari* to make representations to cut down this sacred forest as a means to save the ‘suffering children of Mapanzure.’ This delegation was led by Mapope who recalled:

Baba [Chief Gwenhamo Mapanzure] said to me we have decided that you must go. I will support your journey. I left in the evening and slept wherever I felt tired. This journey was entirely on foot past Mberengwa, into Filabusi in the land of the Ndebeles...wherever I stopped I told them I was going to *Mwari* and I was served with food and given somewhere to sleep. I arrived after seven days and when we got there the *Mupinzi* was Chokoto, he told me I would enter the stone the following day. When I got to the stone, a voice called and said; ‘I see you the son of Mapanzure, you have been sent by your people with the story of your *rambotemwa*, you can go and cut it now but before you do it, brew beer and call for a big *bira* and then you can proceed after telling your ancestors why you want to do it. You have my permission now...’ I came back and we did as was instructed and we chose the house of Chihava and Musingarabwi to settle in the *rambotemwa*.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has described the various attempts by the colonial government to enforce conservation in Chishanga and neighbouring chieftaincies. Inspired by compulsive scientific approaches, this policy sought to do away with what it considered to be retrogressive forms of tribal tenure and, as a result, targeted the institution of the chieftainship. The Mapanzure chieftainship which still held a territorial view of Chishanga was demobilised and demoted under the policy of ‘rationalisation’. It ceased to have administrative meaning. The irony was, however, that all these government policies could not work without the cooperation of chiefs and, throughout the twelve years that the Mapanzure chieftainship was derecognized, Chief Mapanzure put up stiff resistance to attempts to cut down the *rambotemwa* forest. He however, avoided confrontation in other areas and was considered progressive and cooperative by the

colonial authorities. This strategy won him concessions after 1961 when the government increasingly turned to the support of chiefs to thwart nationalist activity in the rural areas that had emerged in opposition to the compulsive policies. Chief Mapanzure and his *dare* used this opportunity to begin lobbying for the return of the *gadzingo* and by the same token the return of their real claims to Chishanga.

Chapter 8

The Retreat of the State and ‘The Return to Tradition’: Community Development and the Reclamation of the Mapanzure Ancestral *Gadzingo* 1969-1976

8.1 Introduction

The turmoil leading to the abandonment of the Land Husbandry Act signaled an end to the era of experimentation with African agriculture but not with African tradition and custom. The growing wave of ‘federalism’ sweeping across the world in the 1950s coupled with the then fashionable development theories favoured by the donor community in the 1960s, account for the drift by the Federal government to ‘Community Development’ as an alternative policy for African administration. The Community Development philosophy sought to transform rural communities into self-sustaining units with reduced fiscal dependence on the state. Such communities would have the right to choose what development they required on the basis of their own ‘felt needs’. Yet when the Rhodesian Front (RF) came to power in 1962, it hijacked the discourse of ‘self-reliance’ implicit in Community Development and used it as an excuse to withdraw and abdicate state responsibilities to traditional tribal structures where chiefs increasingly obtained somewhat exaggerated roles.⁴⁷⁴ The Tribal Trust Land Act of 1967 legalised this transition through its establishment of Tribal Land Authorities (TLAs) with the right to make by-laws for the use and occupation of land within tribal areas. As William Munro demonstrates, these TLAs were supposed to be dominated by chiefs and their appointees, however, because they functioned

⁴⁷⁴ W. Munro, *The Moral Economy of the State: Conservation, Community Development and State-Making in Zimbabwe* (Ohio University Press, Athens, 1998), p. 143.

under the tutelage of government officials in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, they became an arm of government with neither the flexibility nor the authority over land use practice.⁴⁷⁵

The inherent contradictions in the politics of this shift to tribal control were not helped by the fact that the implementation of this new policy depended on whether local Africans would accept community development and respect the new roles bestowed upon the institution of the chieftainship in the first place. Indeed, it was not even certain whether the state would, through community development, foster or violate the much desired community integrity as long as it stuck to the segregationist principles enshrined in the Land Apportionment Act. The RF was confronted with this problem when it introduced 'primary development', a policy aimed at developing sparsely populated Tribal Trust Lands and expanding irrigation schemes.⁴⁷⁶ In its continuous engagement with Chiefs however, some of them, like Mapanzure, were able to use their access to important government officials to lobby for favours particularly to gain access to land in the unoccupied 'Crown Land' which invariably may have been part of their own traditional territories before the Land Apportionment Act. In this chapter we chronicle the means through which this development theory was put into practice in the former Chishanga, once again with disaster. Despite local opposition to it, this and other related policies, were implemented with the apparent cooperation of Chief Mapanzure who enjoyed the support of the local District Commissioner until his death in 1973. Yet, it is naïve to consider him a gullible collaborator of the state, ignoring his agency, in particular his diplomatic manouvres in using his access to high profile government functionaries to lobby for the return of the Mapanzure *gadzingo* and ancestral lands which came true in 1976. This chapter constitutes a turning point in

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 165.

⁴⁷⁶ Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, p. 71-72

the history of Chishanga in two main ways, first, in the sense that after several years of its fragmentation and disaggregation under colonial forces, it was to be fully reconstituted physically by the return of the *gadzingo*, its pre-colonial political centre. And secondly, in the sense that the RF discourse of the 'return to tradition' put paid all attempts that had been made over the years to modernize Chishanga. This discourse was usefully exploited by Chief Mapanzure and his *dare* not only to facilitate the return to the Chishanga of old, but to reassert their traditional authority through claims, however nostalgic, to a pre-colonial Chishanga order. This was, in a way, able to compensate for the humiliation their traditional structures had suffered in the previous decades that reached its peak with the abolition of the Mapanzure chieftainship in 1948.

8.2 Community Development in Practice in Chishanga

8.2.1 The Politics of Mapanzure Council

'Community Development' was declared the basis of African Administration in Rhodesia in May 1962 under the auspices of a technical grant obtained from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Its stated objective was to '...place responsibility for decision-making in local affairs on the freely chosen representatives of responsible people at the community and local government levels'.⁴⁷⁷ Designed entirely to correct the mistakes of 'progress by compulsion' that characterized the decade of the Land Husbandry Act, the founding

⁴⁷⁷ G.C. Passmore, *Hidden Conflict: A Documentary Record of Administrative Policy in Colonial Zimbabwe 1950-1980* (Praeger Publishers, Westport, 2002), p.xxiv.

principles of this policy, as advocated by the United Nations and its donors were overtaken by political events in Rhodesia which culminated in the election of the Rhodesian Front (RF) to power in the same year. A more right wing party committed to separate development along the lines of South African apartheid, the RF quickly embraced the discourse of 'self-reliance' and bastardized it to imply state disengagement from rural affairs by abdicating power to traditional authorities which in turn reduced fiscal dependence on the state.⁴⁷⁸ The new theorists of community development championed their argument on the basis that traditional social structures were impervious to change, they required 'organic change' which, if introduced piecemeal, would ultimately facilitate attitude change. To this end, a community could only accept responsibility for development if it defined such development for itself and actually desired it (its so-called 'felt needs'). Once identified, these 'felt needs' could be expressed and realized through a 'council' or local governing body answerable to the central state although representing the interests of the community at a local level.⁴⁷⁹

After the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) by the RF in 1965, the redefined council became the organ through which this new version of Community Development was implemented, ostensibly to champion development but in reality to reinforce traditional and customary structures and strengthen the government's grip on African areas through tribal control. From the outset, its philosophy was condemned by Africans, particularly by the nationalists who saw it as part of Rhodesia's drift towards the South African apartheid policy based on Bantustans comprising an impoverished rural periphery wholly dependent on capitalist agriculture and industry. The RF's commitment to uphold the Land Apportionment Act

⁴⁷⁸ Munro, *The Moral Economy of the State*, p.143.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 146.

confirmed these fears. This way, community development became mired in the dynamics of state power which now was being deployed through chiefs and white administrative officials in the rural areas although they did not necessarily enjoy legitimacy in the eyes of the people for whom the development was aimed.⁴⁸⁰ The banning of nationalist activity in 1964 came together with increasing concessions that were offered chiefs as key allies of government simultaneously, amongst them, an increase in their salaries and their incorporation into parliament in the years to come.

The legal instrument used in the implementation of the RF version of Community Development was the Rural Councils Act which became law in 1967. In Chishanga, it is given that the District Commissioner put pressure on Chief Mapanzure to form a council as early as 1966. Quite interestingly, a contemporary study in Mapanzure in the late 1960s saw opposition to the formation of a council coming from the ordinary people, who refused, even to be represented by their headmen in such a council. One such headman, tired of the pressure from the chief and the DC reportedly stood up and confronted the two at a meeting and addressed Chief Mapanzure;

...my sister's son, it is absolutely necessary that you should understand your own people. Our silence means opposition. All of us reject community development'.⁴⁸¹

According to this study, the chief was agitated and the DC left in a huff. The chief reacted by deposing one headman who was a close relative of his and this apparently scared the others to conform. They reluctantly agreed to recall the DC to come and constitute the council and the chief paid his own money to help start up the council. This council was gazzetted in 1967 but

⁴⁸⁰ M. Bratton, *Beyond Community Development: The Political Economy of Rural Development in Zimbabwe* (Mambo Press, Gwelo, 1978), p. 6.

⁴⁸¹ A.K.H. Weinrich, *Chiefs and Councils in Rhodesia* pp. 206-207.

immediately ran into all sorts of problems including government delays in handing over the running of the affairs of the council to locally elected office bearers and embezzlement of funds. The immediate benefit was the construction of a clinic but most common people had no direct say on the running of the entire council as they had been seen to be obstacles to its initial establishment. In her interpretation of this whole drama, Weinrich concluded that the Mapanzure Council as an imposition on the local people achieved through the collaboration of their chief with the DC.⁴⁸²

As shall be demonstrated below, Mapanzure had apparently struck a relationship with the Internal Affairs officials who were desperate for his support. He acknowledged, it seems, that the government and the Mapanzure people had parallel interests which would never converge except if, and only when, they agreed to bargain. Ever since the abolishment of the Mapanzure chieftainship in 1948, his people's interests had been land and they knew that the *gadzingo* lay unoccupied as Crown Land. For them, it was not just access to land *per se* but the restitution of that specific piece of land, the *gadzingo*. It was obvious the state would not let it go for nothing, yet with the new policy of 'Community Development' the government needed Mapanzure's support as chief more than he needed it. It was the same government that had demoted him in 1948. He did not need to confront or embarrass it in the manner that Shumba-Chekai was already doing, but to squeeze out of it the best he could that would restore his legitimacy amongst his own people and protect the institution of the chieftainship while, at the same time, getting him and his people their ancestral land. In this case, getting more land was the best bargain and getting such land in the form of his clan's ancestral lands was going to be an even better political score. The example of Shumba-Chekai, his neighbour and rival, was already proving a bad one.

⁴⁸² Ibid. 209.

The same study by Weinrich shows us that his activities as a nationalist were curtailed by the banning of nationalist parties in 1964 after which he was deposed as President of the Council of Chiefs and soon he deteriorated into a hopeless alcoholic before he could get any more land for his people. It will be remembered that Shumba-Chekai was the leading voice amongst the Victoria chiefs agitating for more land in the consultations with the Robinson Commission's Working Party 'D' in 1962. It is submitted here that Mapanzure chose the path of diplomacy rather than confrontation, whose results bore the fruits detailed below. It is therefore misplaced to interpret, as Weinrich does, some points of this bargain with the colonial administration as blind acts of collaboration. Indeed, it does not follow that agreeing to work with an oppressor means sharing similar interests. It is possible to find common ground with such an oppressor as a vehicle to achieve much broader and crucial goals. For Mapanzure, the carrot of the ancestral lands came with the stick of playing the 'community development' game. The challenge that remained was how to turn the RF version of 'community development' into beneficial development for his own people. Before considering the dynamics of this conundrum in detail, it is important to understand the other means through which the RF government tried to implement Community Development in Chishanga.

8.2.2 The Victoria Young Farmers Club and Mshawasha West African Farmers Cooperative 'Kopa'

The explicit message in the 'community development' discourse was 'change'. Its implementation therefore, needed to target, by and large, the agents and institutions for such change. On the human factor side youths, women and master farmers were identified as the

primary agents of change while institutionally, cooperatives became, like the councils, important self-help schemes. By encouraging the formation of Young Farmers Clubs (YFC), it was hoped to arrest the deteriorating situation in the reserves, now known as Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) since 1967. The rising overpopulation and declining potential of the land in the TTLs did not augur well with the high number of unemployed youths who were drifting to towns. To control the influx, these young people had to be motivated to stay home and help in the restoration of the TTLs to produce increasing quantities of food by better farming methods and a proper regard for the conservation of natural resources which would foster a transition from subsistence to a cash economy.⁴⁸³

The philosophy of the YFC was firmly couched in the discourse of ‘community development’ as it was also meant to be a voluntary, constitutional, self governing body of young people aged between 10 and 30 years working, both as a team and individually, on activities and projects that interested them. They did this for the improvement of ‘themselves, their community and their country’. Similarly, it was important for the YFCs to have the strong backing from elderly people specifically, Tribal Land Authorities and other important people in the community who had to be consulted before the formation of such clubs.⁴⁸⁴ The Victoria Young Farmers Club was founded in 1969 under the leadership of an Agricultural Demonstrator Berias Machingambi who worked with several youths across the Victoria TTL that warrant an independent study.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸³ MS10/2 National Archive of Zimbabwe, Masvingo Records Centre, Ministry of Internal Affairs General: ‘The Future Role of the YFC in the Tribal Society’ National Secretary’s address to the Master Farmers Association in Victoria Province, n.d.

⁴⁸⁴ MS10/2 National Archives of Zimbabwe, Masvingo Records Centre, Ministry of Internal Affairs: General, ‘Formation of a Young Farmers Club’, n.d.

⁴⁸⁵ MS12/1 Victoria Young Farmers Club Annual Reports 1969-1980.

it here to say that the successfully trained ‘young farmers’ were recommended for further training to become Master Farmers.

Community Development was not confined to the TTLs alone, it extended to the former Native Purchase Areas, now known as African Purchase Areas. From 1962 onwards, intensive efforts were made to encourage farmers in Mshawasha African Purchase Area to embark on Master Farmer programmes to form clubs on livestock and cropping as well as credit cooperatives. This gospel was spread through a local newsletter circulated amongst the farmers called *Mshawasha Bepanhau* or ‘Mshawasha Newspaper’ as well as through a programme supervised by extension officers known as the Teach and Visit exercise or ‘TV’. In the latter programme, a number of farms were grouped together to participate on farming projects on a competition basis. The groups were, more or less, permanent and farmers could hold field days on members’ farms to assess each other’s progress or learn new things. A ‘TV’ was organized along the lines of a cooperative where members in a particular ‘TV’ would plough, weed or harvest collectively.⁴⁸⁶ The Purchase Area Farmers were encouraged to run their farms as ‘businesses’. What was important, read one section in an issue of the *Mshawasha Bepanhau* was to know where and what they spent their money on.⁴⁸⁷ The newsletter was also a means of publicizing the successful activities of the various farmers in Mshawasha; Mr. Javangwe of Farm 95 was congratulated for the high yield he had obtained of wheat in 1963 despite the threat to his crop by donkeys from the Mukosi River Ranch, yet he was also advised through the *Bepanhau* to use fertilizer and compost manure for an even better yield.⁴⁸⁸ Mr. Chikukwa of farm 357 was publicized for his breakthrough in harvesting 10 bags per acre of millet, *mapfunde*, because he had used hybrid

⁴⁸⁶ Interview with councilor JJ Chemhuru.

⁴⁸⁷ MS10/3 *Mshawasha Bepanhau* June 1964.

⁴⁸⁸ MS10/3 *Mshawasha Bepanhau*, September 1963.

seed. The local varieties, singled out by name, 'Rada', 'Tsveta' and 'Ngaima' could not reach this yield, the *Bepanhau* advised.⁴⁸⁹ Mr. Zishiri of farm 364 was hailed as an example in the use of fertilizer for his maize which yielded him 12 bags on half an acre. Mr. Zishiri and his family the paper wrote, did not want to waste their time, labour and acreage and, if they could be emulated, the farmers would earn more money.⁴⁹⁰ Equally, Mr. Nhega Sward of farm 42, Mr. Takuva of farm 100 and Mr. Samuel Munodawafa of farm 115 successfully fenced their farms in 1963 and won accolades.⁴⁹¹ Others were congratulated for successfully dozing their stock with Phemothiazine and these included K. Mataka farm 120, Fayindi farm 368, Pesanai Chipatiso farm 113, JJ Hama farm 132, Nyasha farm 407 and Mr. Ishmael of farm 397. All farms were encouraged to place 'placards on their houses inscribed, 'Ziso Remurimi Rinokodza Zvipfuwo' literally, the 'eye of the farmer fattens his own stock'. Even those who lost stock to vermin got remorse in the paper for instance Samuel Munodawafa who lost 6 sheep to hyenas.⁴⁹² Irrigation work was encouraged and took shape at the farms of Messrs. Muhera (137), Mugabe, (110), Chiwawa (49) and. Jaya (101). These farmers were irrigating potatoes, cabbages, onions, carrots, choumolia, beetroot, tomatoes and peas.⁴⁹³

Farmers were also encouraged to build 'big houses' and there is a whole ethnography to be drawn from the architecture of these houses with such Victorian features as chimneys, lounges and coal stoves which are still a significant feature of the farming landscape of Chishanga. In 1964, 'livestock clubs' had been formed at Mamvura, Vuramba, Gwira and Bangomwe.

⁴⁸⁹ 'Mubairo wakabva Pakukohwa Mapfunde' *Mushawasha Bepanhau* September, 1963.

⁴⁹⁰ 'Chiratidzo Che Feteraiza Pamunda' *Mushawasha Bepanhau*, September 1963.

⁴⁹¹ 'Fencing: Kusosa Mapurazi' Ibid.

⁴⁹² 'Zvipfuwo, Livestock; ibid.

⁴⁹³ 'Kudiridza' Ibid.

Members each paid 10/- to purchase syringes, dozing guns and the required medicines.⁴⁹⁴ This announcement was made to frown upon those in other parts of the Purchase Area that had not done so. At the same time praise was showered on those that had been able to inoculate their stock such as Messrs Gavhure, Chiwawa, Hama, Marindo, Zivengwa, Mushiringi, Chawa, Pirimukai, Mayimba, Madangombe, Mhini as well as those who had ordered inoculation medicine such as Chisvas, Mavushe, Mudangaza, Zinyakatira and Rambanapasi.⁴⁹⁵

The Mshawasha Cooperative Store also started operating in 1964. Initially it was meant to incorporate all the farmers in Mshawasha West until members from the area north of the Govogwe river expressed reservations over accessing the cooperative store some fifteen kilometers south at Chingombe. It was too far for them and they proposed to build another one at Vuramba. Meanwhile, there was only enough money to start the one at Chingombe and the Vuramba 'Kopa' remained a dream, leaving most of the farming business from that end to be conducted at Vuramba school.⁴⁹⁶

In practice however life had been made more difficult for these purchase area farmers by the introduction of 'community development'. Principally, the cooperatives were designed to monitor and deny them any level of flexibility in the marketing of their produce except through the Marketing Boards from which they were forced to contribute to the African Development Levy. It was this levy that would make up the African Loan Fund which was the principal source

⁴⁹⁴ The Chairpersons were Messrs, M. Dhliwayo, J. Makotore, J. Lucas, H. Takuva, and T. Chando while the Secretaries were Messrs. M.C. Munodawafa, Faindi Sibanda, M. Makasi, J. Hama and Chinavi.

⁴⁹⁵ 'Vatungamiri Venhengo dze Sungano', 'Sanganai navarimi ava', *Mshawasha Bepanhau* June 1964.

⁴⁹⁶ 'Imba yeKopa yoVuramba', 'Nhengo Dzichavaka Imba Yadzo, (Depot)' Ibid. Interview with Councillor J. Chemhuru.

of development financing in African areas and which could only be accessed in some cases if Africans belonged to cooperatives.

8.3 ‘Primary Development’ and The Shumbayaonda/Mapanzure Irrigation Scheme

In 1963 the RF government decided to launch ‘primary development’, a policy offshoot from mainstream ‘community development’ aimed at developing sparsely populated TTLs and expanding irrigation schemes by reducing the acreages of individual plots from the traditional 4 acres of the Land Husbandry period (which were now considered unproductive) to more strictly monitored allocations of 2 acres.⁴⁹⁷ As far as the first aim was concerned, we have already shown in the previous chapter the movement of a section of the Mapanzure and some Charumbira people to Matibi II in 1957. However, the ever-increasing land shortage as well as the drought that set in from 1966 to around 1972, made the irrigation part of ‘primary development’ a priority issue. Indeed, in 1969, the RF government added water to the list of items that became the responsibility of local communities as well. It was in this context that the Shumbayaonda Irrigation Scheme was established in Chishanga in 1969, primarily to contain an ecological disaster and to leave the responsibility of water management to the local community rather than develop small scale irrigation based commercial agriculture. The consequences were an irrigation project run on authoritarian terms by the local District Commissioner without recourse to the needs and desires of the plotters.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁷ Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, p. 71-72

⁴⁹⁸ MS/2/1 Ministry of Internal Affairs Circular no. 172, Addendum ‘A’ Tribal Trust Land, 22 March 1967.

The existing condition of the land in Mapanzure reserve was perceived as a serious erosion hazard which could be remedied only by increasing crop cover through irrigation support.⁴⁹⁹ In addition, an irrigation project was seen as the only way to relaunch and sustain cattle feeding programmes since no remedy to the shortage of grazing land had been found since the days of the Land Husbandry Act and the *rambotemwa* saga.⁵⁰⁰ In September 1966, plans were put in place that an area of 50 acres could be irrigated all year round with an additional 100 acres that could be irrigated in summer on a supplementary basis. Water was to be drawn from the stream flow of Musogwezi river immediately south of Shumbayaonda school, to reduce engineering costs. It fell within the larger catchment area of the proposed Tokwe Mukorsi Dam but its own catchment area was 28 or so square miles in the greater part of the hilly Chishanga plateau incorporating most of the *gadzingo* area.

Later on, in 1968, Noel Hunt the Provincial Commissioner and A.B.N. Beale the District Commissioner, approached Chief Gwenhamo Mapanzure and the three village-heads of the area where the scheme was to be established, not for their permission, but to inform them that an irrigation project was already underway and to offer them the concession that their people would be given first priority in the allocation of irrigation plots. Once again, Chief Mapanzure put his diplomacy to work and chose not to object directly. Hunt wrote; 'In the unlikely event of there being plots to spare after the three kraalheads are satisfied the chief will find people from his followers to take them. He is anxious to keep the scheme for his people.'⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁹ S3700/49/20/1 Mapanzure (Shumbayaonda) Irrigation Scheme 1967-1972, T.W.F. Jordan, Provincial Agricultural Officer, 'Cropping Programmes: Irrigation Projects: Tribal trust Land: Victoria Province', 26th January 1970.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁰¹ S3700/49/20/1 PC, Victoria to Secretary, Internal Affairs 18th September, 1968.

In reality, however, interest in the scheme was very low. By 1970 only 7 farmers were on the scheme growing 2 acres of cash crop and 1 acre of fodder crop.⁵⁰² Part of the reason lay also in the fact that existing Land Husbandry dry land allocations, where the people were settled, seemed better than going to farm just 2 acres of arable land instead of 6. Later on, an extra acre was allowed each plotholder after an edaphological survey had confirmed that the Mapanzure soils were indeed poor and leached easily. This third acre, however, came with the price that it had to be devoted only to pasture or fodder crops and that the plotholder had to pay the same water rate for the third acre as for the other two.

Still, volunteers were not forthcoming and the administration had to resort to compulsion. The Land Husbandry right holders whose lands had been included in the scheme were forced to move from the land if they did not decide to become plotholders. This way, the people of Matarirano and Muvengwa villages lost their 100.8 acres which were compensated for 'improvements' at the rate of £5 per acre.⁵⁰³ Indeed, even for those that chose to enter the scheme, there was very little flexibility; their cropping programme was dictated by the DC with a view to experiment on risks in the initial years so that it would be known which was the best crop to plant in the future. In summer all the farmers had to dedicate one acre to maize and another to groundnuts of a specified variety while in winter another acre was set aside for wheat.⁵⁰⁴

The RF government was unwilling to pay for this 'primary development' and was content to rely on money generated through the African Development Fund. The money initially invested in the

⁵⁰² Based on 'Project Report on the Mapanzure Irrigation Scheme: Victoria Tribal Trust Land 26th January, 1970'.

⁵⁰³ S3700/49/20/1 Henson to Sumner 14th October 1969.

⁵⁰⁴ S3700/49/20/1 Minutes of the Second Mapanzure Irrigation Scheme Cropping Programme, Fort Victoria, 6th October 1969.

Shumbayaonda Irrigation Scheme had to be recovered although this was impossible with the rate at which local people were taking up plots in the scheme. Only about 14 plotholders existed in 1971 and this number was too small to set up a cooperative to enable them to purchase fertilizer and seed or to market their crops and become self-reliant. The DC's office became even more involved in the day to day running of the irrigation to recover the initial costs.⁵⁰⁵ Crop failures and the ravages of frost made such a task difficult to achieve in the first two years; 'I personally think we would be foolish to try to fill this [irrigation scheme] too quickly' wrote W.E.J. Henson, the new DC, in his quarterly report on Mapanzure in 1970, 'If by September 1971 the scheme is not more than 80% full, I would be prepared to consider trying ¼ or ½ acre plots if we have a decent season.'⁵⁰⁶ In 1972 smaller plots of ¼ acre were introduced in order to draw off as many farmers as possible from the dry lands, with an added concession that a farmer could retain his dry land allocation in addition to his ¼ acre irrigation plot. If they elected to give up their dry land allocation, they would then qualify for a 1 or 2 acre plot.⁵⁰⁷ This at once attracted the farmers and ushered in a an era of 'zvikota' pl. (from 'quarter') where one could live the way they had always lived and cultivate their traditional lands yet still have a '*chikota*' of irrigated cultivation. In 1973, about 8 hectares of 0.1ha plots were demarcated and they proved popular amongst the locals and, apparently, more requests began to trickle in.⁵⁰⁸

The relaxed conditions of the irrigation scheme were interpreted as a triumph against government authoritarianism. The Mapanzure people believe that they successfully obtained from an overweening state, a version of irrigation on their terms, and the credit for this resilience

⁵⁰⁵ S3700/49/20/1 Henson to Sumner 18th October 1969.

⁵⁰⁶ S3700/49/20/1 Quarterly Irrigation Report on Mapanzure Scheme, 23 January 1971

⁵⁰⁷ S3700/49/20/2 Mapanzure Shumbayaonda Irrigation Scheme Vol. 2 'Restricted Project Report on Mapanzure Irrigation Scheme Augmented to 150 acres All-Year-Round, March 1972.

⁵⁰⁸ S3700/49/20/2 J.G. Becking Irrigation Officer to DC Victoria 1st November 1974.

is given to the wise leadership provided by Manyoka son of Chief Gwenhamo who spearheaded the campaign on behalf of his ailing father. Gwenhamo died in 1973, the year that the '*zvikota*' were introduced, leaving Manyoka as acting chief until 1984. 'We were not against the development brought by the irrigation...' Manyoka revealed in an interview, '...but we did not want the way they wanted to run it with our own water'.⁵⁰⁹

The rise in the number of plottolders meant a bigger demand for water and the need to establish a permanent supply. This led to the construction of the Gozho dam in 1974. Once again, families living around the site of the dam were immediately moved. The exercise was done at short notice and negotiations for compensation were only entertained after the evictions had taken place. Various disputes arose with the DC's office over the criteria of valuation but chiefly on the fate of the local graves that were to be covered by the dam. Originally all this work had proceeded without the consultation or permission of the now (acting) Chief Mapanzure. He was only called after the graves issue had raised a furore, but even then, his role was only to receive R\$90 in person on behalf of the people whose graves had been disturbed. This did not go down well with the people and in the same year, 1974, a flood damaged the dam.⁵¹⁰ The people of Gozho explained it as a curse on the dam and a failure to respect their dead, let alone consulting the Chishanga ancestors for the use of their water.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁹ Interview with Raphael Manyoka Gwenhamo, Mapanzure Communal Lands, 12/04/2004.

⁵¹⁰ S3700/49/20/2 Water Supplies Engineer to the Provincial Water Engineer, Victoria, 12th February 1975.

⁵¹¹ Interview with Machongwe Chihava, Ngomahuru Hospital 31 December 2006.

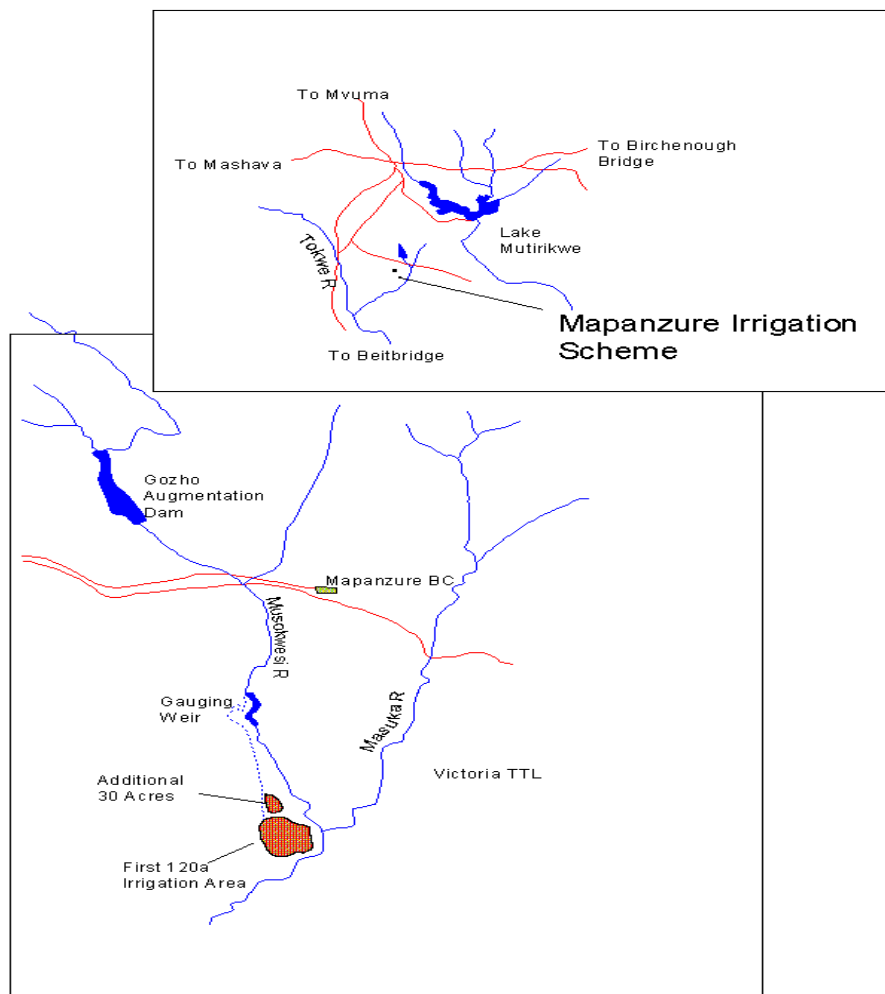


Fig. 8. 1: Mapanzure Irrigation Scheme Plan [Map not drawn to Scale]

As the situation obtaining in most parts of the country was already demonstrating, the RF government's versions of 'community development' had succeeded in antagonising the rural population and had been implemented at considerable costs to the Africans. The rise in guerrilla activity in the second half of the 1970s owed much to the support of a strained rural peasantry so that the main objects of guerrilla attack became those instruments of exploitation introduced by 'community development'. The RF responded by allocating more powers to chiefs leaving

guerrillas with the dilemma of traditional legitimacy in the eyes of the people if they attacked the same chiefs. Jocelyn Alexander's work has ably deconstructed this thinking by showing that guerrillas and nationalists preferred to recruit chiefs rather than attacking them because they were not opposed to customary authority but to the abuse it was being put to by the RF.⁵¹² She develops this argument by demonstrating the individual agency of chiefs in using their high profile meetings with government ministers and senior officials as well as their new role in the Republican Senate to seek concessions for their people within this precarious position by clamouring for more land. This, Alexander argues, they were able to do on the basis of the historic claims of their chieftaincies agitating for the opening up of 'Unreserved Areas' or 'Unalienated Crown Land'.⁵¹³ Manyoka Mapanzure carried on the diplomacy of his father and was one of the few successful chiefs who manoeuvred the tight ropes of the politics of the RF and successfully obtained back the *gadzingo* to the people of Chishanga and, by the same token, the restitution of their long lost lands.

8.4 The Return of the Ancestral *Gadzingo* 1969-1976

As the demand for more land increased, the Ministry of Internal Affairs was inundated with requests to avail certain tracts of unoccupied land for purposes of settlement. However, a circular of the Secretary for Internal Affairs which followed the passing of The Tribal Trust Land Act in 1967 made it explicitly clear that owing to the shortage of land and the need to gazette boundaries of tribal areas, it was forbidden to issue out land or resettle anyone. 'Where Tribal Trust Land comprises large areas of unoccupied land which lend themselves to large scale new

⁵¹² Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, p.84.

⁵¹³ Ibid. p.85.

settlement...;’ it stated, ‘it may be necessary, for the time being, to hold up the inclusion of such sections in tribal areas because it may be necessary to move a tribal group for settlement in such an area.’ The Secretary gave the examples of the resettlement of Chief Jiri and Chief Jahana to Gokwe TTL to illustrate this case. He continued;

It must be appreciated that in many instances these tracts of Tribal Trust Land were previously Crown Land or Private Land and their mere transfer to Tribal Trust Land *does not entitle a local chief to claim the area just because he believes that the spirits of his ancestors traversed it*⁵¹⁴[my emphasis].

District Commissioners were especially reminded that it was not policy ‘to reserve tracts of unoccupied or sparsely occupied land for a particular tribe’s future population increase, or to allow Tribal Land Authorities to do so.’⁵¹⁵ However, the case that developed in Mapanzure defied all these instructions first, by getting back the *gadzingo* on the strength that ‘the spirits of the Mapanzure ancestors traversed it’ and, secondly, by winning over the support and cooperation of the local DC and PC in making a case for the return of this Mapanzure ancestral land for use by its expanding population.

At face value, this development could be interpreted to mean that the administration was rewarding the loyalty of Chief Mapanzure over the years, something they still saw in his son and successor Manyoka. Yet, through the African Affairs Act of 1966, the RF government was already seeking, overtly, to restore ‘more dignity and power to chiefs’. Ranger’s study of Makoni chiefs remains the best illustrative description of the mechanics of this shifting emphasis to legitimate chiefs in the eyes of the African people. Ranger dubs this effort and the whole ‘Community Development’ exercise ‘belated Indirect Rule’ which fed on a notion of Chiefship that was both anachronistic and discredited. Restoring the legitimacy of chiefs on such a version

⁵¹⁴ MS/2/1 Ministry of Internal Affairs, Circular 172, Addendum ‘A’, Tribal Trust Land Act, 22 March 1967.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid, p.2.

of revived 'tradition' and 'custom', Ranger argues, were no answer to a modernizing revolution in so far as the guerilla war was turning out to be.⁵¹⁶ DCs all over the country became pre-occupied with this project seeking to have more say in the succession and appointment of chiefs within the strictures of the 'customary principles of succession of the tribe over which the chief is to preside'. Moreover, the administrators observed the importance of tribal spirits and insisted that they be propitiated.⁵¹⁷ The DCs not only frowned upon the appointment procedures of chiefs by their predecessors in the Native Affairs department who had erred in not giving due recognition to the 'virtues of African tradition and custom' but, as David Lan shows us in Dande, the DCs began to see themselves as the 'custodians of Shona tradition, a bulwark against the "communist-inspired" agitators who were dedicated to tearing down the hallowed customs of the people.'⁵¹⁸

Ranger and Lan both agree that these efforts by the RF were counter-productive and that they were passing on a huge advantage to the African nationalists and guerrillas to emerge as the legitimate representatives of the people and alternatives to these 'invented' chiefs. Equally, this search for authenticity led to a growing fascination with, and increasing attempts to harness, spirit mediums. Where possible, as in the case of Dande, DCs became *de-facto* spirit mediums-in the sense of presiding over succession and appointments of chiefs-and pastmasters of local genealogies in search of authentic succession lines.⁵¹⁹ The result of all these efforts for the rest of the country was the 'Spirit Index', compiled by officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in

⁵¹⁶ T.O. Ranger, 'Tradition and Travesty: Chiefs and the Administration in Makoni District 1960-1980', *Africa* vol. 52 no. 3, *Past and Present in Zimbabwe* (1982), p.24.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁸ D. Lan, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe* (James Currey, Oxford, 1985), p.186.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*

1973, locating each spirit medium and his or her connection with the chieftainship.⁵²⁰ Once again, Ranger draws our attention to the crucial ambiguity inherent in this RF politics of tradition; that is, the way in which the chiefs themselves saw and interpreted it. In the administration's eyes, their concept of tradition was a series of 'dos and don'ts' defining, specifically, the limits of the government's power and that of the chiefs. Most chiefs however, gave it a more pragmatic interpretation, viewing tradition in its true and authentic sense as a means of increasing their own power. Such 'strong' chiefs effectively made the administration taste its own medicine by creatively using this rigid antiquarian version of 'tradition' to their own advantage, in other words by interpreting it literally.⁵²¹

Chief Gwenhamo Mapanzure was by no means one such a 'strong' chief in the eyes of the RF administration. To them he was 'loyal'. By 1967 he was fully aware of this and was taking advantage of the overtures government was making to chiefs as well as the warm relationship he had cultivated with the local DC to take pragmatic steps to lobby for the return of the Mapanzure *gadzingo* 'Crown Land' back to his people. Gwenhamo Mapanzure was a perfect example of the much sought after 'authentic' whose case made a straightforward link to his ancestry. He was only a third generation successor to the founders of his dynasty, being the last born son of Mazorodze, the 'shaper' of the Mapanzure dynasty.⁵²² Unlike in Makoni where the DC observed in 1972 that the succession of many members of the Ndafunya family was 'a break in custom' that was accepted by former NCs for administrative expediency, the succession of seven sons of

⁵²⁰ S3276/4 Notes on the Mediums, Spirit Healers, Church Leaders and Cult Places in the Victoria Province, May 1973.

⁵²¹ Ranger, 'Tradition and Travesty', p.24.

⁵²² See Section 3.6 of this thesis.

Mazorodze to the Mapanzure chieftainship was viewed as a perfect and stable line of custom.⁵²³

RF officials in the Victoria Province were particularly interested in locating each medium in the 'spiritual hierarchy within the district' and their relationship with other mediums in neighbouring districts.⁵²⁴ Gwenhamo made the job of the Victoria DC much easier, he was also the spirit medium of the two important Hera ancestors Mutunha and Ndyakavamwa. In his entry for Chief Mapanzure in the 'Spirit Index', the DC wrote;

...He is medium to an ancestral spirit. Ceremonies are held at Zhou mountain near a large mutondo tree somewhere near the summit. Only the medium and elders are allowed there. The medium is dressed in a lion skin and a black cloth. Beer is brewed by that section of the community for which the ceremony is being held. The elders of the section of the community take the beer to the hill where they hand it to the medium's acolyte or interpreter who relays the request to the medium....⁵²⁵

Mapanzure's perceived 'loyalty' could only have sweetened the pot. It is also tempting to suggest that the binary distinction of collaborators and resisters was an invention of colonial officials, a product of a 'laager mentality' that always developed when they faced the potential of an African revolt. This mentality, perfected over years of native administration since the 1896/7 risings defined 'troublemakers' from 'friendlies' and was quite often rigid and reminiscent of the events of that period of turmoil. It will be remembered that Mapanzure and most Victoria chiefs were some of these 'friendlies' who were rewarded with salaries after the 1896/7 risings.⁵²⁶

Chief Gwenhamo Mapanzure on his part was careful enough to involve his TLA and to ask his *dare* to accompany him in all his negotiations. Already, the Department of Lands was concerned

⁵²³ Ranger, 'Tradition and Travesty', p. 33, Weinrich, *Chiefs and Council* p. 206.

⁵²⁴ S3276/4 H.E. Sumner PC to the DCs Bikita, Chibi, Chiredzi, Gutu, Ndanga, Nuanetsi, Victoria, 11 May 1973.

⁵²⁵ S3276/4 'Spirit Index', Entry 441 Chief Mapanzure of Victoria TTL, 1973.

⁵²⁶ See Section 4.4. of this thesis.

that the land that Chief Mapanzure claimed was being used ‘by all and sundry’ without any measure of control although it was useless because of its topography.⁵²⁷ Similarly, Mshawasha farmers whose holdings bordered this land had for long left their cattle to stray there. Previous debates on its use during the Land Husbandry days had led the Land Inspectorate to contemplate sharing the land between the adjacent Mshawasha Purchase Area holdings and the Mapanzure Reserve.⁵²⁸ The request by Chief Mapanzure and his *dare* was well-timed for they followed hard upon the findings of the Robinson Commission’s Working Party ‘D’, just as it coincided with the ongoing, high profile administrative debates on the fate of ‘Crown Lands’ across the country. W.E.J. Henson, the District Commissioner, certainly wanted to solve the perennial grazing problem in Mapanzure Reserve but he also wanted the cooperation of Chief Mapanzure in the implementation of the various ‘community development’ projects he had launched there including the Shumbayaonda Irrigation Scheme. Indeed, even for the loyalty of Mapanzure whom Henson considered ‘one of the most progressive and loyal chiefs in the district’, it was in place to return the favour by throwing his weight behind the request. The Provincial Commissioner, HE Sumner was won over through a series of correspondence on the subject and he supported the application.⁵²⁹

Henson hoped that this Crown Land, which had originally been set aside for the expansion of the Mshawasha Purchase Area, could simply be handed over to the Victoria TTL without involving any ‘exchange’ which was forbidden under the just passed Land Tenure Act.⁵³⁰ This was the

⁵²⁷ S3700/106/6/4 *Zhou Transfer: Exchanges, Transfers of Land, Mshawasha Purchase Land Victoria District 1969-1976*. Senior Inspector, Lands Inspectorate, (P.J. Lilliot) Fort Victoria to Chief Inspector, Causeway, 13th November 1969.

⁵²⁸ S3700/106/6/4 Lilliot to Chief Inspector, 24th November 1969, see also Section 7.3. of this thesis.

⁵²⁹ S3700/106/6/4 DC Victoria (WEJ Henson) to PC Victoria (HE Sumner) 18th November, 1969.

⁵³⁰ S3700/106/6/4 Henson to Secretary Internal Affairs 4th December 1969.

beginning of all the troubles with various government departments which generated piles of correspondence that, above all, demonstrate Henson's support for Chief Mapanzure and his *dare* in his spirited fights with fellow officials in the different government departments.

The first objection to such a transfer came from the Department of Agriculture who expressed concern over the current state of this land. It was still, in their opinion, infertile and therefore needed to be placed under some recovery scheme until it restored its fertility. Only then could the transfer be effected.⁵³¹

Second was the Department of Land Settlement who were 'not entirely happy' with the proposed transfer and ordered an investigation into the area for settlement purposes in consultation with the Board of Trustees of the Victoria TTL as a whole.⁵³² In fact, they could only consider the recommendation if enough reasons had been put to justify the transfer. In this, they found the full backing of D. Espach, the Secretary for Agriculture who disagreed completely with any move to transfer any portion of the Mshawasha African Purchase Land (APL) to Victoria TTL since no 'exchange' was contemplated to make up for the land that would have been lost by the APL. He felt that the Department of Agricultural Land Settlement and the Ministry of Agriculture in general, were inundated with problems emanating from the APLs as well as pressure for consolidating land into larger farming units daily. The Agricultural ministry was already considering policies to deal with such issues and, so far as the Mshawasha case was

⁵³¹ S3700/106/6/4 Sumner to Secretary Internal Affairs, Salisbury, 27 November 1969.

⁵³² S3700/106/6/4 Secretary For Lands, Causeway to The Secretary for Internal Affairs, 5 March 1970.

concerned, no action could be taken which was likely 'to cut across matters of principle which [were] shortly to be determined'.⁵³³

This did not deter Henson and his boss at the Victoria office, who pressed the matter further on the basis of three main reasons; first, that it was 'ancestral burial ground of the Mapanzure tribe', secondly that its topography made it unsuitable for settlement even by the APL farmers making it only suitable for rough grazing and lastly, that Chief Mapanzure and his *dare* had made numerous and repeated requests for this land to be brought under his dominion.⁵³⁴ In addition, they secured a guarantee from the Provincial Agricultural Officer to place the area under planned grazing to restore grass cover and fertility once the transfer was effected. Still, the Department of Agriculture remained adamant, arguing that such land was better off added to the APL to expand the arable areas of the farmers. Henson dismissed this thinking arguing that even if this land was given to an APL farmer, that farmer would never cultivate it because it was in a chief's burial ground for fear that 'the tribal spirits would be insulted and wreck their revenge on him!'⁵³⁵

Sumner supported this view once more although he was getting irritated by the objections of the agricultural ministry. The correspondence slowly degenerated and he quipped;

There must surely be a very strong case for including within a tribal area its chief's ancestral burial ground when such is possible. The Secretary for Agriculture's letter deals with a hypothetical problem rather than a real one. Any farmer who has on his farm an ancestral burial ground might find his land burnt out at regular intervals. I respectfully suggest that the Secretary for Agriculture is not facing the facts of the case.⁵³⁶

⁵³³ S3700/106/6/4 Secretary for Agriculture to Under Secretary Agricultural Land Settlement, Causeway 5th October 1970.

⁵³⁴ S3700/106/6/4 Secretary for Internal Affairs to Secretary for Lands 26th October 1970.

⁵³⁵ S3700/106/6/4 Henson to Sumner 25th November 1970.

⁵³⁶ S3700/106/6/4 Sumner to Secretary for Internal Affairs Salisbury, 4 December 1970.

In subsequent correspondence, he went on to state that the Secretary for Agriculture's reasoning was emotional rather than practical since it evaded the question of the abuse that the land was being subjected to by 'all and sundry' and totally ignored the fact that it actually was a burial ground for chiefs.⁵³⁷ The Agricultural Ministry remained adamant and maintained that this was a policy issue still under consideration and one which no decision could be passed, although the strong reasons advanced would be taken into account.⁵³⁸ This was enough to silence the DC for a while since the end of 1970 and the matter was kept in abeyance for the rest of 1971 until the Under Secretary for Agriculture returned to it in August 1972.

This was the year that the administration of purchase areas was handed over to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and, it appeared, the Lands department had been experiencing numerous requests of this nature from overpopulated areas near or adjacent to purchase areas. One such request had come from Budya in Mtoko, not less than 2 or 3 years before. The Ministry of Agriculture had, in all, been resisting such suggestions in view of the pending transfer of administration. In this context then, any detailed consideration to the transfer of the Zhou area had to be deferred until the administration of both TTLs and APLs was in the hands of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.⁵³⁹ The Internal Affairs officials certainly felt that, were it not for the administrative concerns, the Ministry of Agriculture was agreeable in principle and this way now, the ball was back in their court. It was therefore essential to begin to make the noise once again by submitting a fresh application.

⁵³⁷ S3700/106/6/4 Sumner to Secretary for Internal Affairs Salisbury, 5th October 1972.

⁵³⁸ S3700/106/6/4 Secretary for Land to Secretary for Internal Affairs, 23rd December 1970.

⁵³⁹ S3700/106/6/4 Undersecretary, Agricultural Land Settlement to Secretary for Internal Affairs 3 August 1972.

Henson was quick, and in September 1972 he had submitted a fresh application with slightly modified reasons for supporting the transfer. The area was required as a traditional burial ground for Chief Mapanzure and as grazing area for his chiefdom which was so heavily populated simple! Now, since the matter was now under the administration of the ministry pushing for it, and following reassurances in 1970 that once a policy position had been reached the matter would be considered on its merits, it was the best time to prod the Secretary of Internal Affairs once more. Sumner was careful even to supply supporting historical material in the form of the 'Duma notes' which detailed the position of Mapanzure as a chief within the Mshawasha Purchase Area. He wrote;

If you will consult the Duma notes at page 6, bottom, and page 7, top, you will find that the whole of Mshawasha Purchase Land Area belonged to the Duma chief Murinye, by whom it was divided up. Mapanzure comes into picture as a neighbour of the Duma people.⁵⁴⁰

Once again, the matter subsided until the middle of 1973 when Henson made yet another inquiry. This was prompted by a request made by Acting Chief Manyoka Mapanzure and his TLA asking whether it would be possible for them to rent this state land, pending the decision to transfer it to them, particularly as they were suffering from a very severe drought that year.⁵⁴¹ Sumner recommended that urgent and sympathetic consideration be granted to the proposal but had his reservations which he made explicitly clear to the Secretary for Internal Affairs.

I am not greatly in favour of hiring land to tribesmen who would, when once in occupation by means of some form of legal right, be very difficult to evict when the right expired.⁵⁴²

The effect of this reminder was useful since it was out of order to sound insensitive to a TLA whose support they relied heavily on to deal with the situation in Mapanzure reserve. Thus by

⁵⁴⁰ S3700/106/6/4 Sumner to Secretary for Internal Affairs Salisbury 5th October 1972.

⁵⁴¹ S3700/106/6/4 Henson to Sumner 7th April 1973.

⁵⁴² S3700/106/6/4 Sumner to Secretary for Internal Affairs, Salisbury 13th April 1973.

May 1973, the Memorandum for the proposed transfer had passed through most of the important signatures in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. However, in July the proposal hit another snag, this time, with the Department of Conservation and Extension, CONEX, whose Directors made it categorically clear that they were 'entirely opposed' to the proposed transfer for a number of reasons. Firstly, that the area was extremely broken country which 'constituted a fairly major watershed between the Musokwezi River and the more northerly Goborgwe River, both tributaries of the Tokwe River'. For them, it was unwise, in the extreme, to subject this land to close tribal settlement. Secondly, they were of the opinion that the correct land use would be semi-extensive medium scale ranching with an appreciably high hectareage per livestock unit. Alternatively, some fifty 'tribal families' could be settled on this land as opposed to cutting into 5 or 6 APA ranches. TTL settlement in this area however, was seen as 'highly hazardous'. Thirdly the transfer of land as proposed would be received with great resentment by the purchase area farmers. Lastly it would split the Mshawasha West Intensive Conservation Area (ICA) into separate, unconnected portions.⁵⁴³

The new Secretary for Land Settlement, F. Curton was equally as resentful, this case being reminiscent of the correspondence entered into by his predecessor who had objected to the transfer since no 'exchange' of land was contemplated in the transfer. He even thought that when the consolidation of the state land in the area had been undertaken, this Zhou state land ought to be advantageously used to extend the grazing areas of surrounding farms rather than being converted to TTL.⁵⁴⁴ All this had the effect of delaying the whole transfer process which could not be effected any sooner in view of the opposition. This lasted another year and in early 1974

⁵⁴³ S3700/106/6/4 Director of Conservation and Extension to Secretary Internal Affairs 13 July 1973.

⁵⁴⁴ S3700/106/6/4 Under Secretary Agricultural Land Settlement to Secretary for Internal Affairs, 18th July 1973.

when the Purchase Land Administration department had been established in the Internal Affairs Ministry, there still was some difference of opinion. D.L. Redman, the Assistant Secretary for Purchase Area Administration was also convinced that the area will cut a deep incision into the African Purchase area and cut off some 25 farms from the main purchase lands. He proposed that the burial grounds themselves be identified so that the area to be transferred could easily be determined. In fact he was as skeptical and cynically remarked;

Excuse my ignorance, but how important are these burial grounds, as I feel that unless they are visited regularly they are being used as an excuse for more land. In any case, they could be demarcated and excluded from any APL consolidations.⁵⁴⁵

An instruction was relayed to Henson down at the Victoria office to mark the burial grounds on the map but he was unmoved and found this a ridiculous requirement. He called in Manyoka the acting Chief and the Agricultural Officer Mr. Pswarayi and proceeded to mark those points on the map that had been supplied by the department of Purchase Area Administration. Once again, it did not make sense and he was frank in his response;

It would appear that as the area is comprised largely of hills, the ancestors have, to a degree, each had their own hill, and therefore a large percentage of the area can be classified as burial ground.⁵⁴⁶

This was to a large extent a very practical response and, as has been shown in the pre-colonial chapters, it warranted so much merit in the appreciation of local uses of the landscape. Henson also took the opportunity to crush the objections raised by the Purchase Area Administration department one by one. First, regarding the objection that this transfer will cut an incision into Mshawasha, this was baseless because by its very nature and present state, the area was already a deep incision as Crown Land. This gave value to the fact that it was obviously considered

⁵⁴⁵ S3700/106/6/4 Assistant Secretary for Purchase Area Administration, L. Redman to Secretary for Internal Affairs, Salisbury, 14 March 1974.

⁵⁴⁶ S3700/106/6/4 Henson to PC Victoria 22nd July 1974

incapable of being cut up into farms, otherwise it would have been subdivided. So why include it now? Secondly the separation of 3 farms from the other 25 odd ones could easily be overcome by the consolidation of the intervening land into these farms. Lastly, the separation of Mshawasha ICA into separate unconnected portions was no valid argument since there were no roads in or through this state land and, in fact, Mshawasha West ICA lay to the west of Musogwezi river which was not part of the area concerned.⁵⁴⁷ This was so well expressed and candidly so, that it struck the new Provincial Commissioner R.L. Westcott who commented:

I support the DC unreservedly; the objections raised [by the department of Purchase Area Administration] are frankly, in my view, rather weak excuses for doing nothing to meet the very reasonable request made by the Chief, which dates back to 1967 at least.⁵⁴⁸

He could appreciate that the process of land exchange could delay the transfer but felt there were no other grounds for opposition. Purchase Area Administration at last conceded and agreed to Henson's suggestions. They however did so by seeking to use most of the state land available to extend the farms around it to allow them to make a continuous connection with the other purchase area farms.⁵⁴⁹ Henson, who was now the Acting Provincial Commissioner exercising some measure of authority, was agreeable but felt that it was not really necessary to consolidate such a large area of state land into Purchase Land. He suggested that the boundary should give more land to the TTL.⁵⁵⁰ This suggestion was accepted although it meant changing the original plan that was to be gazetted. The new plan now meant that the following farms were to get extensions to land immediately adjacent them, farm 348 belonging to Chitafi Jaji, farms 34, 38 and 41 (Mavhuna Chivurayise), 124 Shindi, 125 Chimwango, 126 Manhingi, 137 Muhera, 136 Gon'ora, 347 Mutoti, and 349. This was simply to bring together farms that were rather isolated

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid. See also description of farms in the ICA in the previous chapter

⁵⁴⁸ S3700/106/6/4 Provincial Commissioner Victoria, R.L. Westcott to Secretary Internal Affairs, 8th August 1974.

⁵⁴⁹ S3700/106/6/4 L. Redman, Asst. Secretary, Purchase Area Administration to Secretary for Internal Affairs n.d.

⁵⁵⁰ S3700/106/6/4 Henson to Secretary of Internal Affairs 2nd September 1974.

in the past. Now that the necessary groundwork had been laid, the matter was then referred to the Board of Trustees of the Victoria TTL composed mainly of former members of the Native Land Board such as D.L. Reid and others as well as Chief Mukangamwi who endorsed the transfer. The transfer was approved by the President Clifford Dupont on 14th April 1975 in terms of the provisions of the Land Tenure Act of 1969 so that with effect from 1st April 1975 the Zhou Crown Land formally became Tribal Trust Land.⁵⁵¹ However, owing to the fact that this description had to be altered after the further extension of the other farms, a new executive council minute had to be issued now declaring that as from the 30th of April 1976, the Zhou area was now Tribal Trust Land.⁵⁵²

This was the drama of the return of the *gadzingo* of the Mapanzure people which to all intents and purposes was a reward to the apparent cooperation Chief Mapanzure had displayed to RF policies. Although he did not live to see the actual transfer being gazetted, his diplomacy was responsible for the commitment the DC and PC showed to his dream even after his death. What is true however, is that Mapanzure did not achieve this by blindly following government instructions but, by not objecting to them overtly, choosing instead to get the best out of them for his people and the pride of the past.

⁵⁵¹ S3700/106/6/4 Executive Council Minute, 'Transfer of a Portion of Mshawasha African Purchase Area Land to Tribal Trust Land: Victoria District.' 14th April 1975.

⁵⁵² S3700/106/6/4 Executive Council Minute, 'Transfer of a Portion of Mshawasha African Purchase Area Land to Tribal Trust Land: Victoria District.' 15th April 1976.

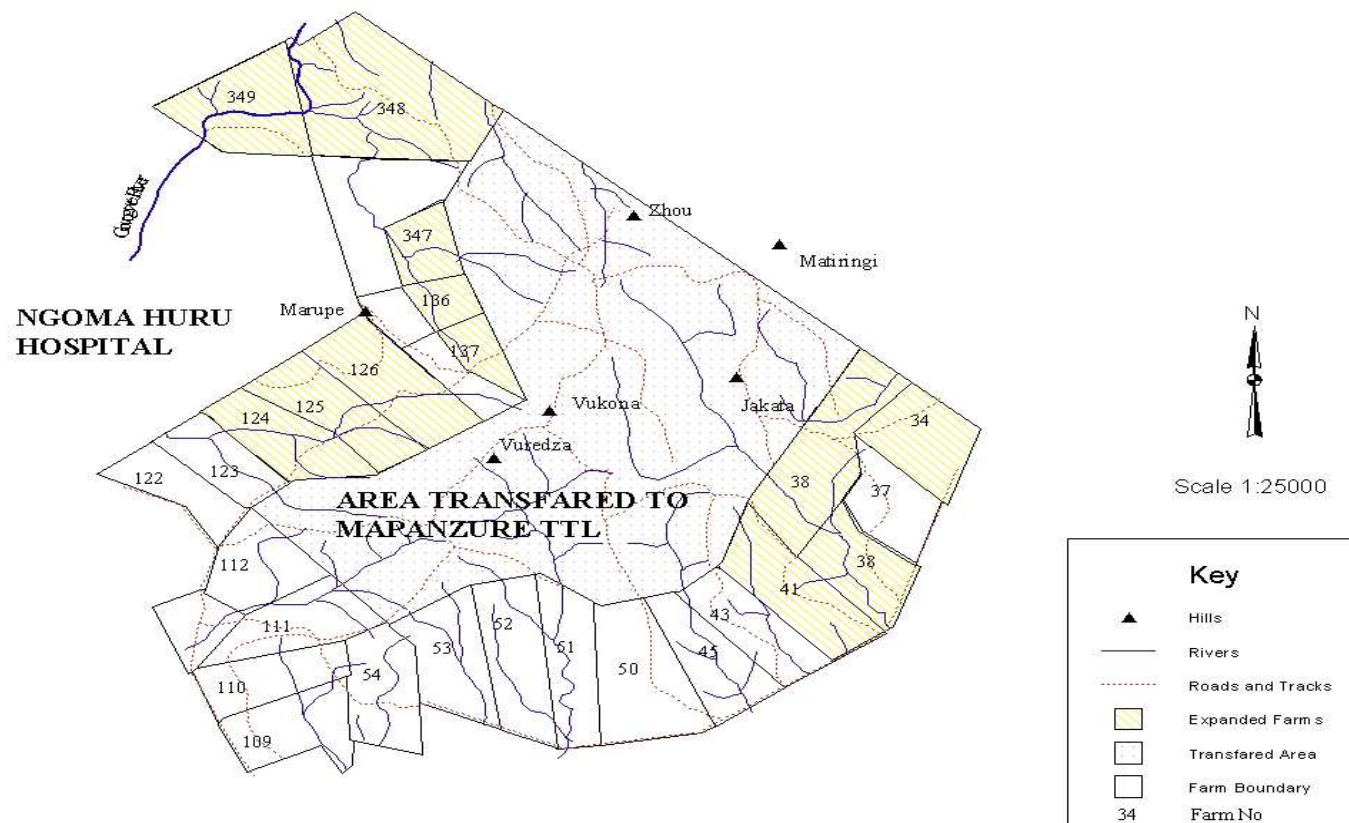


Fig. 8. 2: Gadzingo Area Transferred to Mapanzure TTL

[Modified from S3700/106/6/4 Henson to PC Victoria 22nd July 1974]

8.5 Re-tribalising Purchase Area Farmers 1976-80

The change over of the administration of Purchase Areas to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1972 could be seen as almost inevitable. It was one amongst a series of administrative changes initiated by the influential Secretary of Internal Affairs W.H.H. Nicolle since his appointment in 1965. He was one powerful Internal Affairs official, fully committed to subordinate all government departments dealing with African Affairs to his ministry and, so far as the transfer of Purchase Area Administration from the Department of Agriculture was concerned, it was intended not to leave the purchase area 'out of the current and planned development of the whole African area'.⁵⁵³ In effect Purchase Area Farmers were the remaining class of Africans who still needed to be 're-tribalised' for the RF's return to tradition project to be complete.

To start with, the RF accepted that attempts to modernise African Purchase Land (APL) farmers had failed over the years although it blamed everything on the fluidity of this population rather than on repeated attempts by its predecessors to thwart them as a class. In its thinking, the RF felt that APL farmers were now 'rudderless', that is, they were not sufficiently modernised at much the same time as they had lost their traditional roots. This made them a 'confused' lot who would easily fall prey to the propaganda of the guerrillas who were fast penetrating the countryside. The RF reasoned that APL farmers originated from TTLs where they had been part of the tribal structure and subject to 'the discipline, shelter, and laws of the chieftainship holding sway in the area they lived.' Their strong kinship ties made them part of a system that defined their lives clearly through 'tradition and local custom.' However, when they moved onto Purchase land,

⁵⁵³ Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, p. 85.

these people were 'uplifted' from this traditional way of life and embraced new notions of individualism engendered by freehold individual tenure. They no longer belonged to a community with which they had strong kinship and customary ties but were forced to think as individuals and shun group or communal responsibilities. APL farmers were therefore seen as leaderless and thus insecure, something that made them difficult to handle and non-community minded.

Secondly, the RF acknowledged that APL farmers felt neglected by government and that this stemmed from the lack of a clear, decisive and long term policy position with regard to them. The branch responsible for Purchase Land Administration, it was argued, has had no real 'home' within government having been shuttled from one Ministry or government department to the other over the years. Similarly, there was no coordination amongst those arms or agencies of government operating in the APLs resulting in unnecessary confusion and competition with African Councils where they existed. The government was especially suspicious of the activities and influence of the African Farmers Union. On their part, it seems, APL farmers did not trust that the new development plans originating in the TTLs and spearheaded by DCs would protect their interests in the same manner that the agricultural experts and extension workers had been doing.⁵⁵⁴

It was amidst this atmosphere of uncertainty and distrust that a Working Party within the Ministry of Internal Affairs was appointed to look into the matter at the end of 1975. Its brief was, amongst other things, to investigate the 'strong tribal links' of the landholders and how this affected the occupation of the Purchase Lands, but more importantly, to assess the agencies

⁵⁵⁴ Weinrich, *African Farmers in Rhodesia*, p.29.

presently available to APL farmers with a view to maintain security and monitor the 'political state of the people in purchase lands.'⁵⁵⁵ However, when it began its work, it became pre-occupied with finding ways of subjecting the Purchase Area population to tribal control.

The Working Party, composed mostly of DCs, collected evidence from around the purchase areas and consulted with chiefs, some of whom were invited to the deliberations. In Victoria province as a whole, it was felt that though tribal influence was strong in the Purchase Areas, the African Farmers Union would resist any attempt to extend tribal influence in the purchase areas as much as some chiefs may not cope with the additional responsibilities. Equally, if the farms became part of a tribal area this would encourage even more fluidity that would ultimately overpopulate and ruin the purchase lands in the long term.⁵⁵⁶

Different scenarios presented themselves from the various districts with purchase areas but there was overwhelming evidence of interrelations between APL farmers and adjacent TTLs especially considering that under the inheritance and settlement laws governing purchase areas, the children of purchase area farmers tended to look for land and settle in nearby TTLs. In Chibi, there was evidence that farmers in Jenya Purchase Area originated from various districts and maintained spiritual ties with their former homes. In Gutu, Nyazvidzi purchase area farmers refused to attend tribal courts while the Dewure farmers took their cases to the Chief as that area was formerly TTL and most farmers hailed from there. In one case, a kraalhead actually owned a farm in Dewure. Farmers in Bikita's Mungezi purchase area resisted the chiefs' attempts to

⁵⁵⁵ S3700/106/7 African Purchase Area Administration: Report of the Working Party Set Up by the Minister of Internal Affairs to Investigate and Submit Recommendations of the Future Administration of African Purchase Lands.

⁵⁵⁶ S3700/106/7 African Purchase Area Administration: Minutes of the Working Party on Purchase Lands Held in Salisbury on the 20th January 1976.

control them. In most of these purchase areas, councils were already well established and functioning, Jenya purchase area, for instance, being part of Chibi's Madhlangove African council. Similarly, Zvinyaningwe purchase area had its own council while the Bikita African Council was actually chaired by a Mungezi Purchase land farmer.⁵⁵⁷

Although in Mshawasha purchase area chiefs in adjoining TTLs appointed minor courts composed of farmers and were called upon to assist with rainmaking ceremonies, the situation there was a little more complex. Mshawasha farmers had completely resisted the establishment of councils. Consequently, they had courted the hostility of Internal Affairs officials and in the discussions of the Working Party, these farmers featured prominently as obstacles to progress who should be punished for their misdemeanor. This was possible with a new order introduced in 1975 that required all rural schools to be run by councils and, naturally, those in Mshawasha risked closure. This would affect Mamvura, Mukosi, Gwira, Nyamafufu, Bangomwe, Mandere, Mandini, and Vuramba schools.⁵⁵⁸

All this notwithstanding, the Working Party finally made its recommendations on the basis of two main considerations; first, the practicability of imposing tribal control from an administrative point of view and, secondly, the implications of such a move on the security of the countryside where a war was already in full swing. With regard to the first concern, the Party submitted that the cosmopolitan nature of the population in the purchase areas had led to a lack of community spirit and cohesion that had severely compromised the community development

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁸ S3707/1/5 Victoria Regional Authority: Notices Agenda: Minutes of Meetings September 1975-December 1976: Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the Victoria Regional Authority Held in the Chiefs Hall, Fort Victoria, 24th November, 1975.

policy and effective administration. If tribal control were imposed, it would bring about a policy conflict in the purchase areas where the Ministry of Agriculture had for long wished to completely absorb APLs into the European capitalist economy. Such tribal control would easily compromise and encourage, instead, a feudal subsistence economy.

Secondly, from a security point of view, the Party deemed purchase area farmers to be the most politically vulnerable group of Africans. The individualism fostered by the nature of land occupation in the purchase areas made the farmers lack 'tribal discipline'. This way, they were 'easily swayed and intimidated' so that the farmer became 'easy prey for terrorists and these areas are more easily subverted than any other.' The situation in these areas, the Working Party argued, was compounded by the limited presence of government agencies as compared to what obtained in TTLs which were better served by administrative sub-offices, and police sub-stations. The Working Party did not, however, envisage any change to this state of affairs in the purchase area owing to staff shortages and the deteriorating security situation which demanded urgent attention. It therefore strongly recommended against the extension of tribal control in purchase areas and as an additional precaution, it also advised that no more land should be set aside for the creation of further purchase land.⁵⁵⁹ The Ministry of Internal Affairs, apparently, took these recommendations seriously and this seems to have shaped the attitude of their officials in dealing with purchase area farmers for the entire duration of the war.

⁵⁵⁹ S3700/106/7 Minutes of the Working Party on Purchase Land Administration Held at Fort Victoria on the 22nd January 1976.

8.6 Conclusion

The monumental failure of the Land Husbandry Act and the consequent rise of African nationalist activity in the rural areas forced the Federal government to rethink its administrative strategy of 'progress by compulsion.' By 1962 the state was already in a process of retreat from its paternalist presence in African areas. The political climate also changed with the triumph of the Rhodesian Front party which was committed to apartheid-like ideals of administration based on separate development for Europeans and Africans. It quickly embraced the then fashionable administrative policy of 'community development' and transformed it to a version of rule through African traditional structures with a view to make Africans bear the fiscal burden of administering themselves. In practice, this gave African chiefs the leeway to lobby for concessions that would qualify their authority over their subjects and often, this authority could not come without the ability to avail land. Amidst all the other experiments of 'community development' that were tried on the people of Chishanga, Chief Mapanzure and his *dare* interceded, cooperating as much as possible with the state but at the same time pushing for the return of their ancestral lands.

Officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs pushed this matter forward believing that they were rewarding a loyal chief and his TLA and it is easy to classify Mapanzure as a 'collaborator' of the Smith regime. This chapter has shown that the issue was much deeper than just blind collaboration, that it was diplomacy with a purpose. The ultimate goal was to regain the ancestral *gadzingo*, the centre of pre-colonial Chishanga over which the Mapanzure authority lay,

regaining access to the *gadzingo*, was like re-asserting their pre-colonial authority over a fluid periphery that had undergone so much change in the colonial period. Chief Mapanzure and his TLA realised that they had parallel interests with the colonial government in both their quest to return to tradition. The colonial government wanted tradition to re-establish control over a rural population that was becoming increasingly vulnerable to nationalist propaganda, the Mapanzure traditionalist wanted it to reassert their authority over a territory that had been exposed to a continued process of disaggregation.

Chapter 9

‘Liberating’ Chishanga: The War and Its Local Meanings

9.1 Introduction

Any serious investigation of the war in rural Zimbabwe needs to take into account what local people perceived and remember as ‘war’. More frequently, one encounters in the memories of different people ‘war situations’. Such memories can recall actual battles between guerrillas and the Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF) and often occur as stories about stories. They could also be about the combatants and the people, their relations with each other and, perhaps, some everyday interactions. Such stories can feature perceptions of how the war transformed their society and particular individuals or groups within it as well as the manner in which they adapted to particular ‘war situations’. All this could be variously recollected simply as ‘the war’. This chapter argues that the war, viewed in this sense, constituted a hiatus to the ongoing process of reconstituting traditional Chishanga begun in the past decade as detailed in the previous chapter.

Both the ZANLA guerrillas and the RSF interpreted Chishanga differently. The former found the coumaflaged landscape and, especially, its impregnable *gadzingo* a suitable cover from which to launch the final offensive to capture the town of Fort Victoria. The RSF considered Chishanga and its large component of purchase area farmers an area ‘badly subverted’ by the ZANLA guerrillas. Its landscape to them, was ‘dangerous’, the hideout of a notorious but elusive guerrilla gang that claimed 20% of Rhodesia’s elite troops. The people of Chishanga, caught in between

the belligerents saw the war as a discontinuity. It suspended the administrative apparatus that would facilitate the return of their lost lands as Chishanga became a ZANLA 'liberated zone'. The elevated status the community elders had gathered over the years of Rhodesian 'Community Development' was quickly eroded by the authority of guerrillas supported by youthly runners [*mujibhas* (male) and *chimbwidos* (female)] who not only made material demands on them but used their guns to impose a new social order controlled by young people.

9.2 The Contradictions of Chishanga in a War Situation

Chishanga fell under ZANLA's Gaza operational province opened up in late 1975 under the auspices of a joint military alliance between ZANLA and ZIPRA known as the Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA). Although the alliance was shortlived, the ZANLA section of ZIPA succeeded in escalating the war in this region to a level which allowed them to establish 'liberated zones'. In a New Year's message, the ZANU leader, Robert Mugabe, declared 1978 'the year of the people' meaning that power would be placed in the hands of the people through the intensification of the armed struggle.⁵⁶⁰ In its planning, ZANLA envisaged conventional warfare as the means through which the final annihilation of the Rhodesian forces was to be achieved. The following year, 1979, was dubbed 'the year of the people's storm' where ZANLA troops would literally 'storm the towns from the countryside'.⁵⁶¹ Nyajena Detachment, one of ZANLA's most successful operational areas in Gaza Province had initially been part of its northernmost front, Sector III bordering the Musikavanhu Province. However, since the Save

⁵⁶⁰ 'Towards Conventional War: Smith's Ides of March, 1978: Interview with Josiah Tungamirayi' *Zimbabwe News* 1978, p. 32.

⁵⁶¹ 'The Military Situation is Excellent: Interview with Josiah Tongogara' *Zimbabwe News* 1979 p.40.

river constituted a formidable physical barrier for the smooth coordination of logistics destined for Gaza sectors, an arrangement was reached between the two Provincial Commanders Freddy Matanga (Gaza) and Tonderayi Nyika (Musikavanhu) to cede Sector III to Musikavanhu. This way Sector III was in reality dissolved, leaving Gaza with only two sectors stretching up to the Tugwi River.⁵⁶² Nyajena Detachment became a 'liberated zone' in the middle of 1977 and Chishanga formed part of its northern boundary. It possessed all the strategic factors necessary for ZANLA to capture the town of Fort Victoria.

Despite this, Chishanga had its contradictions. Firstly, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the various sections of the Rhodesian Security Forces such as the Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI), the Rhodesian African Rifles (RAR) and the Selous Scouts had long considered the Mshawasha Purchase Area farmers to be hostile to the government.⁵⁶³ The developments elaborated in the previous chapter partly explain this. On the other hand, ZANLA guerrillas viewed Purchase Area farmers in general with scepticism. To them, they were a failed class of aspirant petit bourgeois 'tea-drinkers' who were not only content with the little land availed to them by the colonialists but were wealthy enough to buy it. *Matengenyika*, literally 'the buyers of land', as the purchase area farmers and the farms were known colloquially, not only suggested the aberration of 'trading' one's birthright but augured well with the discourse of *Mutengesesi* or 'sell out' a term used to refer to collaborators with the colonial regime.

⁵⁶² Interview with Rtd. Brigadier Benjamin Mabenge (Cde. Freddie Matanga) UZ Linguistics Language Laboratory, 7 February 2007.

⁵⁶³ Since the Mshawasha Purchase Area stretched into the Nyajena and Shumba-Chekai areas where the war had been registered much earlier this stereotype against Purchase Area farmers never changed when the war spread into Chishanga in later years.

It was assumed that the *matengenyika* were a contented class who would not easily identify with the struggle because they had excess land. Yet the liberation struggle was fought and continuously depicted as a struggle for land. Indeed, in many areas a number of *matengenyika* were sacrificed during the war for occupying this rather precarious social space. Some figures from the *matengenyika* class like Aaron Jacha and, in Mshawasha, Samuel Munodawafa had played leading roles in early nationalist politics. The latter had by 1976 risen to be elected to the post of National Chairman to the Joshua Nkomo led wing of the African National Council and his influence in the Fort Victoria Area, where ZANU enjoyed a huge following, was considered an important counter-balancing factor. This is what probably prompted an attack on his farm by Selous Scouts on 8 October 1976 where they shot all his cattle and burnt down the buildings at the farm.⁵⁶⁴ This attack was well-timed at the peak of the infighting in the African National Council between factions loyal to Abel Muzorewa and Joshua Nkomo.⁵⁶⁵ It was designed to give the impression that it was a product of this bickering. Fellow Mshawasha farmers could see through this and came in to help Munodawafa restore his herd by each exchanging their live beasts for his that had been shot.⁵⁶⁶

However, factional violence between the nationalist parties in the war period should not be underplayed, especially in the period after 1976. The attempt by the Frontline States leaders to integrate ZIPRA and ZANLA had ended disastrously when the fighting forces turned their guns on each other both in the operational areas and in the training camps in Zambia and Tanzania. By August 1976, ZIPA had disbanded but the result was that ZANLA guerrillas sought out and

⁵⁶⁴ J.R.T. Wood, *The War Diaries of Andre Dennison* (Ashanti, Gibraltar, 1989), p.78., R. Cary and D. Mitchell, *African Nationalist Leaders in Rhodesia: Who is Who*, p. 130.

⁵⁶⁵ A.T. Muzorewa, *Rise Up and Walk*

⁵⁶⁶ Interviews with Kadivirire Gapare, Julius Chemhuru and Evans Frederick Mazarire.

purged ZAPU loyalists in their operational areas while ZIPRA did the same. Ranger has lamented this fundamental discontinuity in Zimbabwean nationalism, a factor that made Munodawafa fail to exert any influence in his home area of Chishanga despite being a high ranking ZAPU politician who had built up a huge following in the 1960s and early 70s.⁵⁶⁷

The Chishanga ‘condition’ however presented a slight complication for some of these long-held prejudices. The farmers in Mshawasha West did belong and, were an integral part of, the historic Chishanga physical and social space as shown in previous chapters. This physical space became home to many guerrillas because its terrain, consisting mostly of mountains and thick forests of the largely underutilised Purchase Areas, was good cover and offered many tactical advantages to guerrilla sections operating there. Thus, most of the pre-conceptions fed into the common ‘Chishanga consciousness’, partly facilitated by the general operational strategy employed by the guerrillas. This consciousness, as it were, became inevitably centred around a ‘gun culture’ or ‘gun justice’ controlled and regulated only by the guerrillas and their *mijibhas*. Despite this, however, paranoia for *matengenyika* persisted in various forms resulting in, as shall be shown, a number of casualties from this class. To confirm this, more farmers died at the hands of guerrillas than any other category of African civilians in Chishanga. Often, the war oiled individual factional fights now common amongst second generation farmers, that is, the offspring of the original farm owners who were now competing for ownership of the farms and not too hesitant to rid each other of competition by branding each other ‘sellouts’.

⁵⁶⁷ Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla War in Zimbabwe*, pp. 206-7, Interview with Jonas Zvovurere, Madzore Village, Chivi, 8 August 1998.

9.3 Accessing Chishanga in the ‘Nyajena Detachment’

Most people in Chishanga recall that the war came from the ‘south’, specifically from ‘Jena’ or Nyajena. It should be noted that from their own literature, it is clear that Rhodesian forces observed two general operational zones in the area under discussion, that is; Nyajena TTL and Mshawasha African Purchase Area. Their military operations within Chishanga were often described under this general nomenclature but Nyajena gradually became the generic description of this operational area for Rhodesian forces. This was somewhat accurate from the point of view of the deployment strategy of ZANLA guerrillas operating here too. According to Retired Brigadier Benjamin Mabenge or Cde. ‘Freddie Matanga’, the Provincial Field Commander for Gaza Province between 1978 and 1979, guerrillas operating in the Nyajena detachment were organised from the Musikavanhu Sector rather than from sectors within the Gaza Province. This was necessitated by the fact that the Save river constituted a physical barrier to logistical management.⁵⁶⁸ Nyajena thus became ZANLA’s southernmost detachment in the Musikavanhu sector constituting the border with Sector 2 of their Gaza Province at the Tugwi River. Musikavanhu Province was commanded first, by ‘Tonderayi Nyika’ but was later taken over by ‘Henry Muchena’ and the Nyajena Detachment by ‘Nylon Masambaasiyana.’ However Nylon’s zone of operation stretched north well beyond Nyajena to Mapanzure Business Centre, the Ngomahuru Hospital, right into the European farms along the Fort Victoria-Beitbridge highway. North of Mapanzure was the Zimbabwe Ruins Detachment under ‘Mapurani Taapedza.’⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁸ Interview with Comrade Freddie Matanga, UZ Linguistics Audio Laboratory, February 2007.

⁵⁶⁹ Interview with Brigadier General Justin Mujaji, Mapanzure Business Centre, 29 September 2007.

Both Rhodesian Forces and ZANLA saw this zone as Nyajena. Such a generic description probably stemmed from the physical inaccessibility of the areas north of Nyajena beyond the Mukosi River Ranch or 'Makwari' and the Musogwezi River where we find Chishanga. Fig. 9.1 shows that Nyajena TTL was accessible through two main routes, the one, a dirt road turning from the main Fort Victoria-Beitbridge highway at the Tokwe Grange Store through the Mshawasha African Purchase Area, past Ngomahuru Hospital, Chingombe township, Mukosi River Ranch, Guwa and eventually approaching Nyajena from the north. The other, safer and often preferred route, came through the Ngundu-Triangle main road and entered Nyajena and the rest of Victoria TTL interior through the Renco Mine from the south. This route followed and stuck to the main protected areas and was easy to vacate in an emergency as well as getting reinforcements through. Indeed Renco was a gold mine and of strategic importance to the Rhodesian economy that it was heavily protected.

The first route via Mshawasha was dangerous and vulnerable to landmines. It meandered through the thick forests of the sparsely populated farms and had to negotiate the mountainous landscape of Chishanga so that, for the entire duration of the war, this zone remained fairly 'liberated'. Nonetheless, some arterial connections to Chishanga did exist although they were both cumbersome and could not guarantee safe exit for Rhodesian forces even when they had 'Fireforce' support. For instance, one could reach Mapanzure township via the main road from Great Zimbabwe through Nemamwa, Nemazuhwa and Makasi then proceed to the Mshawasha West farms of Chishanga from Mapanzure using the dry weather road past the Shumbayaonda Irrigation Scheme and Gwira school to join the interior Nyajena road at Chingombe. However, this was equally dangerous, if not worse off. It was a good 40 or so kilometre stretch of dirt road

which, in the case of an ambush, all the points of exit could be easily closed with the nearest point being Muchakata, itself accessible through twist and turns back via the Mapanzure township. It was rarely used even by local transport except the 'Yellow' bus service which used it to Nyamafufu since the early 1970s. The last option could be getting to Mapanzure from the old main road near Bondolfi Mission, making a turn at Sipambi then proceeding via Chibaya and Mavhengere, cutting through what once was the Rambotemwa sacred forest, past Musingarabwi and approaching Mapanzure township from the west. It was also dangerous and often heavily mined and, by the end of the war, had claimed a number of Rhodesian military convoys. In all the said routes, guerrillas could descend from or disappear back into the mountains with considerable ease.

9.4 Some Early War Experiences near Chishanga

Apart from the incident at the Munodawafa farm, one of the earliest guerrilla activities near this area took place at the outskirts of Mshawasha East near Mashate Township. On 25 November 1976 guerrillas allegedly killed a Swiss Roman Catholic Priest Fr. George Jeorger. He was based at the Bondolfi Mission and was abducted and executed while on a visit to one of his parishes.⁵⁷⁰ Sr. Janice McLaughlin interviewed Cde. Henry Muchena, the ZANLA provincial commander responsible for the group that committed the murder. He recounted that a new group of guerrillas had entered the Zimbabwe Ruins Detachment and had mistakenly identified Fr. Joerger as a

⁵⁷⁰ Rhodesia Ministry of Information, *The Murder of Missionaries in Rhodesia* (1978), pp. 2-3. This was part of a series of publications issued by the Rhodesian Information Ministry for propaganda purposes. Evidence for this particular incident is said to have been supplied by a captured guerrilla during his trial in 1977 on the basis of rumour.

member of the Selous Scouts, and by the time Muchena arrived to identify him as a priest and his former teacher, 'it was already too late' to save his life.⁵⁷¹

Further reports of the war only filtered through from nearby Nyajena or Chibi TTLs where the war was in full swing since the middle of 1976 and this was the case until the end of 1977. Meanwhile, some of the effects of the war had begun to be felt already. For instance, between October and December 1976 some 2442 head of cattle were stolen from the Mukorsi River Ranch and driven into nearby areas such as Chibi, Nyajena and ultimately, into the western parts of Mshawasha Purchase Area.⁵⁷² The consequences of this for Chibi are well documented elsewhere.⁵⁷³ Apparently, these thefts were instigated by ZANLA guerrillas with the object of crippling the Rhodesian beef industry to which Mukorsi River Ranch occupied a strategic place. It was also designed to guarantee their own supplies of meat thereby putting less stress on the herds of their African supporters.⁵⁷⁴ This gave rise to a fairly well organised system in which *mijibha* stole these cattle from 'Makwari' and distributed them to various bases from Nyajena northwards. As the northern front was opened, the system was expanded to target European farms further north such as Tokwe Grange, Buchanan and Stephanies. The cattle were driven at night and slaughtered upon delivery, the meat was boiled, sundried and kept in caves or other concealed places. This meat was known colloquially by various names such as *makabhichi* (cabbages), *matobwe* (snot apple) or *magwigwi*. These pseudo names were coined to conceal the traffic to outsiders and it is no surprise that the names differed in various areas.

⁵⁷¹ J. McLaughlin, *On the Frontline: Catholic Missions in Zimbabwe's Liberation War* (Boabab Books, Harare, 1998), p. 30.

⁵⁷² Hansard House of Assembly Parliamentary Debates vol. 95 no. 16, 2nd March 1977, cols. 1389-92, 1395-7, Reactions to a motion by Mr. Musset, Minister of Internal Affairs.

⁵⁷³ G.C. Mazarire, 'A Right to Self-Determination', pp.87-89.

⁵⁷⁴ Interview with Col. Shumba 'Cde. Willie Deveteve', Sectorial Commander, ZANLA Sector Two.

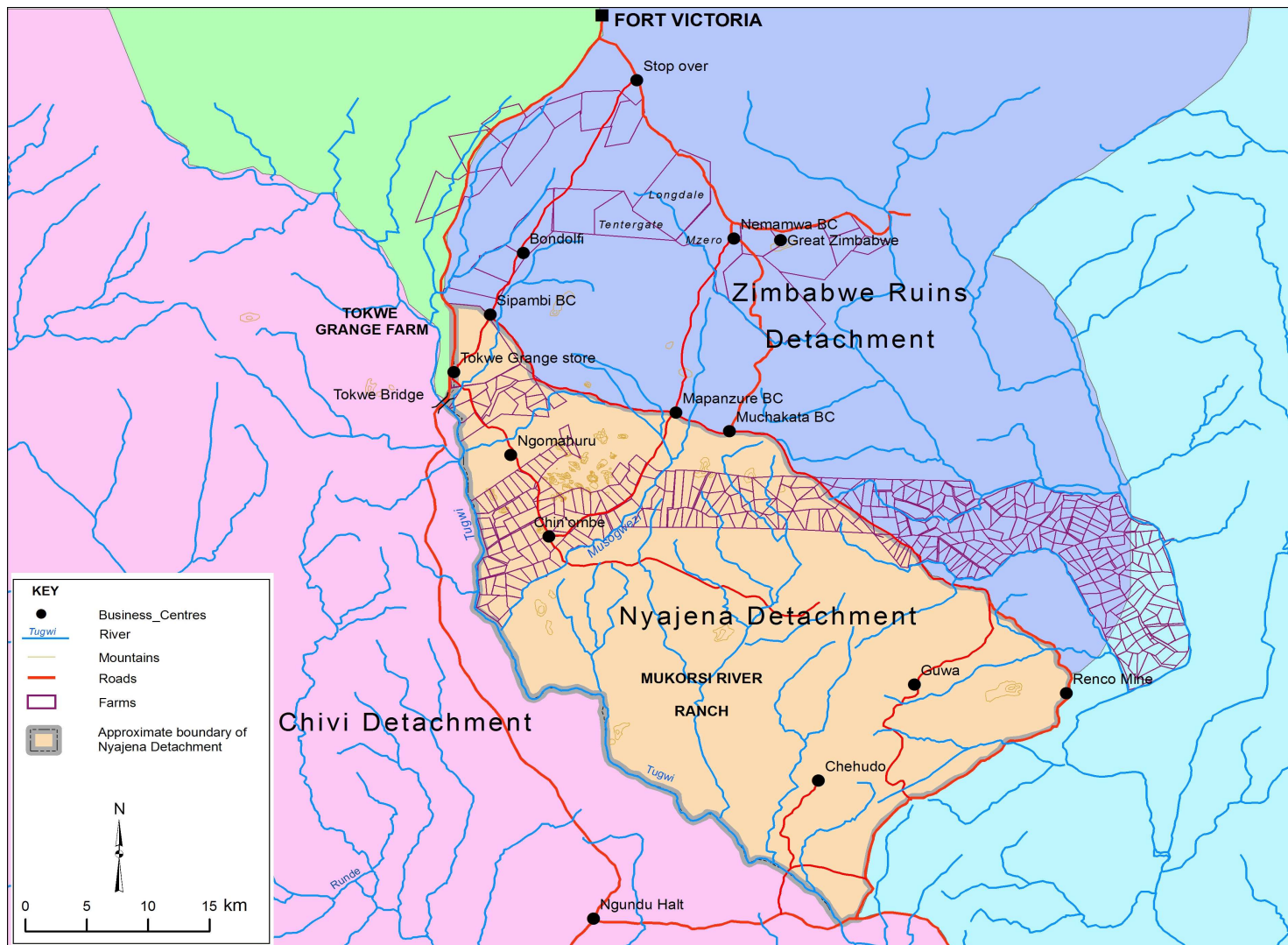


Fig. 9. 1: ZANLA Operational Areas incorporating the Nyajena Detachment

The Rhodesian government responded with a spate of collective punishments unleashed on the local population in retaliation to these thefts. People from Chivi, Nyajena, Gororo, Shindi and parts of Mshawasha were either picked up for interrogation by the police or had their cattle confiscated. A number of convictions took place which resulted in national complaints by the local MP, Mr. Thomas Zawaira, in the Rhodesian parliament. For their part, the affected European farmers participated in the investigations both as members of the Combined Operations 'Agric Alert' and as complainants. This way, their conduct was inspired by vengeance and was often far more brutal than standard military or police operations. It is important to note that even though the war had a late start in the northern parts of Nyajena, Chishanga had been receiving its shares of *magwigwi* well in advance, partly to reserve the beasts for eventual usage by guerrillas and partly, to organise the strategy amongst the people beforehand. By 1978 European farms in the north began to suffer stockthefts and the traffic southwards to Nyajena augmented that from Mukorsi River Ranch. It is then that the European farmers descended and memories of the brutal treatment of locals by such European farmers as *Chigocha*, *Masimba* and *Bhiri-Chinoto* are still very vivid.⁵⁷⁵

9.5 Memories of the War in Chishanga

As mentioned earlier, the groundwork for guerrilla entry into Chishanga was set up well in advance in the usual Maoist style of establishing supply committees centred around 'bases' incorporating various groups and classes of 'collaborators'. The numbers of guerrillas infiltrating

⁵⁷⁵ The exploits of these characters are dealt with in detail below.

Chishanga were kept minimal at first but upon appreciating the 'cover' offered by the Chishanga terrain, this gradually turned out to be their zone of retreat, complete with 'kitchen' and 'hospital' facilities. The first 9 guerrillas appeared at the close of 1977. Among them were 'Mhengeramuropa', '22 Magorira', 'Kamba-Chinamakwati-Kambairai', 'Shuro', 'Mugadza', 'Teurai-Ropa', 'Stan Mashayamombe', 'Shungudzehondo', 'War Zone' and 'Makandiwa'. They all were under the command of Nyajena Detachment Commander Nylon Masambaasiyana who made occasional appearances with his second in command 'Captain Smash'. Sometimes, local people recall the visits of Musikavanhu Field Commander Henry Muchena or joint operations held with the legendary 'Fastmove' of the Chibi detachment.

Interestingly, Nylon and his group observed that Chishanga was traditionally Hera territory and that Chief Mapanzure was the recognisable traditional authority. Manyoka Gwenhamo was the acting chief since the death of his father in 1973. We have seen already that he commanded respect from within the Rhodesian authorities who viewed him as progressive while, at the same time, his *dare* respected his intelligence and sharp mind. They certainly gave him credit for bringing back the *gadzingo* and the development to Mapanzure associated, though retrospectively, with the Shumbayaonda Irrigation Scheme and the Gozho dam, all of which took place between 1967 and the outbreak of the war. Above all, Manyoka also became, effectively, the medium of two important Hera ancestors Mutunha and Ndyakavamwa after his father successfully snatched and appropriated the latter spirit from the Muchenugwa house. Manyoka led the ceremonies constantly conducted at Zhou mountain under the huge *mutondo* tree. He had also inherited all the Mapanzure chiefly regalia including the lion skin and black clothes and to

add on to this mystery, he spoke in different African languages when possessed.⁵⁷⁶ Nylon and his group duly approached him and paid their respects as well as laying out to him their aims. He briefed them of recent developments regarding the Zhou area where they made an undertaking to respect the ancestral burials and not to shed innocent blood therein.⁵⁷⁷

The guerrillas also consulted other mediums and traditional healers. In particular, they cultivated a warm relationship with Chinoda Muhera whom the Internal Affairs had already spotted in their Spirit Index as a possible guerrilla collaborator being possessed by an ‘alien spirit which prophesied and treated patients with medicine’.⁵⁷⁸ Muhera’s farm (137) was situated right at the foot of Vukona hill, one of the ancestral burial areas and he became very useful with treating wounded guerrillas. He converted one of the caves in Vukona into a makeshift ‘hospital’ where wounded guerrillas were kept and were able to recuperate from. The guerrillas also consulted the Mhizha elders who took them up the Marungudzi and showed them the Mhizha sacred pools and the significance of this landscape in the Mhizha spiritual custodianship of Chishanga. Quite contrary to recent assertions that Marungudzi was ever used as a ‘base’, Nylon and his group initially avoided such violations and appreciated the huge caves in the Marungudzi which they obtained permission to use as an armoury to cache their weapons for sustained use.

The actual ‘bases’ were, however, organised in such a way that they formed an arc circling the *gadzingo* as if to give ancestral sanctity to the execution of the war. By 1978, supply bases had assumed the following spatial arrangement; all bases lay south of Ngondo and Govogwe rivers to

⁵⁷⁶ S3276/4 *Notes on the Mediums, Spirit Healers, Church Leaders and Cult Places in Victoria Province, May 1973*, Entry 441, ‘Chief Mapanzure, Victoria TTL’.

⁵⁷⁷ Interview with Manyoka Gwenhamo, for Nylon’s relations with the traditional authorities see J. Fontein, *The Silence of Great Zimbabwe* p. 146.

⁵⁷⁸ S3276/4 *Notes on the Mediums*, Entry 427: ‘Chinoda of Farm 137, Mshawasha W. Dist. V. GP.’

avoid proximity to the Fort Victoria-Beitbridge highway and be drawn closer to the *gadzingo*. Similarly, Ngomahuru Hospital and all its modern lines of communication had to be kept a safe distance away although the guerrillas needed the support of its African employees. The latter gathered around a 'base' at Chimwango's 'Chomukamba' Farm, thick inside Mhizha territory forming the first and northernmost 'base'.

As the war progressed and, with increasing inmates at Muhera's 'hospital', it became necessary to establish another base principally to serve the injured and to enable some of them to maintain contact with the *povo* and the war while they recuperated. This is how the 'Maningi' base came into existence, only a stone's throw away from, and flanking the Chimwango base. African nurses and orderlies from Ngomahuru hospital smuggled medicines, injections and bandages and used their expertise to dress the wounds of injured guerrillas at Muhera's 'hospital'. More complicated cases would require Dr. Simon Mazorodze to drive personally from Fort Victoria pretending to be visiting some relatives in Mshawasha while performing surgery on wounded guerrillas in local farmhouses.⁵⁷⁹ An Irish psychiatrist based at the Ngomahuru Hospital, Kenneth Denford became instrumental in medical and other supplies although preferring to deal directly with the guerrilla leadership than to join his African subordinates at the hospital. This was his personal security initiative, he had worked previously in Kenya where he had collaborated with Mau Mau insurgents. It was not long before Rhodesian authorities became suspicious and he was 'transferred'. Denford had also been married to a local woman from the Charumbira house of Govo.⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁷⁹ For similar activities conducted by Dr. Mazorodze in the Gutu Sector, see Mafurahunzi Gumbo, *Guerrilla Snuff* (Boabab Books, Harare, 1995), p. 31.

⁵⁸⁰ Interview with Machongwe Chihava, Soweto, Ngomahuru 29/12/2006

Further east along the edges of the *gadzingo* was yet another base known as ‘Tii Dovi’. It was located on the stateland or *chivhande* adjoining Mhikairi Dhliwayo and Ephraim Mboweni’s farms. It had been named after the habit of local women to mix the tea they prepared for guerrillas with peanut butter, a delicacy favoured by the guerrillas that it inevitably became their ‘kitchen’. As the war progressed it achieved the status of a principal base in the Nyajena Detachment where trials were conducted or where all sections of guerrillas operating in the detachment would rendezvous to plan major operations.

The third base was ‘Mamvura’, named after a nearby stream and primary school. It was sited on a *ruware* in Samuel Munodawafa’s farm and catered for people to the east of the Nyajena-Mshawasha road but north of the Mamvura river right down to the Tugwi. Bangomwe ‘base’ was next, located on a hill in J.D. Hama’s farm. It incorporated the people coming from farms south of Mamvura river that ran parallel to those making up the Mamvura base on the opposite side. Bangomwe was also named after Bangomwe hill and the primary school there. This base serviced people from as far as the Musogwezi river and the plotholders surrounding Chingombe business centre.

South of the *gadzingo* and adjoining ‘Tii-Dovi’ and ‘Bangomwe’ was ‘Tembwe’ named after a ZANLA training camp in Mozambique. It incorporated people in the farms around Gwira school up to the Shumbayaonda Irrigation Scheme . In the Mapanzure TTL itself, bases stretched from Chipagwe to Mavhengere but were minimised because of a dominant road easily linking Mapanzure Township and the old main road near Bondolfi Mission or the police establishment at Muchakata.

9.5.1 'Bases' as Sites of Memory for the War in Chishanga

An interesting development in this research project has been that memories of the war in Chishanga have had less to do with actual events involving contacts or exchange of fire between guerrillas and the Rhodesian Security Forces. Researching the war 25 years later historians need to distinguish between narratives 'on' the war itself and those 'about' it. Quite frequently one encounters narratives couched in the 'trauma' of the war, retrospective but full of judgements and sometimes bitterness or even nostalgia. Very often people state conjecturally that '*hondo yanga yonakidza*' literally 'the war had become exciting'.⁵⁸¹ Such sentiments are often juxtaposed with the painful, the regrettable and sometimes even grotesque aspects of the war that made it a continuum if not a painful sport.

Yet, we also need to take into account that no matter how rich the memories of the war can be, this war could have never been 'spectated' like a soccer match for instance, to the point that both the combatant and the collaborator could remember events within it with cinematographic acuity. '*Yabhenda*' (it has bent) was a chant that sent an obvious message to either flee or take cover. After the event everybody (at least those that survive to tell the story) try and relate how they think it may have happened rather than what actually took place.

⁵⁸¹ Quite interestingly in his recent autobiography Edgar Tekere has as one of his subtitle '*Hondo Yaakunakidza Vakomana*' which captures this excitement even within the political and military leadership of ZANU PF, see E.Z. Tekere, *Edgar Tekere: A Lifetime of Struggle* SAPES Books, Harare, 2007, pp. 117-122.

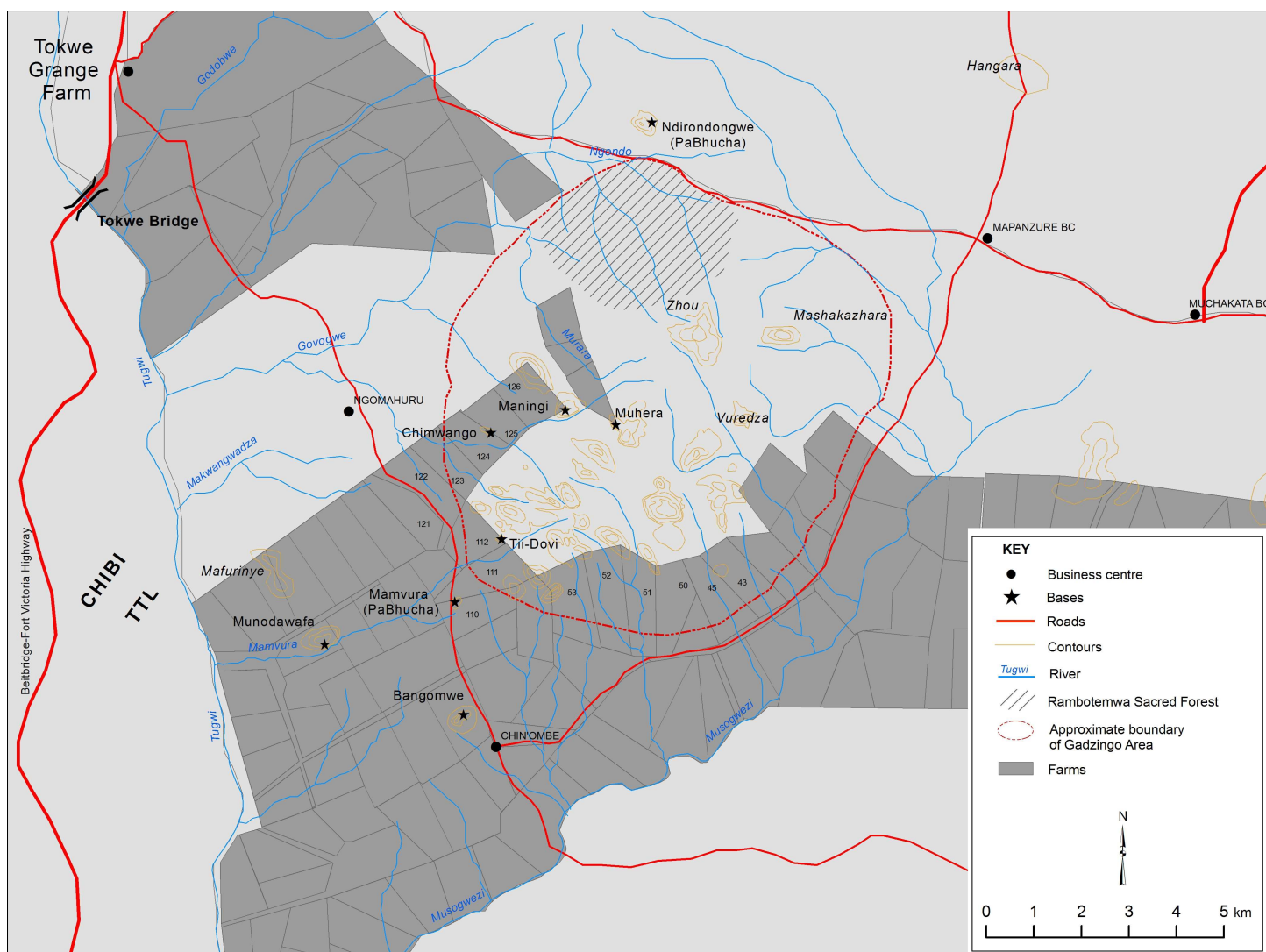


Fig. 9. 2: ZANLA Bases in Chishanga's Gadzingo Area

Normally one gets various narratives of the same and the dominant narratives almost always survive the day. Thus when we do inquire about the war in Chishanga, we get more about its theatres, normally landscapes associated with the war of which the 'base', so far as the majority of testimonies are concerned, was the main arena where the war was defined, contemplated, fought and 'won'. The base was a site of all the struggles about the struggle and those struggles within it. It is also for Chishanga, the source of the struggle's cleansing as much as it is the source of a common war (hi) story.

Ostensibly, there are two sets of memory packages associated with combatant issues on either side of the spectrum of the war in Chishanga. The one depicts combatants themselves-be they ZANLA guerrillas or Rhodesian soldiers and/or farmers-as characters associated with actual events. The other relates to how the stories *should* be told, sometimes in whispers, gossip and rumour (especially when they are bad stories about people still living) or publicly with corroboration and contradiction (where they are general and harmless). In both instances, there are individual and collective narratives. Guerrillas are variously remembered in the broader context of their activities and their relations with local people. Others among them are better known for their singing, cruelty, appetite or their 'last words' and so the list goes on. In most cases, however, the memory of the war in Chishanga is centred around the 'base'. It was a microcosm of national aspirations and how they were negotiated, a centre for information, education and discipline but also an arena for abuse and 'war justice'. With time, the 'base' became more and more about the people themselves and how they wanted to live in a new

Zimbabwe. Gradually, it became possible for the people of Chishanga to come up with ways of liberating themselves even from those oppressive elements of a guerrilla war.

The base was also a centre of communal, retrospective responsibility amounting 25 years later for instance to some ‘truth and reconciliation’ of the war and so often related to present local aspirations in which everybody can be judged by what is said about who they were and what they did or was done to them at the ‘base’. The legacy of ZANU PF as a post-colonial ruling party has certainly played a part in this but for Chishanga, this constitutes an integral part of how the memory of the war has been structured and packaged in the minds of those who not only recall but can be persuaded to or are willing to share these war memories.

9.6 Some Chishanga War Stories

9.6.1 First Encounters and Gun Justice

Individual recollections of the first encounter with guerrillas are often the most vivid because they invariably begin the war stories. At a base in Guwa, the ‘vakomana’ (boys-as the guerrillas were known in local parlance), appeared for the first time and gathered people to educate them on their cause. In the process of doing so, one elder stood up to say;

My children, stop bothering the people...and first take a look at yourselves! Where on earth have you ever seen an African overpowering a whiteman....you are wasting your time.

He was called to the front and told that he was going to be an example of what the gun could do to the white man. He was shot dead.⁵⁸² At Ngomahuru, people gathered around a *ruware* overlooking the primary school to listen to some six armed men. 'It was time to take back the country', they said, '...and those that stood in the way of the revolution would be crushed by its wheels.' Such *crossfire*, as it came to be known, was neither desirable nor avoidable when the situation presented itself. It was the suspension of common justice and its replacement with guerrilla justice. 'You could not report it to any police' as one informant put it, yet you had to police each other.⁵⁸³ People were organised to organise themselves and for the Mshawasha farmers, existing structures such as the 'Community Development' era 'TV' were adapted to suit the new situation. Yet still, the war was also about happiness and the base had its own *morari* (a corruption of morale) kept up by *chimurenga* songs and rhythmic sloganeering accompanied by the *kongonya* dance. 'Cde. Mhengeramuropa' was associated with the song 'Sendekera Mukoma Takanyu' to which he danced even the *dhabhu* (a quick-pace dance that ends with one stamping their right foot on the ground) and won the hearts of many youths. Some songs were composed from within the bases and for his voice and its passion 'Cde. Muhambi' always added emotion to the 'politics' of many Chishanga bases.⁵⁸⁴

9.6.2 *Mujibha* Agency

The guerrillas for their part, did, in fact, spend time with the *mijibha* whom they sent on various errands of reconnaissance, communication or to sometimes keep vigil as they slept in the night.

⁵⁸² Interview with Julius Chemhuru, Dombodema Farm, Mshawasha West, 22/12/2006.

⁵⁸³ Ibid

⁵⁸⁴ Interview with Gilbert Chemhuru

Mijibha also became a ready pool of recruits but often, the go-betweens, assigned to arrange girls for 'vanamukoma' (big brothers) as the guerrillas were also known. 'When *vabereki* (parents) were asked to dismiss and return to the homesteads...', one ex-*mujibha* recalled,

...there was often an instruction for us to assume the role of sentinels. We were told that it was part of our training to become guerrillas in our own right and that it needed such resilience and the ability to keep secrets. We knew however some of the girls would have moved into the *poshtos* (sleeping areas) already to spend the night and have *svuto* [sex] with them.⁵⁸⁵

The taboos against sex were observed more in the breach, evidence of *svuto* or *gwessling* was forever present on the spoilt blankets that the *mijibhas* collected in the morning for routine laundry by the *chimbwidos*.⁵⁸⁶

The personal connections between *mijibhas* and the guerrillas were responsible, many people think, for some unwarranted deaths of local civilians in the so-called *crossfire* or *tamba wakachenjera* (play it safe). It is believed the many deaths of the so called 'sell-outs' were products of calculated *mijibha* conspiracies to rid themselves of personal enemies or threats on the one hand, and guerrilla duplicity on the other. This was typical symbiotic 'back-scratching' designed to oil a relationship meant to conceal social abuses in an emergent regime of 'gun justice'. The Chishanga case is illustrative enough that guerrillas were no saints and that youths, as *mijibha* often were, saw the war as presenting them with a comparative generational advantage which could be used to neutralise parental and other forms of social control. *Mijibha* agency has been a central feature in the story of the war in Chishanga in the same way that it featured in Kriger 's study of the war in Mutoko, but with perhaps more peculiar qualification.⁵⁸⁷

It should be taken into account, for instance that, by 1978 the guerrilla war had assumed a fairly

⁵⁸⁵ Interview with Mr. Musvava, Soweto, Ngomahuru, 29/12/2006

⁵⁸⁶ Interviews with Gilbert and Konifas Chemhuru, Dombodema Farm, Mshawasha West, 22/12/2006

⁵⁸⁷ See N. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerilla War: Peasant Voices*, pp. 179-186.

different position than it had been two years earlier. Most of the rural areas had seen heavy guerrilla penetration and were highly militarised. In Mshawasha, a generation of the children of the farm owners of the 1930s had come into full existence, who had begun fighting over control and inheritance of their fathers' estates. Frequently, some bitter struggles emerged prompting those ejected from the farms to drift back to Mapanzure and other TTLs to find themselves some land or go permanently to the towns. Some of these struggles were still being fought when the guerrillas came and the war became one easy way of ridding each other of the burden of competition.

Mhere Chimwango was a Mhizha who had just inherited his father's farm and in the early months of 1978, Mhere went up to the Tokwe Grange on private business. In his absence a Rhodesian Airforce reconnaissance squadron, probably working on intelligence gathered over the alleged 'hospital' at Muhera's, flew past the area. On spotting two young men scurrying for cover, a jet strike was launched that killed Herimanos Muhera, the son of Muhera and Temba Gon'ora of the Mhizha at farm 136, instantly. There was no 'fireforce' strike nor were the Rhodesian forces in the habit of striking individual human targets with jets. Instead they could use a Lynx spotter aircraft to mount a pinpoint airstrike which would normally be guided by a signal. It is possible the two young men got access to one of the 'Roadrunner' radios clandestinely supplied by Rhodesian pseudo-operations to unsuspecting civilians. It was fitted with a homing device that would guide the spotter plane to the users.⁵⁸⁸

Local suspicion however emerged that Mhere's trip to the Tokwe Grange was a briefing mission with the object to report on the activities of two notorious *mijibha* Amos and Bernard Matewe.

⁵⁸⁸ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, p.169.

The strike was allegedly targeted at the two and, perhaps, on identifying these two male figures near the base, the Rhodesian pilot is said to have believed that he was right on target.⁵⁸⁹ Mhere returned not only to find a bombing near his homestead but Bernard and Amos waiting for him. He was apprehended forthwith and force-marched to the Chimwango 'base' for trial. The guerrillas on their part, presumed 'Chigocha', the white owner of Tokwe Grange Farm facilitated and called in the strike. In retaliation, they raided his farm, stole his tractor and drove it all the way to Zhou where it was set alight. Mhere was executed the following night for his 'deeds'. Chigocha and some DAs followed the spoor of the tractor but lost track of it on reaching Chemhuru's Dombodema farm. Eventually, they gathered intelligence leading them to Bernard and Amos whom they captured, tortured and left for dead. The two *mijibha* immediately left for Mozambique as soon as they recovered.

Meanwhile, Rhodesians had launched a new brand of chemical warfare masterminded by a Professor of Surgery at the University of Rhodesia, one Bob Symington. Three types of toxins were used; ricin, thallium and parathion. Thallium was often injected into tinned foods or fizzy drinks while other poisons like barium or sodium salts, fluorophosphates and monoflauracitric acids were smeared into the guerrillas' favourite clothing such as denim jeans and corduroys.⁵⁹⁰ Others came in the form of medicines such as capsules or pills. Certainly some found their way and claimed the lives of the civilian population and Special Branch had deliberately begun issuing samples to stores and wholesalers without suppliers even knowing it.⁵⁹¹ Guerrillas simply requisitioned their supplies through base committees and whoever could, went and purchased or

⁵⁸⁹ Interviews with Konifasi and Gilbert Chemhuru, Dombodema Farm, Mshawasha West, 26 December 2006.

⁵⁹⁰ I Martinez, 'The History of the Use of Bacteriological and Chemical Agents during Zimbabwe's Liberation War of 1965-80 by Rhodesian Forces', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 23 no. 6 (2002) pp 1163-1165.

⁵⁹¹ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, p. 157.

supplied the merchandise as specified. A number of guerrillas gathered at 'Tii-Dovi' base one evening and, in the middle of a *pungwe*, one by one, some of them began to collapse until Chinoda Muhera became possessed and ordered them to take off their clothes. This however could not stop the death of 13 guerrillas, most of them recent recruits. This was also because some of the poisons like parathion could take time before their effects could be noticeable, some were sometimes designed to last even up to two weeks before killing the victims.⁵⁹² At this point, guerrillas would have eaten and dressed at various points. Nonetheless, a witch hunt was launched promptly and J.D. Hama and his two sons were identified as the sole suppliers of the lethal clothes. To this list of saboteurs was added Mr. Mutoti owner of farm 347, Mr. Zvabva (whose son was serving the Rhodesian African Rifles and terrorising Mapanzure villagers) as well as a Mr. Mataga. The last two were accused of supplying poisoned pills to the guerrillas at the 'hospital'. Mutoti, Zvabva and Mataga were executed at midnight at the Manhingi base, the first time civilian blood was spilt in the *gadzingo* and an abomination to the sacred sites of Zhou.

Joseph Hama was arraigned the following night and dispensed with at once in the 'Tii-Dovi'. His friend who had come on a social visit to their farm provoked a huge moral debate. Some elders, touched by the innocence of the visitor, tried to persuade the guerrillas to spare his life. '22' and 'Captain Smash' presided over the trial and came to the conclusion that he could have been part of the plot. They took him away for execution admits public pleas for mercy. As this took place people had to sing. Hama's sons had refused to come with the *mijibha* sent to fetch them, seeing no harm in the 'favour' they had extended the guerrillas. On hearing this, 'Captain Smash' sent a

⁵⁹² L. White, 'Poisoned Food, Poisoned Uniforms, and Anthrax: Or How Guerrillas Die in War' *Osiris* vol. 19 (2004), pp. 227-228.

contingent of troops who got to Hama's farm, shot the three brothers and ordered that they be thrown into a pit that became their grave.⁵⁹³

Lastly, came the death of Jakuvosi Marindo. It is alleged Jakuvosi, who was working as a driver in Fort Victoria had left his farm at dawn when people in his section were preparing to attend a 'TV' at Munodawafa's farm, whereupon a section of guerrillas arrived and the *povo* converted all their preparations to feed the guerrillas, including slaughtering a goat whose skin they left to dry on a *ruware* overlooking the farm. At this point, Jakuvosi left for Fort Victoria to go back to work. Towards the evening a convoy of Rhodesian troops arrived from Nyajena through the Gwira route. They picked up some men on the road and forced them to take them to the base at Munodawafa where they anticipated a meeting. It is alleged they were operating on intelligence supplied by Marindo through a radio and his conversation was overheard by the men held captive in the troop carrying vehicles. The troops were led to the Munodawafa base but were identified by the *mijibha* well in advance. This gave the guerrillas a chance to split and avoid a gun battle that would endanger the lives of the civilians, the latter were ordered to remain and pretend they were attending a 'TV' but the Rhodesians would not be hoodwinked. They instead subjected everybody present to beatings resulting in some people like Mai Simba Chipatiso sustaining a permanent paralysis such that she walks with a perennial limp to this day.⁵⁹⁴

Later on, word went around that Jakuvosi was responsible for 'selling out the base' and soon it became 'fact', apparently confirmed by an unknown source within the Rhodesian Security Forces who had overheard the radio conversation. Guerrillas returned for a witch-hunt and were

⁵⁹³ Interview with Julius Chemhuru.

⁵⁹⁴ Interview with Khumbula Girilora Chipatiso 12/08/2007.

supplied with evidence, albeit verbal, implicating Marindo and his fate was sealed. Marindo returned home for the weekend as usual, unaware of the tragedy awaiting him as he alighted the bus at Ngomahuru station. A group of *mijibha* waylaid him on his way home and marched him to the Bangomwe base where he was summarily executed.

9.6.3 Memories of the Rhodesian Forces

Rhodesian Security Forces are remembered collectively as *masoja* (the soldiers) and they come together with a memory package that involves actual contacts. This has been helped by the RSF strategy to recruit local people and deploy them in their home areas. Most African troops serving in the Rhodesian army are easily remembered because they are often seen as bearing the collective responsibility for the brutality against local people and were objects of condemnation at guerrilla *pungwes*. Frequently, members of their families were abused or killed by guerrillas as *mapuruvheya* (purveyors?) or collaborators with the colonial regime. On its part, the Rhodesian government believed that deploying African troops in their home areas was effective because they were familiar with the local terrain and knew the habits of their people well. Special Branch and the Selous Scouts went a step further to re-deploy even captured and ‘turned’ guerrillas back in the areas they used to operate. In the former case, they resorted to ‘uplifting’ the families of these troops from the area for fear of local retribution against them. Memories of such local *masoja* have been useful in reconstructing the war in Chishanga. Three characters feature prominently, Zvabva, Marsh and Albert Zingoni.

From the 25th of November 1977 ZANLA guerrillas began to move en-masse into the areas north of Nyajena through the Mukosi River Ranch into Mshawasha Purchase Area. In the process, they laid ambushes as they advanced. Rhodesian forces gathered intelligence of this advance prompting the second battalion of the Rhodesian African Rifles (2RAR) to deploy there the following days under the command of Major Andre Dennison. They were to be kept busy in this area for the entire duration of the war. On the 26th, 2RAR platoons moved to set up observation points with no incident. The guerrillas had avoided engaging them until they penetrated far enough to cover the northern front accessible from the Fort Victoria-Beitbridge road. This forced 2RAR to retreat on the 27th in the direction of Renco Mine but, as they did so, they began to encounter evidence of guerrilla presence. For example, in the east a roadblock had been erected near Morgenster Mission and just nearby, a civilian lorry had detonated a landmine.

The first contact occurred on the 1st of December involving one of the 2RAR call-signs some 2½ kilometres from the site of the landmine. After conducting a sweep of the area the following day, they discovered a 'resting place' for more than 100 guerrillas and gathered intelligence from Special Branch that this group had moved north into Mshawasha. Three 'sticks' of Rhodesian soldiers were sent up north to set up Observation Points (OPs) and identify guerrilla hideouts but saw no sign of the guerrillas for the next 10 days save for old 'resting places'. On 12 December one of their call-signs came under mortar fire on the edges of the Mshawasha but the guerrillas disappeared shortly. A few days later, information was received that a meeting was to be held somewhere in Mshawasha. Two platoons were sent to follow this up and found nothing still. They harassed local men who confessed to guerrilla presence only three kilometres away.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹⁵ Wood, *The War Diaries of Andre Dennison* pp. 170-171.

As far as the guerrillas were concerned, after satisfying themselves that Nyajena was firmly under their control, it became necessary to crack a front north of the Mukosi River and use it as an advance route towards the town of Fort Victoria, the object being to take full control of the Fort Victoria-Beitbridge road. This they were able to achieve by moving men and ammunition in large numbers and then split as soon as they entered the thick forests of the Mshawasha farms and politicised the local population. To accomplish this, they needed not provoke enemy attack until they were firmly established and had sufficient tactical advantage to lay ambushes.

Controlling Nyajena was also useful to block the RSF's safest route into the interior leaving them with the option to come through the much dangerous route via Ngomahuru. So as the others advanced north, the rest kept the RSF busy near Nyajena, launching itinerant attacks on isolated targets. On the 20th of December 1977, they ambushed a Land Rover belonging to a Veterinary team that had come into the area to inoculate cattle against foot and mouth disease. The following day some guerrilla groups were spotted in the Guwa area in transit in a western direction, while another attacked two call-signs of the 2RAR that were attempting to lay an ambush against them near Chehudo. On Christmas day another contact was made with guerrillas near Makumbe school resulting in casualties on both sides.⁵⁹⁶ They continued to harass police reservists at Chehudo Ranch and besieged a convoy of Selous Scouts attempting to enter Nyajena via the high-level Tugwi bridge in the south.⁵⁹⁷ All this intensified activity was meant to keep the Rhodesians occupied to facilitate the northward march and the taking up of positions before the Christmas of 1977. Rhodesians probably sensed this and began patrolling the edges of Mshawasha continuously encountering several ambushes.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid. p.173.

⁵⁹⁷ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, p.183.

On the morning of the 29th December, about 30 guerrillas ambushed a stores vehicle of the 2RAR and an accompanying troops carrying truck near Farm 10 in northern Mshawasha in what appeared to be a very well prepared plan that claimed a number of Rhodesian soldiers. A few civilians were caught up in the crossfire and killed and although reinforcements were flown in from Renco, including commando units of the Rhodesian Light Infantry, they were of little use as the guerrillas had ‘bombshelled’ or scattered in different directions.⁵⁹⁸ Effectively, the guerrillas had managed to infiltrate and establish themselves in Nyajena and they were successful in cracking the northward front to facilitate the advance into Mshawasha. This way they accessed the impregnable Chishanga terrain which emerged characteristically as one crossed the Musogwezi river. In addition to this, guerrilla numbers had swelled and tactically, they made it a point that they laid ambushes in large numbers often exceeding 30 men, engaging the enemy in fleeting attacks that did not last more than 10 minutes firing from widely dispersed positions.⁵⁹⁹ The intended effect was psychological; if they were to draw on their successes in Nyajena and demonstrate further north that they were there in sufficient numbers in such difficult terrain, then for sure, Nyajena and surrounding areas were ‘liberated’.⁶⁰⁰ This point again they managed to achieve very easily and in the words of JRT Wood the Rhodesian war historian,

...the Nyajena was an area heavily infested with terrorists who had totally subverted the population. It was the first “liberated” area in Rhodesia.’⁶⁰¹ [my emphasis].

In Nyajena guerrillas had frequently employed the tactic of capturing people serving with the Rhodesian forces and executing them. This was also practiced in various other operational areas

⁵⁹⁸ Wood, *War Diaries of Andre Dennison*, p.174.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁰ Interview with Brigadier General Justin Itai Mujaji, Mapanzure Business Centre, 27 September 2007.

⁶⁰¹ Wood, *War Diaries of Andre Dennison*, p.188.

across the country and it became policy for the Rhodesian Forces to come and ‘uplift’ the families of the serving forces to safety at Inkomo Barracks near Salisbury. Sometime in 1976 guerrillas abducted Sergeant Head Wuranda of the Selous Scouts while he was on leave at his home in Nyajena. In 1978 they continued to harass his wife and children with the object of provoking security forces or make them, as was their tradition, send a team to uplift Wuranda’s family to Inkomo. Predictably, such a team was sent on this mission and it befell a tragedy that remains the bloodiest contact ever remembered in Chishanga. This was a team commanded by Regimental Sergeant Major Mavhengere which, on the 5th of February 1978, made its way to Nyajena via the dreaded northerly route making a turn at the Tokwe Grange to Mshawasha Purchase Area via Ngomahuru to enter Nyajena from the North. By late afternoon they had collected the Wuranda family and making their way back through the same route. This was a fatal decision as it left Nylon Masambaasiyana and his men to set up a well planned ambush near Mamvura river.

The site was an excellent choice with a long stretching bend which drops into the river where the road climbs a steep slope approaching the Mamvura primary school. Mavhengere’s convoy was mortared as it entered the depression, killing most of the people on board and wounding several others.⁶⁰² *PaBhucha* ‘The Butchery’ as this site (and another at Ndirondongwe) is now recalled, denotes the bloodbath associated with this contact. Apart from choosing their site well, the guerrillas had time and Rhodesian inefficiency in their favour. First, the convoy was ambushed at dusk making it difficult for any ‘Fireforce’ relief support because of poor visibility. Secondly, since this mission had entered Nyajena without thorough preparation which also meant liaising

⁶⁰² Jim Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts* p. 186. Interview with Gilbert Chemhuru. For the identified casualties of this particular contact see also the role of honour with citations published under www.jrtwood.com/roll-of-honour.asp Several other Rhodesian websites make reference to this battle.

with the Selous Scouts and Special Branch of the area (Chiredzi Fort), there would not have been any such relief on standby anyway. What was in fact obtained, as a last ditch effort, was a Lynx spotter aircraft which offered little by way of help apart from escorting the vehicles that had survived the attack. Worse still, for the airmen, the vehicles were not equipped with ground to air communication and apart from reduced visibility, the Lynx was constantly exposed to small arms fire by guerrillas from various positions spread over a fairly wide area.⁶⁰³ The Rhodesians were unable to retaliate immediately because of persistent bad weather conditions for the next four to five days. 2RAR attempted a deployment the following day but was forced to retreat because of a storm. Meanwhile, this was a morale booster for the guerrillas who took advantage of the weather to break apart into small assault teams.

Locals remember the incident very vividly not least because of the number of troops killed but specifically, because of some eventualities that came with the contact. First, one of the survivors of the attack, a white trooper, attempted to reach Ngomahuru Hospital to make a distress call for himself. He was sighted by some *mijibha* who on seeing his plight, predicted his intentions and went ahead to warn the people manning the telephone exchange at the hospital. Quickly, some men were mobilised to wait for him and on arrival he was apprehended and marched under cover of darkness to Muhera base where guerrillas had gathered to execute him. J. Manyawi, who witnessed the execution remembers how this trooper was first burnt with plastic and paraffin and he was later clubbed to death and thrown into a shallow grave.⁶⁰⁴ It has been a celebrated case of

⁶⁰³ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, p.187.

⁶⁰⁴ Interview with J.Manyawi, Mupepete Village, Jaka, Chivi 12 July 1998.

bravado on the part of the men involved and a rare case in which captured white soldiers were executed at local *pungwes*.⁶⁰⁵

On the Rhodesian side, this is a well documented case where all units of the Security Forces regretted and blamed Inkomo Barracks' failure to seek advice on 'Nyajena' from troops familiar with its dangers such as the Selous Scouts and Special Branch officers stationed at Chiredzi Fort. The latter attempted a punitive expedition sometime after the 16th of February trying to deploy call-signs that would follow up on guerrilla sightings, this only succeeded in attracting more strikes that cost them more men as guerrillas consistently capitalised on the bad weather.⁶⁰⁶ More new recruits swelled the guerrilla numbers in March and April and on the 22nd of May 1978 well over 33 guerrillas ambushed 2RAR Support Company in Mshawasha.⁶⁰⁷ By this time however, all the Rhodesian forces operating in Nyajena began to blame their misfortunes on the exploits of a superhuman guerrilla figure they imagined to be 'Nylon Ndela' but better known amongst the locals as 'Cde Nylon Masambaasiyana'. It would be incomplete to write the history of the struggle in Chishanga without paying particular attention to him.

9.7 Nylon Masambaasiyana: 'The Legend of Nyajena' or is it of Chishanga?

Nylon 'Masambaasiyana' which translated to 'the tea leaves have changed' was also known in Rhodesian military circles as Nylon Ndela. The *nom de guerre* was perhaps deliberate; nylon was slippery fabric, as he often remained to pursuing Rhodesian troops, changing tea leaves was

⁶⁰⁵ Interview with Machongwe Chihava, Mr. Musvava and Baba Teki Matewe Soweto, Ngomahuru.

⁶⁰⁶ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, p.187.

⁶⁰⁷ Wood, *The War Diaries of Andre Dennison*, p.236.

perhaps intended as a message to ‘tea-drinkers’ basking in the patronage of oppressive whites-to get a different taste of the liberation tea.

The Rhodesian Special Branch described him as ‘the legend of Nyajena’. This stemmed from their various contacts with him and his group in Nyajena. With all the tactical advantages offered by the local landscape, Nylon quickly became infamous for his record in claiming by his hand alone 20% of the total number of Selous Scouts killed in the entire Rhodesian Bush War, a feat he accomplished in the space of a single week!⁶⁰⁸ Similarly, he was the only one to change the record of the Rhodesia Light Infantry’s minimal casualties vis-à-vis their high kill rate compared to other Rhodesian Fireforce units. All these, were registered in his ‘Nyajena’ hideout and a significant number of RLI troops died when their own phosphorous grenade was thrown back at them by Nylon’s group with devastating consequences.⁶⁰⁹ Nylon was also known to be an excellent sniper who was frugal with his bullets. Of all the firing positions inspected by the Rhodesian units after a contact with his group, it was often found that expended cartridges on his position corresponded with the number of hits. He was also very innovative, sometimes preferring to mix standard ball ammunition with armour piercing bullets which forced the Rhodesians to revise some of their tried and tested anti-terrorist tactics. Several operations were launched with the specific objective of killing or capturing him but they yielded nothing. Nylon remained elusive and responded to these operations with even more savage vengeance that made Nyajena and areas north of the Musogwezi river ‘the most dangerous zone in the *Operation Repulse* area’. A recent account by the Special Branch officer operating there is still haunted by Nylon’s antics;

⁶⁰⁸ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, p.187.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid. p.118.

Sectorial Commander Nylon Ndela had become somewhat of a living legend within the Security Forces. He was extremely aggressive and cruel in the extreme to the local black population. He had a reputation for killing and maiming everyone who did not abide by his policies. By the same token he ruled his own troops with an iron fist. It was speculated that he was a trained and experienced former RAR soldier but this was never confirmed. He was fearless in combat and always led his men from the front. His tactics were exceptional and his operations were always well planned and executed....

Further elaborating his tactics in response to 'fireforce' attacks, Parker adds;

Ndela [Nylon] always stood his ground...and could be heard loudly ordering his troops to 'flank' or 'advance' or to fire single shots only. Such commands were unnerving to the average Rhodesian soldier as this was a new experience when fighting guerrillas.⁶¹⁰

Nylon could also taunt Rhodesian soldiers during fire fights shouting obscenities and using his marksmanship to demoralise the enemy by targeting troop leaders. Most Rhodesian forces strongly suspected that he and his groups partook of drugs and always went into battle under the influence of *mbanje*.

Before making his appearance north of the Musogwezi, Nylon had been known for allegedly killing Dick Prinsloo, a farmer of Bangala Ranch in an amazing tactical feat. He ambushed him on a sharp curve approaching his farm gate in the early hours of the day when he knew his security as relaxed. All his ammunition including armour piercing rounds found their mark on Prinsloo's chest right behind his car's steering wheel.⁶¹¹ Nylon was also linked to the murder of another Roman catholic priest Fr. Jose Manuel Rubio Diaz of Bangala Mission near the Maregere dip tank. Here, it is alleged, Nylon was in the company of another notorious ZANLA

⁶¹⁰ Ibid. p. 117.

⁶¹¹ Ibid. p. 118.

Detachment Commander one Stopper Chiridza who marched Fr. Rubio a kilometre or so into the nearby bush and showered 37 bullets into his body.⁶¹² Once again, it is difficult to appreciate the validity of this allegation, especially considering the support that ZANLA in general and Nylon's group in particular received from the Roman Catholic Church and Fr. Rubio himself. In addition, this is hardly imaginable given Fr. Rubio's popularity amongst the local people.

In July 1978 Nylon began joint ambushes on the Fort Victoria-Beitbridge road with other ZANLA groups operating in Chivi. On the 2nd of July they ambushed a convoy that remained grounded for more than 6 hours. Later on the 17th, 30 Rhodesian troops were killed in an ambush near the Chamutsa area that also destroyed 9 military vehicles.⁶¹³ Towards the close 1978, it is said that Nylon has begun robbing local buses to provide for his group. The Selous Scouts reacted by painting a bus they had raided in Mozambique with the colours of a popular bus, *Shu-Shine Bus Service*, which plied the route to Nyajena through Chishanga. They mounted it with machine guns and placed on board Selous Scouts operatives disguised as African passengers. This 'funny bus' was made to operate in Mapanzure and Mshawasha African Purchase Area specifically to attract the attention of Nylon and his men but somehow, perhaps through *mijibha* intelligence, neither Nylon nor any of his men ever attempted to attack it. The bus was withdrawn in 1979 when Percy Hall, the owner, complained of the activities of the 'funny bus'. Thus ended the search for the elusive Nylon who was 'never to be seen, captured or killed or heard of' right up till the end of the war.⁶¹⁴ In 2001 the author with Dr. Joost Fontein was to encounter 'Nylon' as Collins Chihumba at a bar in Seke, Chitungwiza where he agreed to be interviewed but always evaded questions to his heroic feats in Nyajena.

⁶¹² Ibid p.113.

⁶¹³ *Zimbabwe News* vol. 11 no. 2 July-August 1979.

⁶¹⁴ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, p. 226.

9.8 The Final Northerly Advance

The end of 1978 also signalled the beginning of a consolidated drive by ZANLA guerrillas to advance northwards towards Fort Victoria town, this was to be achieved through the expansion of the 'liberated zones' of the Nyajena and Chibi detachments. The idea was also designed to gain full control of the strategic Fort Victoria-Beitbridge road and block any traffic from the south particularly trucks that brought in fuel from South Africa and ethanol from the Lowveld sugar estates. A demolition team of ZANLA engineers began work on some strategic targets under the leadership of 'Cde Nyakanyaka'. On the 2nd of October 1978 they laid explosives that blew up the Tokwe Bridge to a near rubble.⁶¹⁵ It was estimated that the damage would take 'no less than two months to repair' putting a temporary strain on the Rhodesian economy that had also been crippled by the bombing of fuel tanks in Msasa, Salisbury. Meanwhile, sections of ZANLA guerrillas straddling along the road would spend most of their time ambushing teams of maintenance convoys. They also used the opportunity of the temporary absence of patrols caused by the damage to the bridge to move in more troops and heavy artillery. Under the same strategy, the main bridge across the Govogwe river linking Chishanga to the main road was demolished in the same week. Effectively it became difficult to access Mshawasha Purchase Area and Ngomahuru just as it trapped all those Rhodesian Security Forces that were operating between this point and Nyajena who could only be airlifted out.

⁶¹⁵ 'Tokwe Bridge Blown' *Zimbabwe News* vol. 10 no. 5, September-October 1978, p. 24.

Eventually it took almost 2 months to repair the Tokwe bridge as had been predicted and it was open to traffic from the 28th of November 1978.⁶¹⁶ A new smaller bridge had to be built to ford the Govogwe river so that Ngomahuru and Mshawasha only became accessible from the north in the early months of 1979 this having been made possible only after diverting the road some metres away.⁶¹⁷

9.9 Conclusion

The term 'war' in Chishanga was a collective description of various situations obtaining in the period when armed activity was witnessed in the area. This study encountered stories about these situations as told by the Chishanga people who frequently projected ZANLA 'bases' as the theatres where this war was experienced. The war, rendered this way, had its heroes and its villains just as it had its casualties. The irony was, however, that these bases formed an arch circulating the *gadzingo*, the centre of Chishanga that the people had been fighting to get back from the colonial government. The Rhodesian forces and the ZANLA guerrillas interpreted Chishanga differently, it was a military terrain otherwise perceived as Nyajena, a dangerous one for the Rhodesians but a safe hide out for the guerrillas. Although ZANLA called it a 'liberated zone', this did not have any local meaning as long as the *gadzingo* had not been reclaimed. So indeed, when the war ended it brought an end to the military hostilities and the local abuses that came with it but not the struggles that the Chishanga people had been waging even before it had started. It had just frozen their aspirations in time and diverted their attention to the pressing needs of the emergent military situation. This is why it was difficult to encounter straightforward

⁶¹⁶ Hist. Mss. MS536/11/4 Julie Frederickse Collection, Rhodesia, Ministry of Information Press Statement, 'Repairs to Tokwe Bridge Complete' 28 November 1978.

⁶¹⁷ Interviews with Machongwe Chihava and vaMusvava.

stories linking the war to specific Chishanga grievances. With the coming of national independence, it was hoped that all the efforts towards restitution in Chishanga that had been suspended by the war, would be realised without any inhibitions.

Chapter 10

Dis-Continuity in 'Independent' Chishanga 1980-2000

10.1 Introduction

If the war had anything worthy to be acknowledged for Chishanga society, it was the manner in which it seemed to freeze time for a while and keep a number of already existing community processes and priorities in abeyance. Somehow, the 'war situation', as it developed in Chishanga, had rendered most such processes numb, after which, it seemed, all the wheels of society began to regain their motion, although being navigated in a direction that society now had little control over. A number of developments had allowed the drift into a perfectly straightforward trajectory seeking, as far as possible, to reconstitute the Chishanga of old. The previous chapters have demonstrated the gradual development, and the advantages to the people of Chishanga of a consciousness of belonging to a common territory. By the same token, the various attempts by the RF government, though for its own purposes, to make good any claims by these people to return to tradition supported this notion. It worked for Chief Mapanzure to make specific requests to that government in such a context and win some concessions. Naturally, when the war ended, Chishanga still had a lot of unfinished business in this regard. The *gadzingo* had been reclaimed on paper in 1976 but no occupation could actually take place due to the intensification of the war. The Mapanzure chieftainship was still not resolved since the death of Kunyanhu Gwenhamo in 1973 and his son Manyoka continued to act as chief. The Mapanzure reserve, now renamed a 'communal area', was bulging with the overpopulation that had been a cause for alarm over the past thirty years. At much the same time, generational and inheritance disputes in

the purchase areas were displacing more people back into the communal area. In the war period, all these developments appeared to have been suspended as Chishanga became a 'liberated zone' that had completely replaced the colonial civil administration with guerilla gun justice and popular, local versions of democracy.

The new independence government sought to replace the dominant colonial state machinery with orderly technocracy. In practice however, it never really abandoned the coercive scientific approach that had characterised the colonial years and sometimes, this deferred or postponed particular 'independence' aspirations of the Chishanga people for a long while. The new government had its own priorities, spearheaded by technocrats who charted an agenda for Chishanga from above as if there were no local immediate priorities. In this discontinuity, Chishanga ceased its balkanized existence and had to learn to adapt to a national development plan spearheaded by the local Member of Parliament (MP), ward councilors and the District Administrator's office. Although this suffocated its otherwise peculiar priorities and subordinated them to such a national agenda, they were to resurface through other means when the government and ruling party gradually lost popular support. Only then, did it seek to resuscitate a version of neo-traditionalism that promoted structures, ideals and images of the pre-colonial past in which Chishanga fitted perfectly. This chapter argues that the post-colonial period failed to facilitate the process of reclamation that had gained momentum during the colonial period because of the contradictory administrative policies of the independence government. With time, the Chishanga people grew impatient and began spontaneously occupying their ancestral lands without due regard to government policies. In the end, the government was forced to recognize their historic quest for restitution.

10.2 Re-negotiating Power in Newly Independent Chishanga:

Power in Chishanga after 1980 was bargained on the basis of solutions to the pending issues that the liberation war had been meant to address for the people of Chishanga. Key amongst them were; restoration, restitution and freedom of settlement on the local land. The major vehicle for this had been the already unbearable overpopulation of Mapanzure communal lands and the rate of dispersal from the former purchase area owing to varying social fission dynamics. For the Chishanga people, physical possession of the land was a deciding factor in reaching that historical fulfillment for this had always been at the heart of their struggle as documented in the last chapters. However the question remained whether the new state was accessible, or even available for such immediate local requirements. The practice of resettlement in Zimbabwe has largely been depicted as being determined, not by policy but by the effectiveness of tactics employed by different peasant groups to coerce the government to issue out land. Naturally, 'squatters' appear triumphant in accessing land for resettlement than communal area farmers because of the former's ability to circumvent the resettlement bureaucracy, especially its poorly institutionalized procedures as well as their ability to use national politicians to their advantage.⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁸ J. Herbst, *State Politics in Zimbabwe* (University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare), p. 80

Present Landuse Patterns in Chishanga

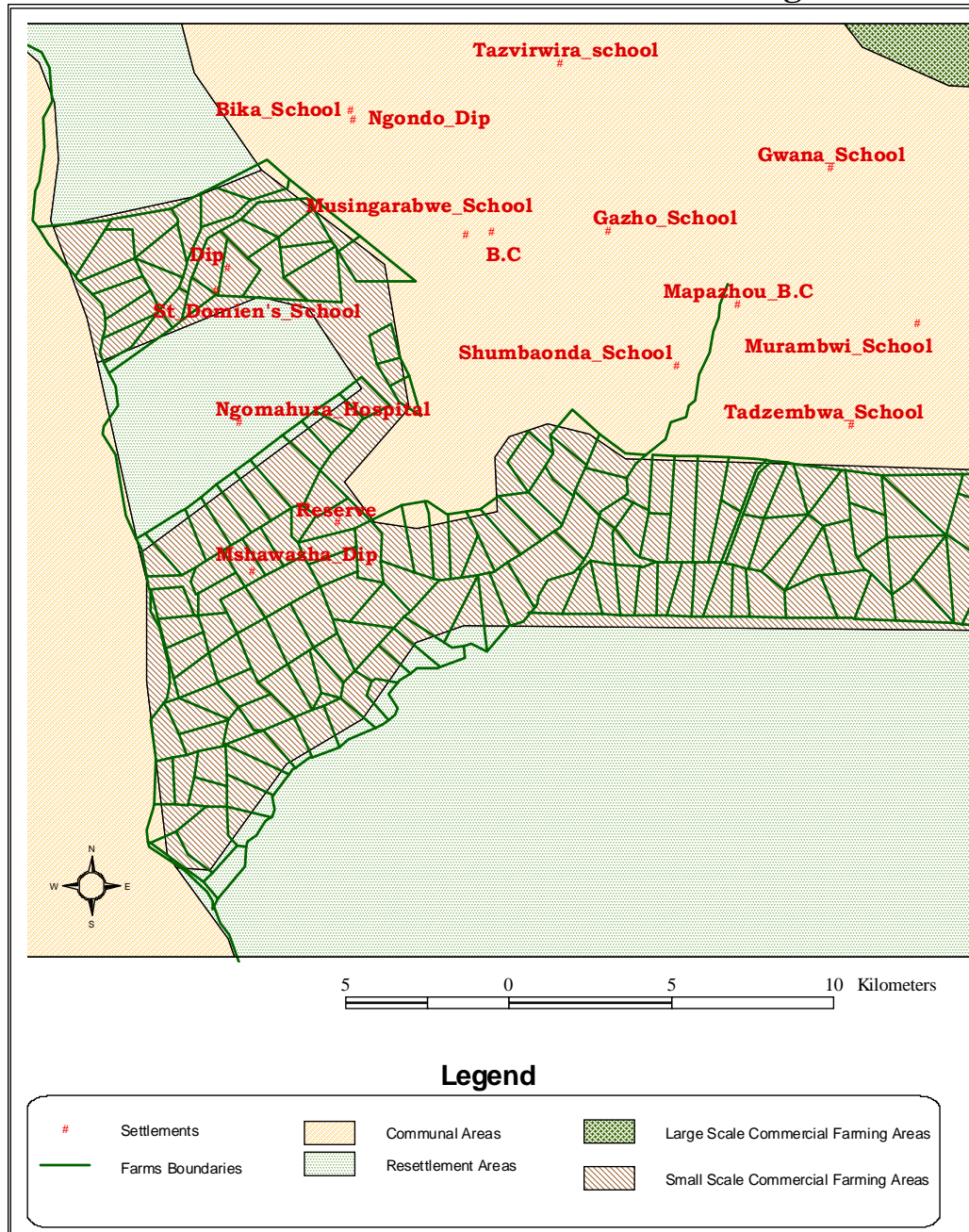


Fig. 10. 1: Present Land Use Patterns in Chishanga

The Resettlement schemes introduced in Chishanga did little to help the communal farmers of Mapanzure and totally failed to absorb the population emerging out of the former Mshawasha West APL. Although their *gadzingo* was legally returned to them on paper in 1976, the people of Mapanzure were still to achieve its physical occupation which, by extension, meant that they still had no control over it. Squatters countrywide were doing the opposite, resettling themselves by physical occupation, a language that a government without the institutional capacity to manage resettlement could only understand.

The new government's national agenda was projected chiefly as a 'development' oriented one. Such development, however, had to be administered without destroying already existing social and economic arrangements. This was the underlying concern in the government's new national development plan dubbed 'Growth with Equity'. A number of scholars have submitted that Zimbabwe's negotiated independence settlement is partly responsible for the continuity of colonial development policies by the new post-independence ZANU PF government. Under the Lancaster House Agreement, the government had to operate in a context in which it was supposed to deliver the fruits of independence to a previously oppressed African majority while, at the same time, preserving existing capitalist property relations. This way, it inherited the legacy of the coercive and dominant state, structured to preserve the interests of a privileged few i.e. the former colonial white community and an emergent black bourgeois class.⁶¹⁹ These contradictions forced the state to intervene to preserve the interests of capital by re-introducing authoritarian patterns of development targeted at the poor and subordinate classes. This, in effect, meant that the new political leadership had to control popular demands through a systematic

⁶¹⁹ C. Sylvester, 'Continuity and Discontinuity in Zimbabwe's Development History' *African Studies Review* vol. 28 no.1 (1985), p. 30.

process of ‘demobilising’ the structures and people it had mobilized during the war.⁶²⁰ According to Jocelyn Alexander, at this early stage in its life, the government was concerned with maintaining the image of a modernizing state, while limiting and controlling demands made to it on the basis of liberation war promises. It was ‘top-down development, not bottom-up restitution’ that would give this government legitimacy in the eyes of the international and donor community, she argues.⁶²¹ Under these circumstances, it did more to suppress the aspirations of previously subordinated groups, leaving them room, not only to become impatient, but to radicalize their demands with time and become powerful enough ‘to either seize the state to advance radical socialism, or cause a weakened bourgeois state to embark on a radical socialist course.’⁶²² Meanwhile, socialist transformation remained merely rhetoric and perhaps impossible to implement since the new independent state was funded to a large extent by capitalist institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF. What this meant in effect was that it would be difficult to dislodge the relations of production inherited from the colonial state.⁶²³

The chief proponents of the ‘radicalisation’ thesis are Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros. They have coherently advanced the idea of a radicalized peasantry to account for the drift towards the land occupation movement of the post 1997 period. Frustrated by the failure of the resettlement exercise and the high-handed manner in which ‘squattling’ was dealt with, landless peasants and liberation war veterans took to occupying large commercial farms including those owned by

⁶²⁰ Kriger, *Zimbabwe’s Guerilla War: Peasant Voices* p.223.

⁶²¹ J. Alexander, ‘Squatters, Veterans and the State in Zimbabwe’ in A. Hammar, B. Raftopolous & S. Jensen (eds.) *Zimbabwe’s Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis* (Weaver Press, Harare, 2003), p.85.

⁶²² Sylvester, ‘Continuity and Discontinuity’ p.39.

⁶²³ L. Tshuma, *A Matter of (In)Justice: Law, State and the Agrarian Question in Zimbabwe* (SAPES Books, Harare, 1997), p.54.

some government ministers.⁶²⁴ This in turn created, in Moyo and Yeros' view, a revolutionary situation which did not result in a revolution, but however, created a radical state prepared to undertake radical agrarian reform.⁶²⁵ Although these two scholars sympathise with the state and underplay the complicity of the political elite in seeking to replace, instead of reforming, the colonial capitalist system, it is possible under their logic to talk of a 'captured' state rather than a 'revolutionary' one. It is argued here that state bureaucracy and arrogance engendered a bourgeois class of political administrators that was contemptuous of the legitimate liberation aspirations of the masses while, at the same time, electioneering around and mobilizing them politically according to the ideals and legacies of that same liberation war. This, with time, created the environment for a potentially explosive revolutionary situation where peasants, not only drifted towards radicalism, but questioned the legitimacy of the leadership for betraying the liberation objectives. In its mild form this disillusionment could be expressed in the ballot box (by voting out the leadership) but in its extreme forms, it could deteriorate into demonstrations by veterans of the war and spontaneous mass land occupations as was the situation that developed in the country since 1997. The state was held at ransom and forced to give in to these demands or 'take over' these issues and champion them as its own 'radical' policy. This way, it was indeed the state that 'interrupted' such a revolution and co-opted its malcontents to suit their own political contingencies.⁶²⁶

Secondly, we need to acknowledge that the new government preferred to administer 'development' through a decentralized political system. 'Decentralisation' was part of the legacy

⁶²⁴ S. Moyo, 'The Land Occupation Movement and Democratisation in Zimbabwe: Contradictions of Neoliberalism' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* vol. 30 no.2 (2001), p. 323.

⁶²⁵ S. Moyo & P. Yeros, 'The Radicalised State: Zimbabwe's Interrupted Revolution' *Review of African Political Economy* no. 111, p. 103.

⁶²⁶ *Ibid.*

of the Rhodesian Front's 'community development' policy but it had also been buttressed by ZANLA guerilla fighting ideology which aimed at establishing 'liberated zones' such as Chishanga became. Under the new state system of an elaborate technocracy however, this decentralization engendered institutional absence in the rural areas. It also disempowered traditional authorities such as chiefs and spirit mediums, who had inspired the war, by leaving them out of the new administrative hierarchies. Instead, it entrenched the structures of the ruling party which remained well deployed politically to rally or coerce support on the basis of continuing the liberation struggle.⁶²⁷

Initially these party structures took the form of elected village committees organized along the lines of war-time 'base-committees', but now designed to rescue the 'feeble and rudimentary' caretaker administrative apparatus that characterized the state in the first twelve months of independence. Party hegemony could easily be maintained under such a 'lame duck' administration, as Ranger called it, but not for long.⁶²⁸ Both the unavailability of material benefits to reward those peasants in the rural areas serving in these party structures and the commitment of the government to introduce proper local government based on elected district councils did the trick.⁶²⁹ It successfully diluted the power of the party and customary leaders who became the chief protagonists of the state in contesting power in the rural areas for years to come.

In Chishanga local power had to be re-negotiated on the basis of these new post-colonial arrangements. In practice, this marked a reverse shift from the restitution agenda of the RF

⁶²⁷ Herbst, *State Politics* p. 66.

⁶²⁸ Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, p. 292.

⁶²⁹ Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerilla War: Peasant Voices* pp. 224-225.

government discussed in the previous chapter that was promoting a return to tradition. It is ironic that the new government preferred to administer Chishanga in its disaggregated constituents, conforming to specific development plans for its different land use patterns rather than as a cohesive whole. So indeed, where we saw attempts by the RF government to 'retribalise' purchase area farmers in the 1970s, now they featured as 'small scale commercial farmers' under the new ZANU PF regime. Where the chiefs had regained their judicial and land allocation powers through Rhodesian Tribal Land Authorities, they were now stripped of the same by the new independence government and reduced to officers in the emergent local councils. All the new programmes introduced were spearheaded by officials from outside Chishanga who became the new heroes prescribing what 'development' Chishanga required, when, how and why. When the political environment changed after 1997, the government reverted back to the old Rhodesian Front tactics of giving more power to the chiefs, re-tribalising the purchase areas, rejuvenating local party structures and relaxing the policies against squatting.

10.3 Land Disputes, Political Re-Deployment and Declining Chiefly Power in Chishanga

Masvingo Province topped the list of the most overcrowded communal areas in Zimbabwe. Efforts by the RF government to resettle people from the province to other sparsely populated areas such as Chiredzi and Gokwe in the 1960s and 70s had certainly not borne much fruit. Naturally, the province recorded the highest incidence of 'squatting', farm occupations and land disputes soon after independence than any other in the country. This was at a time when the government was insisting on an orderly resettlement process which required that all the landless people should first register with district councils before they could be issued out land. Most

peasant groups however, grew impatient and began occupying land as they wished, in some cases led by their own chiefs.⁶³⁰ In August 1981, Chief Chikwanda led over 3000 of his followers to occupy farms east of Masvingo town and they were only turned back by the intervention of politicians and the Deputy Prime Minister, Simon Muzenda.⁶³¹ Although squatting was widespread in the province, the most high profile case involved those 'squatters' around lake Mutirikwi where about 1000 squatters amongst them, some 700 cultivators, moved into an area meant for resettling only about 118 people.⁶³² The usual strategy of dealing with squatters was to send in the police or the army to forcibly evict the people while those who resisted eviction or returned back were arrested and brought to court.⁶³³ In some cases, conflict erupted in those communal areas adjacent to white commercial farms. In Chivi communal lands, for instance, border and grazing disputes resulting from conflicts over boundaries between communal farmers and commercial farmers were only resolved after the farmers offered grazing paddocks to the communal farmers.⁶³⁴ In others, the new administrative arrangements failed to promote local harmony as in the case of the Chamburukira area where two Chiefs; Nhema and Mabika clashed over whether to belong to Ndanga or Bikita district councils in the new dispensation and the violence that erupted there claimed the lives of three people.⁶³⁵

The spontaneity of land disputes and occupations in the province mirrored the situation prevailing in most parts of the country. Sometime in August 1981, the Minister of Lands Resettlement and Rural Development Dr. Sidney Sekeramayi delivered a wide ranging speech to

⁶³⁰ 'Landless Must Register with Councils' *Fort Victoria Advertiser* 7 August 1981.

⁶³¹ *The Sunday Mail* 30 August 1981

⁶³² Reward Mushayabasa, 'Squatters Destroying the Country' *Masvingo Advertiser* 30 July 1982.

⁶³³ For example, '12 Squatters Get Maximum Sentence', *Fort Victoria Advertiser* 11 December 1981.

⁶³⁴ 'Commercial/Communal Farmers Find Common Ground', *Masvingo Advertiser* 4 June 1982.

⁶³⁵ D. T. Rwafa, 'Muzenda Solves Bikita/Ndanga Border Dispute' *Masvingo Advertiser* 23 August 1983.

the annual congress of the Zimbabwe National Farmers Union at the Masvingo Town Hall where he reiterated the need for an orderly resettlement programme which required the landless to first register with district councils. In Masvingo province in general, it was reported that people were refusing to fill in the application forms for resettlement arguing that they would only do so when they knew when and where they would be resettled.⁶³⁶ 'This is surely a foolish attitude...' the minister responded,

...most likely emanating from people who have no land problem. How does anyone in a sane frame of mind expect the government to know whether he or she is landless unless some registration exercise is done? I am sure those who are not cooperating are not facing any genuine problem and they are free to remain where they are!

The refusal to fill in the forms was a widespread phenomenon in the entire country partly fuelled by mistrust over the government's intentions with data collected through these forms but practically the result of frustration over how much this bureaucracy was reducing the pace of an already slow process.⁶³⁷ The minister ended his speech with a warning to anyone who was 'arrogantly defying such logical procedure' to expect to be removed from whatever piece of land he or she has declared their new home.'⁶³⁸ Yet, despite these warnings and calls for order and patience to the rural masses, this rule did not seem to apply to the local political leadership who were openly defying the ZANU PF government's socialist 'leadership code' by amassing personal wealth through taking over former white farms, hotels and businesses for themselves in the province.

Most scholars who have analysed Zimbabwe's post-independence agrarian policy have pointed to its internal contradictions. Chief amongst them being that it has largely been cast as a political

⁶³⁶ 'Landless Must Register with Councils' *Fort Victoria Advertiser* 7 August 1981.

⁶³⁷ Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, p. 153.

⁶³⁸ 'Landless Must Register with Councils'.

necessity rather than being designed to offer solutions to the constraints of communal area production.⁶³⁹ There are also some notable continuities with colonial land policies, especially the commitment to abolish communal tenure in favour of establishing planned and surveyed 'economic units' in the spirit of the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951. This approach, as we saw in Chapter 7, did much to undermine the authority of chiefs and headmen who held a different view of land use and ownership. Naturally, there was an inevitable clash of interests between the new government's two key ministries concerned with these structures, the Ministry of Lands and the Ministry of Local Government. According to Jocelyn Alexander, the Lands ministry viewed chiefs, headmen and village heads as the conservative guard of an unproductive system and gladly welcomed the new legislation that took away their judicial and land distribution powers. On the other hand, the ZANU PF government, through the Local Government ministry continued the RF policy of seeking legitimacy in chiefs and pursuing development policies alongside traditionalist ideologies.⁶⁴⁰

The practice of post independence land redistribution reflected this uneasy relationship between tradition and modernity, with chiefs increasingly feeling that they had been effectively replaced in their roles by government technocrats. Local politicians also played their part in this confusion, some of them going as far as seeking to intervene in, or influence, the selection of chiefs. Late in 1982 this tendency was widespread in the country prompting the responsible minister of Local Government and Housing Eddison Zvobgo to issue out a statement:

⁶³⁹ J. Alexander, 'State, Peasantry and Resettlement in Zimbabwe' *Review of African Political Economy* vol. 21 no. 61, p.333.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

It has come to my notice that, in some cases, elements of political parties are seeking the removal of a chief or chiefs. Similarly the same elements are trying, in some instances to install chiefs of their own choosing or, where a vacancy exists because of the death of the incumbent, to interfere with the normal customary rules of succession in an endeavour to ensure that their own candidate is nominated for the chieftainship. I wish to make it quite clear that Government will not, under any circumstances, permit elements of political parties to remove chiefs from office, or to interfere in the normal selection procedures for purely political reasons...⁶⁴¹

In Chishanga, the Mapanzure chieftainship was still vacant, Manyoka Gwenhamo acted as chief until 1980 when, following the introduction of Village Courts, he was he was elected a 'Presiding Officer' or *mutongi* of the Mapanzure Village court.⁶⁴² In its quest to supplant the judicial powers of the chiefs, the new government introduced Village and Community courts that were subordinated to the Magistrates' Court. Although in practice most chiefs became and were encouraged to be 'Presiding Officers', it was a polite but definite move to contain their power.⁶⁴³ The major reason for this was that Chiefs and other customary leaders were, like the early party committees, seen as 'centres of alternative authority' to that of the state which would interfere with the modernizing agenda of the new government.⁶⁴⁴ Their customary power, though still relevant politically, had to be channeled through non-customary means in the emergent technocracy. There was thus a nationwide drive to fill in all vacant chiefly posts in order to ensure a complete exercise of subordinating them to the district council. These are the circumstances which broke the monotony in the Mapanzure chieftainship. In 1983 the succession was resolved amongst a number of competing houses and it was decided that the chieftainship remains within the Mazorodze house where Masimba Shumbayaonda was chosen as its oldest surviving descendant. At his installation in May 1984, politicians were conspicuous in their speeches. First, the Minister of Home Affairs who was acting as Minister of Local Government

⁶⁴¹ 'Hands off Chiefs Says Zvobgo' *Masvingo Advertiser* 1 May 1982.

⁶⁴² Interview with Manyoka Gwenhamo 18/07/01.

⁶⁴³ Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, p. 165.

⁶⁴⁴ Tshuma, *A Matter of (In)Justice*, p. 88.

and Town Planning, Dr. Simbi Mubako was at pains to play down the triumph of technocracy over tradition. He explained:

It would be tragic if chiefs were to look on councillors as usurpers of their powers, which previously were exclusively enjoyed by them. The chief, as the father of his people, gives unswerving support for all development projects initiated by his councillors.

He went on to defend this power-sharing on the basis that:

...before independence, chiefs had become the bulwark of the capitalist system in rural areas where they acquired wealth and lived in luxury, while the peasantry they claimed to represent sank deeper and deeper into destitution.⁶⁴⁵

The new district councils were organised according to wards and villages whose borders were delineated by ZANU PF political commissars so they naturally followed existing party demarcations. In Chishanga, two wards, 19 and 21 were identified covering Mapanzure communal area and the farms in Mshawasha west and north of the Musogwezi river respectively. Ward 20 covered those south of it. The villages in themselves resembled the war-time bases or 'TVs' as elaborated in the previous chapters. Interestingly, on the same occasion of installing Chief Mapanzure, the Provincial ZANU PF chairman, Mr. Nelson Mawema, urged chiefs to contest political posts within council wards and at party branch, district and even provincial levels.⁶⁴⁶ Under the circumstances, the new chief had little room to manoeuvre outside the discourse of the party so that even the land concerns of his people received less attention than they did in the years leading up to the return of the *gadzingo* in 1976. The people only featured in their relative importance to the support they could offer to solidify the strength of party structures amongst themselves. Subsequent changes in government policies would reflect this with time, but other interesting developments were taking shape in the former purchase area.

⁶⁴⁵ D. T. Rwafa, 'Mubako Installs new Chief Mapanzure' *Masvingo Advertiser* 11 May 1984

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

10.4 The Competition for ‘Home’: Conflict, Sub-division and Dispersal in the Mshawasha Purchase Area

The main vehicle for change and mobility in the purchase areas was not a post-independence phenomenon but a trend already visible within the second generation of farm dwellers. We discuss it here simply because its effects became more pronounced due to the ambivalent nature of post-independence land reform policies which failed to take into account some of the local dynamics. This trend principally concerns the competition created by inheritance disputes and the simple matters of co-existence amongst the people living on former purchase land. It has been argued by some scholars before that the relative isolation of the farm homesteads, the large acreages of cultivable land as well as the expense of hired labour left the purchase areas farmers with serious labour problems. A number of them increasingly turned to marrying more than one wife, having more children, or staying with relatives as a way out of the labour problem.⁶⁴⁷ It is no coincidence, therefore, that nearly 53% of the original farm owners in Chishanga were polygamous.⁶⁴⁸ With time, the division of labour amongst family members translated into division of land on a usufructural basis where, for instance, a farmer could ‘point out’ responsibility for a particular section of arable land or part of the farm to a wife or an unmarried adult son.⁶⁴⁹ As demonstrated in Chapter 6, the Native Land Board did not only pursue ‘squatting’ relatives out of the farms but was seriously opposed to the subdivision of the plots,

⁶⁴⁷ Weinrich, *African Farmers in Rhodesia*, p. 162.

⁶⁴⁸ Statistics collected from the 83 Farms in Mshawasha West

⁶⁴⁹ A. P. Cheater, *Idioms of Accumulation: Rural Development and Class Formation among Freeholders in Zimbabwe* (Mambo Press, Gweru, 1984).

particularly to the farmer's sons.⁶⁵⁰ It believed that the success of the NPA scheme depended on the manner in which the farms changed hands over time, and this was to a large extent true in the long term. However, the NLB was more concerned with who took over the farm after the death of the first owner or when he became too old to manage it, rather than the sociological issues emerging out of the competition for such ownership during and after that farmer's life.

Allison Shutt believes that first generation owners of the farms did not intend to turn them into retirement homes but saw them as investments and launch pads to better standards of living. This is one reason for the farmers' high investment in their children's education so as to open other avenues of accumulation and employment to supplement the family enterprise based on the farm.⁶⁵¹ In Shutt's view, the fact that the NLB discouraged this strategy meant that most sons looked elsewhere for alternatives while those sons most likely to inherit the farms were involved in perpetual conflicts with their fathers. Meanwhile, those whose chances of inheritance were minimal tended not to invest any money or time to the farm's development.⁶⁵² While this is a valid observation for most purchase areas, the evidence from Chishanga contradicts the first part of Shutt's argument. We have already shown the extent to which Chishanga was 'home' first and foremost to the original owners before it was perceived as a productive business enterprise. It had all the necessary paraphernalia to qualify it as such; it was ancestral land, the spatial proximity of relations left the kinship webs intact and even those that had been displaced for various reasons chose to be buried here. The farms were still *matongo* (old homes) where everybody came for various family functions such as *biras*, just as they became family

⁶⁵⁰ A. Shutt, "Everyone Has a Right to the Farm: Generational Conflict in the African Freehold Areas of Zimbabwe", Unpublished Paper Presented to the 1st International Land Tenure Conference, Orlando, Florida November 23-26 1996, p.1.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid. p.15.

⁶⁵² Ibid. p. 21.

mausoleums or burial grounds. So even when farmers' children were educated and found employment elsewhere, they still wanted to show some evidence of belonging at home by erecting dwelling structures or owning livestock back at the farms. The possibilities of leaving the farms for urban areas existed but were curtailed by the Rhodesian laws against influx control that began to resurface in the period following the passing of the Land Tenure Act of 1969. Thus to the landscape of Chishanga farms, with its Victorian bungalows and their big verandas, was added a new set of architecture ranging from huts to smaller 'flats' that mushroomed around each farm. Most family members stayed put on the farms for the simple reasons that they had such rights of settlement as children of the original farm owner. Others stayed to protect the interests of their mothers, as wives of the owner, who had worked with their husband to pay up the lease of the farm.⁶⁵³ Equally some farmowners encouraged their children to stay with them in their old age.⁶⁵⁴

During the liberation war guerrillas operating in Chishanga instructed all the people with children working for organisations directly assisting the Smith regime's counterinsurgency to tell them to come back or face retribution. Many people working for the police, army, prison service and rural district councils were forced back home as a result.⁶⁵⁵ This not only shrunk the space for alternative forms of survival but increased the number of people competing for the same resources on each farm. The frictions that ensued resulted in conflicts that manifested themselves in accusation of witchcraft or, during the war, in using the discourse of 'selling out' to rid each other of potential rivals.

⁶⁵³ Interview with Shasha Gwande, Chitekedza Farm 20/10/03.

⁶⁵⁴ Interview with Ngwambi Makavire, Makavire Farm 16/02/05.

⁶⁵⁵ Interview with Tirivapo Mazarire Mbeva Village, Chivi, 9/08/06. Tirivapo was a high ranking officer in the Prison Service and was forced to leave his job to become a local teacher.

After the war, although the purchase area may not have been overpopulated, it definitely had more people seeking the opportunity to leave. This was due, more to social pressures rather than land shortage. There was equally no legal pressure to disperse people ever since the suspension of government administration and monitoring mechanisms as the war escalated. Each farm has its own story of conflict and dispersal and it is in place to analyse part of this purchase area ethnography and how it fed into demand for more land.

10.4.1 Equal Access to The Farm: The Gapare and Matewe Farms

‘Chifuridyana’ Farm no.126 was owned by Madhumbu Gapare who had seven sons of whom four were still dwelling at the farm at independence. These were Chirichoga, Teyayi, Podzindicheri and Kadiviriregwiziguzere. Chirichoga was heir to the farm upon his father’s death in the 1970s, he continued to stay at the homestead with all his siblings except for Kadivirire who was in urban employment in Gweru. However, upon the death of Chirichoga, both Teyayi and Podzindicheri abandoned the central family homestead with its big house and settled in separate sections of the farm. When Kadivirire retired in 1997 he also selected yet another section to settle with his family. Apparently, they all agreed that each one was entitled to choose a piece of land within the farm to settle and cultivate with their individual families. Although this may have been a form of subdivision it allowed the opening up of land that had never been used since the farm was pegged.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵⁶ Interview with Podzindicheri ‘Mushongamunyuwani’ Gapare, Chivandire Farm 23/12/05.

This arrangement differed from that obtaining at Chipare Matewe's 'Gwangwadza' Farm no.122 where initially all his sons were settled in one place but due to differences amongst them they eventually decided to move apart and occupy different parts of the same farm.⁶⁵⁷ Both cases were inspired by the principle of equal access to the farm for all the farm owners' children. The Gapare case pre-empted conflict allowing separation at an early stage whereas the dispersal of the Matewe brothers was a result of conflict caused by spatial proximity. It can also be observed that such co-existence and equal access was common amongst the children of monogamous farm owners where the filial bonds binding the siblings were strong enough to discourage fission.

10.4.2 Brother Takes All: The 'Dombodema' and 'Chemudekunya' Cases

In some instances it is common that heirs to the farms seek to dispose of all potential competitors by driving them off the farm. On the death of Maronga Chemhuru, owner of 'Dombodema' Farm no.121, his eldest son took over as heir and continued to live on the farm with his mother and siblings. While two of his younger brothers and three of his sisters were in employment, the eldest son spent most of his time developing the farm. Eventually, a conflict arose that saw the other two brothers leaving to find their own places in Gokwe, while one elderly sister found a 'stand' in Mapanzure communal lands under Headman Makasi, where she moved with their ageing mother. In some instances, it need not be the eldest but the most influential child of the farm owner who effects change. Eliazel Marindo of 'Chemudekunya' Farm no. 128 had three sons, two of whom pre-deceased him including Jakuvosi who was killed by guerrillas in the war

⁶⁵⁷ Interview with Maxwell Matewe, 'Chinombururuka Chinomhara' Store 12/07/06.

as earlier described.⁶⁵⁸ They all left behind children and widows who dwelt at the farm. When Eliazel later died in the 1980s the remaining son took over as heir, but soon sought to rid himself of the extended family. Most of his nephews and nieces took refuge in the education they had acquired and slowly moved off the farm to secure new places of their own.⁶⁵⁹

10.4.3 'Let us all live Together': The 'Mafurinye' Case

Although some farm families avoided proximity, others encouraged it for different reasons. One reason for favouring clustered family co-existence was to continue the legacy of communality engendered by the farm owners as heads of households. The spirit of living together bound most people within a polygamous situation allowing for stronger family ties and high moral values. All seeds of division were bound to bring chaos and lack of control over the day to day running of the farm. Similarly, spatial proximity allowed for easy control of others by the dominant family. Chikozho Mazarire of 'Mafurinye' Farm no. 127 had five wives and in excess of 39 children who all were raised and lived at one homestead. His first wife did not bear a son which meant that Chikozho's first son, Gwanditarira was born of a junior wife. The first wife secured her niece as another wife for Chikozho and she begot two sons one being Chikozho's last born son delivered after his father's death in 1960 and symbolically named Taguma (the last one). He was made heir in place of Gwanditarira. The latter quit the farm and moved to Murinye with his family. Other sons like Vuta and Njodzi bought properties in towns and completely gave up farm life. Those that remained, continued to dwell on the same place in their large numbers but squabbles frequently arose over who determined policy at the farm. Although still projected as

⁶⁵⁸ See section 9.6.2 in this thesis.

⁶⁵⁹ Interview with Eria Marindo, Mapanzure Business Centre, 2/08/02.

an egalitarian family unit, the heir's house has the final say over what happens both at the farm and often in the family. Taguma occupies the uneasy role of assuming specific responsibilities on behalf of his brothers as the youngest brother, yet they all do not trust his ambition in using this position to the advantage of his immediate family. In reality, it is this communality that is a source of friction, for it is tilted in favour of the heir's family. Family members that have seen through this 'strategy' have left and secured their own places elsewhere, particularly amongst their kin in the Mapanzure communal lands.⁶⁶⁰

10.4.4 The Abandoned Farm: The 'Chamapete' Case

Mbizvo Tagwireyi or 'vaGutu', the owner of 'Chamapete' Farm no. 117 married two sisters, none of whom bore a male child. In the 1980s Mbizvo died and left behind the two widows Mai Johana and Mai Diana with the whole farm to themselves. All their daughters were either married or had passed away so that none were available to manage the affairs of the farm on behalf of the ageing widows. As an alternative, they had to rely on male relatives for labour and general management. For most of the 1980s to the 1990s this service was provided by their nephews from Maburuse across the Tugwi in Chivi communal lands. With time, they all got into urban employment and left the farm in a limbo once more. Next to be invited were some two cousins from the Maliki family from Chivi as well, one of them, Fana, died in 1993 and the other Kunda became a state land 'squatter' in the area near the Ngomahuru hospital. The two widows were left helpless once more but this time around, they were content to stay alone and watch the farm degenerate into a thicket of dense secondary vegetation in the fields that were once

⁶⁶⁰ Interview with Taguma Mazarire, Mucheke Suburb, Masvingo 18/03/08, Interview with Tirivapo Mazarire, Mbeva Village, Chivi, 9/08/06, Interview with Njodzi Mazarire, Kingston Park, Gweru, 7/08/02.

cultivated. Mbizvo's bungalow built in the 1940s architectural tradition was reduced to a rubble in the heavy rains of the 2000 cyclone 'Eline' and at one point the two widows did not even have descent shelter.⁶⁶¹

10.4 5 Buying Our Way Back To Chishanga: The Manenji Farm

In Chapter 6, we quoted at length the testimony of Munhumeso Manenji relating the dispersal of the Muchibwa house on the eve of the introduction of purchase areas in 1936.⁶⁶² After the 2nd World War, his elder brother Kutadza, who had been working in the Native Affairs Department, subsequently bought 'Manenji Farm' 390. Munhumeso, who had moved to Gwindingwi in Chivi still cultivated and kept some stock at his brother's farm. Kutadza, on his part, married two wives and in his twilight years had a third. He only had two sons Wewe and Shadhi who both stayed with him at the farm. Although comparatively well off during his time, Kutadza did not invest in the education of his children like his brother Munhumeso. Wewe took to a career as a traditional healer and Shadhi pre-deceased his father. Tensions after the death of Shadhi arose leading to Wewe's departure to secure his own place in Gokwe. Soon however, Kutadza also died leaving Wewe to return to the affairs of the farm only to find Shadhi's son Jephy and Munhumeso also in the picture. Neither Wewe nor Jephy had the wherewithal to develop the farm, although Munhumeso's children, who were far advanced in education and had well paying jobs, were already keeping their stock at the farm and contributing in different measures to its upkeep and that of the whole family left behind by Kutadza. This they did from their home in Chivi but never attempted to settle at the farm. More recently, Munhumeso's sons have offered to

⁶⁶¹ Interview with Kunda Maliki, Village 3 Ngomahuru Resettlement Scheme, 4/12/05.

⁶⁶² See section 6.5 in this thesis.

collectively purchase the farm, ostensibly to effect a more efficient management policy, but in reality to legitimate their settlement back on ancestral land. Members of the extended family have had mixed reactions to this proposed move, others seeing it as a welcome development to ensure Munhumeso's return to Chishanga, while others view it as a conspiracy against the inheritance *nhaka* of Kutadza's children.⁶⁶³

In the final analysis, although the purchase area by its nature had more excess land on the eve of independence, it was more contested than it had been ever before. Ranger identified cases in Makoni in 1981 where Purchase Area farmers were more concerned with the vulnerability of their land to invasion by Chief Makoni's people in the wake of renewed attempts by the chief and his people to regain their traditional territory. We described already the moulding of a Chishanga consciousness amongst Mshawasha West farmers who not only maintained links with the Mapanzure reserve farmers as their relations and customary realm, but treated their farms as home owing to their predominant local origins. There was never a threat of invasion or squatting on individual farmland but on state land in general. What bothered Chishanga's former purchase area farmers were renewed attempts by the ministry of local government, since February 1981, to force them to form their own councils or join existing district councils.⁶⁶⁴ Having successfully resisted them in the 1970s the farmers had no experience in forming one, subsequently they were incorporated into the Masvingo Rural District council in 1985 as part of its Ward 21. Their first Ward Councillor Julius Chemhuru had been the local base committee chairman during the war. With time, the purchase area farmers began to share similar administrative challenges as were those experienced in the communal area.

⁶⁶³ Interview with Jephy Manenji, Kutadza Farm, 14/06/06, Interview with Chomunogwa Mazarire.

⁶⁶⁴ 'Setting up Councils in Purchase Areas', *Fort Victoria Advertiser* 20 February 1981.

10.5 The Ngomahuru/Mukosi Resettlement Scheme and the 1982-84 Drought

In post-colonial Chishanga, it is much logical to talk about the Ngomahuru Resettlement scheme rather than the Ngomahuru hospital which, as we showed in Chapter 5 had been transformed into a fully-fledged mental institution by 1980. It would require yet another study whose data is yet to be available. By March 1982, however, 3 villages were established around the Ngomahuru Hospital under the government's newly adopted resettlement programme.

Resettlement, like other national programmes launched by the government at independence, should be seen within the context of sustaining the principle of egalitarianism implicit in the development strategy of 'growth with equity'. Two versions of the resettlement programme were adopted; the 'Intensive' and 'Accelerated' resettlement programmes. The first sought to settle farmers more densely and as closer to each other as possible to allow for economies of scale and the effective sharing of infrastructure while at the same time achieving a sense of cooperation amongst the settlers. It was based on 3 village models A, B, and C which varied from individual plot holdings to communal and cooperative farming. With respect to Chishanga, this phase of resettlement was established in the former Mukorsi River Ranch or 'Makwari', where 24 villages were created to cater for 657 settlers from the surrounding chieftaincies mainly; Shumba-Chekai, Nyajena, Chivi and Mapanzure itself. Since some such big ranches had already been invaded by illegal occupants, usually former labourers, these 'squatters' often got priority in land allocation

than registered landless communal farmers.⁶⁶⁵ It can be said the Intensive Resettlement phase did not help much the overpopulation situation in Mapanzure communal area nor did it absorb much of the population leaving the Mshawasha West purchase area. The Ngomahuru Resettlement scheme was a product of the Accelerated Resettlement Programme which was designed, to all intents and purposes, as a fire-fighting measure meant to tackle, 'quickly some of the most serious instances of squatting and some of the severe cases of over-population...' Its basic objective was 'to resettle as many people as possible in the shortest possible period of time by minimising planning, and postponing indefinitely the building of infrastructure'.⁶⁶⁶ This best describes what emerged as the 3 villages comprising the Ngomahuru scheme made up of only 46 families mostly from Mapanzure which was a token gesture in alleviating the crisis there. Again, virtually no one from the purchase areas gained a plot in this scheme.

These villages were created by cutting up tracts of land in the former Ngomahuru farm established for the Leprosarium through events described in Chapter 5. Ironically, it rekindled the traditional ties that local people had with this land where their kith and kin had been evicted from when the Leprosarium was established in 1929. At the same time, it complimented efforts by Chief Kunyhanu Gwenhamo to resettle people in the 1960s when he took the initiative to cut open the *rambotemwa* forest for settlement. Although it was not a complete exercise in restitution, it was return to familiar and associative territory. Some sceptics, however, see it as facilitating the spatial spread of the dominant Mazorodze house once more into those traditional zones of Chikwerenge province that it did not originally control. Two of the three villages fall under headmen who are Mazorodze's direct descendants, that is the Ponde house at 'Village 1'

⁶⁶⁵ B.H. Kinsey, 'Forever Gained: Resettlement and Land Policy in the Context of National Development in Zimbabwe' *Africa* vol. 52 no. 3 (1982) p.97.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p.101.

(behind Ngomahuru mountain of the Mhizha) and the Mutukwa (Bvongwe) and Zingoni houses in 'Village 3' (behind the Mafurinye mountain of the Muchibwa faction).⁶⁶⁷

Meanwhile, the prolonged drought from 1982 to 1984 seemed to have dealt a heavy blow on the new scheme. It affected the cropping programmes and claimed the livestock of the newly resettled farmers forcing most of them to seek grazing in the adjacent farms.⁶⁶⁸ At the same time, the impact of the drought at the national level was immense and the demand for drought relief in the face of poor agricultural yields made land reform a costly exercise. This saw a huge shift in the government's policy of 'growth with equity', where the emphasis was now placed more, on growth rather than on equity, implying a shift from land re-distribution to increasing peasant productivity.⁶⁶⁹ Further land redistribution or the relocation of people was halted in favour of programmes meant to increase crop yields or experiment with other productive options. In 'Village 3' of the Ngomahuru Resettlement scheme, a new cropping programme was introduced to the farmers to experiment with drought resistant crops such as *mapfunde* (finger millet) under an 'outgrowers' scheme sponsored by the Masvingo branch of *Chibuku* breweries. Mr. Mutasa, one of the resettled farmers who participated in this project recalls how he, within a short while, transformed his farming from basic subsistence crops to *mapfunde* as a commercial crop. He became the chief supplier of the crop and he also opened a local *Chibuku* beer distributing point from which he generated extra income.⁶⁷⁰ Certainly, even those farmers who stuck to traditional subsistence crops in the resettlement area, were better off after the drought than their counterparts in Mapanzure or the purchase area. Meanwhile, no further re-settlement ever

⁶⁶⁷ Interview with Boniface Tungamirayi Mazarire, Kadiviregwiguzere Gapare and Taguma Mazarire

⁶⁶⁸ Interview with Mukanga Zingoni, Village 3, Ngomahuru Resettlement Scheme 18/12/03

⁶⁶⁹ L. Tshuma, *A Matter of (In)Justice: Law, State and the Agrarian Question in Zimbabwe*, p. 56.

⁶⁷⁰ Interview with Koreka Mutasa, Village 3, Ngomahuru Resettlement Scheme 2/08/02.

occurred in Chishanga after this government policy shift despite the growing numbers of landless people. This situation facilitated an increase in the numbers of people identifying their own places to settle without official government approval.

10.6 Squatters, Politicians and Occupation of the *Gadzingo* 1985-1997

The circumstances created by the drought also hardened the government's attitude towards squatters. Whereas the government had initially pursued resettlement as a political necessity, its new emphasis on peasant productivity depended upon the enforcement of order in communal areas. It set the 25th of January 1983 as the deadline when all people occupying land illegally should vacate it. This was a contradiction given that it had actually slowed the pace of actual resettlement. In Chishanga, more illegal occupations were witnessed after that government deadline than before it. All those who were not accommodated in the Ngomahuru or Mukosi resettlements found an excuse to invade unoccupied state land. This could be land adjacent to farms or around communal dip tanks and the small 'reserve lands' or *zvivhande* left out in the pegging of farms in the 1930s and 40s. Towards the end of 1983, over 50 people carved out plots for themselves on the *chivhande* close to the Musogwezi river known as 'Zvomutuzu', and an unspecified number went to 'Dhamazi' near the Tokwe Grange Farm on the Beitbridge-Masvingo highway during the planting season of 1984.⁶⁷¹ Another group targeted the state land reserved for a business centre at Chin'ombe. The most dramatic of these occupations took place in 1986 on the state land adjacent to farms 127, 117 and 115, a place that came to be known as 'Runyararo Village' or the 'Village of Peace'. Here, Chimina Haruzivishe a daughter of the

⁶⁷¹ Interview with Clr. Julius Chemhuru 24/01/01

owner of Farm 127, decided to return home after divorcing her husband who left her with a disabled child. Her many brothers, who were themselves involved in their own bitter squabbles over the farm's inheritance, sent her away. She put up a strong fight but they were successful, at last, in evicting her. All she did was cut up a 20 acre plot on the *chivhande* next to their farm overlooking the Mafurinye dip tank and the Mamvura dam. The police came several times to evict her but failed. According to her;

I simply told them that a policeman has no power to evict me, it is my ancestral land, this is Chishanga, the land of the Hera, my forefathers, so I cannot be a squatter in my own home even if I am a woman. When they referred the matter to Chief Mapanzure (Masimba Shumbayaonda) he told them, "nobody should disturb a daughter of Mutunhakuwenda in her fatherland, we are busy giving land to strangers forgetting our own children. Leave her alone!..." That is how I continued to stay here until this day in peace... This is why it is also called it Runyararo Village.⁶⁷²

The Masvingo Rural District Council was aware of all such occupations and kept updated records, they also deliberated at length on this subject in the minutes of their planning committee meetings.⁶⁷³ However, the 'Runyararo Village' incident was peculiar in the sense that the local publicity it got and the way it was resolved, encouraged two other widows to come and settle side by side with Chimina, carving out plots as big as her own and turning it into a village indeed. No action was taken against them either, despite government's hardening policy towards squatting. Only a year before in 1985, the government had introduced new measures of controlling squatters. They involved giving the responsibility of dealing with squatters to the Ministry of Local Government which quickly established 'Squatter Control Committees' designed to 'coordinate the actions of all government departments involved in evictions and resettlement'.⁶⁷⁴ These committees were ineffective in the long run because although they had

⁶⁷² Interview with Chimina Haruzivishe Muchibwa 13/12/04.

⁶⁷³ Masvingo Rural District Council Minutes n.d. (From the Personal Files of Councillor J.J. Chemhuru).

⁶⁷⁴ Alexander, 'Squatters, Veterans and the State', p. 89.

the power to evict squatters, they did not have control over land for resettlement of the landless. Land acquisition was a more complicated matter split between several ministries and government departments who held conflicting interests in their different roles in the new agrarian policy.⁶⁷⁵ This was not helped by the fact that government itself was no longer in favour of actual resettlement. In its *First Five Year Plan* which appeared in 1985, the government placed more emphasis on 'Internal Resettlement' or a local version of 'villagisation' involving the movement of people into planned villages with arable blocks, rotational grazing and possibly irrigation.⁶⁷⁶ Ministries were reshuffled with the objective of pursuing this plan in earnest and the implementation of the programme was shared between various departments of different ministries such as Physical Planning (in the Ministry of Public Construction), the Department of Rural Development (DERUDE) in the Local Government ministry and Agricultural Extension Services (AGRITEX) in the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture. This resulted in confusion, partly caused by inter-departmental conflicts, and non-cooperation which were all met with open hostility by the local people in the areas where villagisation was introduced.⁶⁷⁷ This apparent chaos gave power to other actors who had for long been significant in local negotiations for land such as chiefs, headmen and local political party committees to make a case over the extent to which the 'experts'-inspired agrarian reform was alienating them. Meanwhile, developments in the late 1980s, exposing the corruption of several senior government officials, the rise of a militant civic movement and Edgar Tekere's opposition Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), all facilitated what Alexander has termed ZANU PF's pre-election insecurity in the run up to the

⁶⁷⁵ Tshuma, *A Matter of Injustice* p. 71 identifies 19 ministries and or government departments involved in resettlement and illustrates in detail some of the conflicts between them.

⁶⁷⁶ Alexander, 'State, Peasantry and Resettlement', p.339.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 340.

1990 elections.⁶⁷⁸ The result was not only the revival of promises for land and resettlement to the electorate but reduced pressure on squatters and the increasing importance of councillors, chiefs, VIDCO and party brass, in making local decisions over land. Once again, resettlement re-emerged as a tool for political expediency.

The consequences of this for Chishanga were quite obvious. Unlike other areas in the country like Manicaland with plenty of vacant land abandoned by white farmers during the war, Chishanga had no excess land except for the *gadzingo*. Nearby farms such as Buchanan and Stephanies were still under their white owners. The Mukorsi River Ranch was now history as it had been divided into 24 resettlement villages and, only the Tokwe Grange Farm had changed hands to an African owner. The only consolation was allowing the local squatters at 'Zvomutuzu', 'Dhamazi' or 'Runyararo Village' to live on where they were. This is what actually saved them and strengthened their case against the local Squatter Control Committee rather their own agency or radicalism, as some scholars would want to emphasise.

The other factor that shaped matters in Chishanga during this time was the 1992 drought, which in local memory, appears to have been the worst ever calamity to affect Chishanga society, leaving most families on the brink of starvation. Local rivers dried, livestock perished and people survived entirely on wild fruits or government food handouts and grain distribution by local NGOs such as the Catholic Development Commission (CADEC). During this time, a socio-religious movement emerged, led by a local woman from the Mapanzure house of Chatikobo. Juliana Tazvigwira, popularly known as 'Mbuya Juliana', was the daughter of Tumai, the son of

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid. p.338.

Tazvigwira who was born to Chatikobo, the son of Mazorodze (Mapanzure II).⁶⁷⁹ Her movement which spread through the entire south-central Zimbabwean region between 1992 and 1994 had a far reaching impact and has received a very thorough analysis by Ken Wilson and Abraham Mawere. In their view, her movement was able, through its focus on the drought, to challenge the state, business, church and traditional powers to elaborate new ecological and political ideas while at the same time restructuring local social relations and land-use practice.⁶⁸⁰

Juliana operated principally as a messenger of the *Mwari* cult or a *nyusa* and functioned with local traditional power structures, mainly chiefs, to impose a traditional socio-ecological order designed to mitigate or reverse the effects of the drought through the provision of rainfall. This was done through elaborate rituals sustained by a set of regulations to be observed strictly by the local population. This included observance of *chisi* rest days, banning of commercial beer brewing, drum beating and Zionist night vigils, the use of western utensils coming in contact with water and ultimately, fining transgressors to these and other rules. These were imposed in most south-central Karanga chieftaincies from Mazvihwa, Chivi, Gororo, Nyajena to Mapanzure itself. While in other areas, Juliana sought to project the image of a religious figure whose identity was mythical [e.g. her underwater origins, where she dwelt in the company of water sprites or *njuzu*], in Mapanzure, her identity was known. Her message here was different, it was prophetic and milleniarist. ‘Do not cry for your cattle... more people will die than the cattle’ she said in an apparent reference to the AIDS scourge. However, like in other chiefdoms, she successfully deployed her movement to operate through the structures of the traditional leadership. This way, it is easy to fit her work in the social context that was informing rural

⁶⁷⁹ Interview with Mapope Tavarera

⁶⁸⁰ A. Mawere & K. Wilson, ‘Socio-Religious Movements, The State and Community Change; Some Reflections on the Ambuya Juliana Cult of Southern Zimbabwe’ *Journal of Religion in Africa* vol. 25 no. 3 (1995), p.253.

struggles across Zimbabwe. In their analysis, Mawere and Wilson submit that the year 1992 was fertile ground for a social movement such as Juliana's because there was a notable shift in local attitudes towards government policy from general indifference to one that actually blamed the government for ecological desecration and rainfall failures. At the centre of this was the loss of chiefly authority and its gradual replacement by elected VIDCO and party officials who did not respect the will of the people or implemented rural change without recourse to local spiritual and traditional values. In their interviews with villagers in Mazvihwa (west of Chishanga), Mawere and Wilson found 'Harare politics' featuring prominently as the cause for drought, thus 'political leaders were perceived as willing to sacrifice the well-being of citizens in their pursuit of power' and 'the discord that this generated both created failures in the rains and disrupted people's capacities to cope with droughts.'⁶⁸¹

Juliana's movement was welcomed by chiefs for its desire to create a traditional social re-organisation that challenged the state's faith in scientific technocracy. Through Juliana's movement, most chiefs were able to re-assert their ritual authority and had the opportunity to revitalise their courts (through the administration of rules, regulations and fines) which was in effect the 'real' power they needed over their subjects. In Chishanga, Juliana's movement worked in favour of the traditional Mapanzure leadership who were proud that its leader was their own 'daughter'. The movement's regional appeal in general and its connection with the age old territorial cult of *Mwari* enhanced the stature of the Mapanzure chieftainship as both a secular and sacrilegious institution at a time that most chieftaincies were faced with political and ecological crisis. It reasserted the 'Rozvi System' that had been the basis of power as has been argued in the theoretical framework of this study. It will be recalled that the Mapanzure chiefs

⁶⁸¹ Ibid. p. 269.

had for long sought to appropriate the religious power of the Mhizha based at Marungudzi and control their rainmaking shrine at Chomukamba.

The impact of the Juliana movement however, need not be overstated. Despite its revolutionary nature, it failed to dislodge ruling party structures which were well deployed strategically in the distribution of food relief. It must also be understood that the difference between the drought of 1982 and that of 1992 is that government response to the first was welfarist, whereas in 1992 it was clearly interested in politicising rural structures for the coming elections in 1995. In its campaign trail, ZANU PF had to offer tangible solutions to the rural masses that happened to be its key support base with the growing disillusionment of the urban electorate. The rural grievances invariably remained the same and now the government needed to transform its rhetoric into action. In one such ZANU PF campaign rally held at Mapanzure Business Centre in the run up to the 1995 elections Joshua Nkomo and Eddison Zvobgo gave people the 'permission' to settle in the 'Zhou state land' or *gadzingo*.⁶⁸² Since its transfer to the then Mapanzure TTL by the Rhodesian government in 1976, the war and the independent government's policies of land re-distribution had militated against its reclamation and settlement by Chief Mapanzure's people-the people of Chishanga. Nearly twenty years later, a political decision was to effect this restitution overnight.

Instead of making things easier for the land hungry peasants, this announcement complicated an otherwise straightforward case of land restitution in Chishanga. It engendered competition between ruling party committees and traditional authorities over the settlement and land

⁶⁸² Many people interviewed recall the incident when the two politicians literally said that the people were free to settle the *gadzingo*.

distribution process. On their part, the former wanted to reward party loyalists and generate money from land seekers while traditional leaders wanted to use land redistribution as a means of re-asserting their long lost authority. In most cases these party officials were notables from local Chishanga families and, for a while, they had an upper hand because the Mapanzure chieftainship was once more on the verge of crisis in the 1990s following the death of Masimba Shumbayaonda. His son, Gwatipedza, acted as chief until 1997 when Vhuramayi Vushangwe Mutukwa was appointed substantive chief. Vhuramayi, a Second World War veteran had long left Mapanzure after receiving his veteran's pension and settled in Mt. Darwin in the 1950s. He was not familiar with local developments when he returned in 1997 and, up till now, he has no permanent dwelling in Mapanzure, save for a hut that he also uses as an office. When he came he found the local ZANU PF branch chairman Chinoda Muhera already distributing land in the Zhou *gadzingo*.

1997 was a turning point in Zimbabwe's land reform as it was for the Mapanzure chieftainship. The farm occupations by Chief Svosve and his people began to indicate the radicalisation of the peasantry and the increasing confidence the people were putting in chiefs to deliver them their land promises. In the same year, Chief Mapanzure's *dare* agreed on a mechanism of dividing up the *gadzingo* which undermined Muhera's initiative which was already mired in controversy.⁶⁸³ The *dare* decided to create villages representing all the key pre-colonial Chishanga families and houses. These amounted to 17 villages namely, Shindi (Mhizha), Gon'ora (Mhizha) Muhera (Hera) Munyarari/Gapare (Hera) Zingoni (Hera), Mawarire (Hera) Gotosa (Hera), Dimhairo (Hera), Hwena (Hera) Chikume (Rombo-Gwadzi) Makuvire (Hera), Mutya (Hera), Manduna

⁶⁸³ Muhera earned a reputation of lining up his pockets with landseekers money, issuing out land to anybody with the wherewithal to purchase land from him even those from other chieftaincies.

(Hera) Chingoma (Hera) Mabwe (Hera) Chimbuya (Hera) and Matiza (Hera). Each of these villages is demarcated either by rivers or hills originally associated with their ancestors in the *gadzingo* as it had emerged in the pre-colonial period. The proportion reflects the traditional dominance of the Mazorodze house but, also, the triumph of the traditionalists over the party. Muhera was silenced by two broad strokes of tradition. First, he owned a farm so he had no say over affairs concerning the communal area, secondly, his claim to be a *sabhuku* (village-head), if any, could only be exercised within the context of the village representing his family. In this case the Mabwe village had been allocated his own elder brother. In the end, the one village he had created was allowed to continue but that is only so far as the ‘party’ could go in this exercise. Otherwise, it was already apparent that the name of the ZANU PF party was being used in what was essentially Muhera’s personal money spinning project.

Although the Mhizha were allocated a *bhuku* in the *gadzingo* they have not been entirely happy with the reassertion of Mapanzure hegemony in this historically contested terrain. It will be recalled that even the name of the key mountain in the *gadzingo*, the Zhou was claimed by the Mhizha as their own. They had been watching these developments with considerable interest and gradually, came to view themselves as being increasingly stripped of their traditional religious role in Chishanga. They saw themselves as being reduced to a mere political headmanship and have since developed an argument that although Mapanzure owned the territory traditionally his authority over Chishanga was shared with his ‘uncles’ *madzisekuru*, the Mhizha.⁶⁸⁴ Consequently they have begun to argue that the land was theirs in the first place and Mapanzure got it courtesy of them after he ‘took’ their daughter VaChirungeni. They gave it in trust to their nephew *muzukuru* Mazorodze whom they trusted so much. Now his offspring are forgetting this

⁶⁸⁴ Interview with Poterai Gon’ora Mupota, see also Section 3.6 of this thesis.

covenant and disregarding the *mhiko* 'covenant' of their ancestor. The Mhizha have found a strength in this argument with the political support they have obtained from the Zimbabwe National Army, who have been conducting cleansing ceremonies for ex-combatants at the *zviturivadzimu* sacred pools since 2002. They usually brought with them other chiefs-including Chief Mapanzure-and leading political and military figures as well as some cabinet ministers. This entourage is led by the medium of Nehoreka, a well known *mhondoro* and descendant of the legendary pre-colonial Budya rainmaker.⁶⁸⁵ In 1982 Nehoreka's predecessor had conducted similar cleansing ceremonies for Mutoko youths who had allegedly, 'gone mad for killing innocent people in the war.'⁶⁸⁶ Kriger argues that this medium claimed that she could protect them from avenging spirits by making them wear black beads and administering to them medicines. She also prevented them from eating certain kinds of foods or drinking beer.⁶⁸⁷ The Nehoreka medium that came to Chishanga had a similar approach except that he brought with him people with no historical connection to the environs of the Mhizha sacred pools. It is still not known why the pools were selected as one Mhizha elder Mupeyiwa Chimwango reiterated;

I was walking on the path to Maningi's farm when I heard the sound of army vehicles. They stopped near me and the driver shouted 'hey *mdhara!* (old man) could you show us the way to the *zviturivadzimu?*' I did not seek to ask them what they wanted as they were military men and seemed to be accompanied by very important people. I told them I was the right person to talk to and jumped on to the truck full of strangers, the only local people there were the ones that they had asked to guide them...I also saw the spirit medium of Neroveka (sic) as well as another medium who they called Chitimkubu.⁶⁸⁸

After performing the rituals, the Nehoreka medium claimed that the long 'lost drum' of the Venda *ngoma lungundu* was in Chishanga and led the search for it in Ngomahuru mountain and

⁶⁸⁵ Crispen Chauke and Edward Matenga, 'Site Nomination Statement for Marungudzi Hill' National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe, Southern Region, April 2005. For the identity of Nehoreka and his role in the pre-colonial period see D.N. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe* (Mambo Press, Gweru, 1980), p.164-165.

⁶⁸⁶ Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerilla War: Peasant Voices*, p. 232.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁸ Interview with Simbarashe Mupeyiwa Chimwango.

succeeded in retrieving some ancient artefacts in one of the caves.⁶⁸⁹ Such national recognition of the Mhizha *zviturivadzimu* and their significance in national cleansing ceremonies within Mhizha ‘waters’ have no doubt fuelled Mhizha political aspirations and their claims over land. In addition, members of the ZNA participating in the rituals, have taken it upon themselves to evict those squatters encroaching the *zviturivadzimu* and not ‘listening’ to the custodian. In a recent field visit to the *zvituruvadzimu*, the custodian, Poterai Gon’ora Mupota (known locally as ‘Mhizha’) had this to say;

...go and tell them [Government] you have seen Chief Mhizha. Even Neroveka (sic) knows me and has been here...I now want my *nyembe* (chiefly badge) back!

This is but one narrative reflecting the continuity of re-interpreting and re-negotiating space in Chishanga which will never end and can be an independent study in itself. It confirms that Chishanga is now but an idea of territory which was and still is being contested.

10.7 Conclusion

The Chishanga people saw the end of the war and the coming of a popular independence government in power as the gateway to completing the process of reclaiming their former territory. The liberation war had been a diversion which postponed, but did not destroy, this commitment. The chiefs, who led the campaign for reclamation, certainly believed they would triumph but the new government’s policies let them down. Not only were these policies ambivalent and contradictory, they succeeded in replacing the power that chiefs had regained in the era of Rhodesian Front ‘Community Development’ with an elaborate government technocracy under VIDCOs that were complimented by some ruling party structures. This

⁶⁸⁹ I assume the motivation for this was the presence of visiting Venda chiefs from Makhado, South Africa, in the delegation. In subsequent years they visited Zimbabwe on more formal arrangements with the Zimbabwe Chiefs’ Council. Its President Chief Fortune Charumbira mentioned to me that these chiefs made continuous requests to visit Ngomahuru and rekindle the rich Venda heritage found there. Personal Communication with Chief Fortune Charumbira, Kwekwe 25 April 2005.

technocracy failed to implement a successful resettlement programme in Chishanga despite establishing two resettlement schemes. The problem of 'squatters' mounted as some landless Chishanga people resorted to spontaneously occupying state land to which they lay historical claims. The Squatter Control Committees appointed to evict them were challenged and rendered useless. The drought of 1992 came at this point of growing disillusionment with the state and was in some quarters blamed on the government. The *Mwari* cult-inspired rain-making movement led by a Chishanga woman, Juliana Tazvigwira or 'Mbuya Juliana', succeeded in rejuvenating the power of chiefs by appealing to a pre-colonial order of purity safeguarded by chiefs that would guarantee rain and prosperity. Countrywide, chiefs were on the forefront in leading peasant groups in land occupations and, in the campaigns for the 1995 elections, the ZANU PF government had to find ways of appeasing these traditional leaders and the radicalised peasantry if it would count on their votes. This is how Chief Mapanzure obtained the permission for his people to occupy the ancestral *gadzingo* at a ZANU PF political rally. For his people however, the process of reclaiming Chishanga had been achieved, whichever way this had been done. Metaphorically most of the Chishanga families were represented in the 17 villages that were established in the *gadzingo* after 1997, thus transforming it into a miniature pre-colonial Chishanga. All the same, even after occupying their ancestral lands, the Chishanga people did not live 'happily ever after', contestations continue amongst them over claims from various periods of the making and unmaking of Chishanga that thesis has attempted to document.

Conclusion

Contemporary studies of pre-colonial societies must not view them as neatly bound and unchanging entities. They are also not bygones that can be cast away in the dustbins of history. This study was inspired by a people's continuous appeal to belonging to a past territory which none of them could convincingly describe in the present. Chishanga was at one time a political territory, now it is an idea in the minds of the people who all lay various claims to it in different epochs of a collective history. The use of the term 'Chishanga people' in this study to refer to most of these people or their experiences in this spatial configuration was deliberate. It did not imply a homogenous identity but referred to different people with shared experiences in a place they all described in their varied perspectives. This fluidity and malleability of Chishanga is a defining mark of Karanga notions of territoriality which may suggest new concepts of analysing local societies. Studying Chishanga as if it were a political chieftainship completely misses the various other identities and power relations that shaped and continue to shape it. This is why Chishanga can never be accounted for in a colonial archive composed of documents concerned with administering straight-forward African political entities.

Chishanga also defies historians' classifications of African societies as being either 'pre-colonial', 'colonial' or 'post-colonial'. Chishanga cannot be frozen in time. Although forces such as colonialism did effect changes on Chishanga, they failed to erase it in the minds and imaginations of its people. These changes were appreciated but re-interpreted within the context of Chishanga as a metaphor for a collective territory, accommodating all the various claims. It is therefore essential to appreciate the historiography of the idea of Chishanga in order to understand its history and that of its people. This study has found it possible to unpack the idea

of Chishanga by analysing it across the entire chronological spectrum rather than in epochs defined only by one factor such as colonialism. This way, it encountered several other 'ideas' that make up Chishanga after all.

The most important observation was that Chishanga was, and still is, a place which has been given meaning by different groups that settled in it over time. This place has had universal interpretation by its successive inhabitants. It was appreciated from a centre that defined its periphery differently over time as well. It was a means for claiming space and relating to other spaces. From the point we begin its analysis, Chishanga exhibits characteristics of being a peripheral province of the Rozvi political centre. However, Chishanga had its own centre and periphery in turn. This centre has been the constant variable throughout the entire period covered by this study. It remained at one place, around Zhou mountain, even under different rulers. This study has concluded that this was so because it was the highest and healthiest point in the region which naturally attracted settlement by a ruling elite. It is also a watershed, the source of many rivers in the surrounding region. The concentration of mountains at this centre constituted good defence in case of enemy attacks and the various caves in them made good strongholds. They were also ideal burial sites for the dead in the years before the Karanga adopted coffins and ground burials. They in turn, became important religious sites for ancestral veneration. The relief rainfall facilitated by these mountains and hills also encouraged micro-climates of a tropical nature and access to all-year-round supplies of water that ensured good harvests compared to what obtained in the immediate rain shadow areas that constituted the periphery. In short, it was a place for privileged settlement, controlling it meant controlling the disadvantaged or vulnerable periphery in every sense.

The Rozvi who dominated this region employed the same formula of control on a larger scale. They were a ruling class that had emerged out of elaborate social networks defined by powerful lineage heads who maintained and controlled clients *vanyai*. The master-client social arrangement fitted well with the territorial idea of the centre and periphery. It produced a political structure based on the same principles that were managed through a parallel tributary network where client provinces were run by appointed chiefs who maintained their status for as long as they showed their allegiance by paying tribute to the Rozvi kings.

The Rozvi also appropriated the *Mwari* cult, a centralised High God cult which worked through the tribal spirits of tributary chieftaincies. Its network of provincial messengers also complimented the tributary network and cemented a centre-periphery structure that defined a 'Rozvi System'. Although the Rozvi state crumbled, this 'Rozvi System' survived especially in the southern Zimbabwean plateau which was slowly populated by incoming migrants taking advantage of the political vacuum left behind by the Rozvi. These groups came from a number of nuclear points and embraced the 'Rozvi System' as a universal model of social and political administration, convenient enough to subordinate former Rozvi subjects whom they found already resident in the region as well as their own followers. This way, a new 'Karanga' identity was born out of these changing configurations and based on the application of the 'Rozvi System' on a micro-scale by new, autonomous and semi-independent groups that established their own centres and spheres of influence. The Mwari cult also survived the Rozvi demise and easily deployed itself in these emergent miniature centres organised as *gadzingos* and it spread its influence through local ancestral structures in their peripheries. *Rambotemwa* sacred forests,

mitoro rain-making ceremonies and annual pilgrimages to the Matopos shrines qualified the High God presence amongst the Karanga. At the same time, the coming of the Nguni as well as the turmoil and mobility of the 19th century all made sure that these Karanga would secure their own permanent *gadzingos*.

Chishanga as a Rozvi tributary province, and later, as a Karanga colony, was found to demonstrate the traits elaborated above which is not a unique phenomenon in other contemporaneous Karanga polities, although it explains why its centre has remained at one place over the years. It does not explain however, why the name Chishanga has had universal appeal amongst successive rulers, a unique concept amongst the same people. This study concludes that the term Chishanga is also a metaphor for power relations shaping its people over time. It is a historic but neutral term, accommodating all claims to this territory. To this extent, this study has tried to account for these power relations. It has shown that although the vaHera are the politically dominant group, they are not the only claimants to Chishanga and that their Mapanzure dynasty and the territory it controls, are not synonymous with Chishanga.

Chishanga is a much broader and more inclusive concept. Like its contemporary neighbour Mushawasha, Chishanga was an important Rozvi satellite polity. Yet, unlike Mushawasha, it was more stable and ruled on a federal basis by a Rozvi dynasty of the *shoko* totem known as NeChishanga. This federation was composed of three peripheral provinces under the Rombo, Gwadzi and Mhizha groups. Of these autochthonous groups the first two were scattered with the collapse of the NeChishanga dynasty and this study has had to rely on historical and ethnographic evidence provided, chiefly, by the Mhizha. The Mhizha are the only ones who

survived the demise of NeChishanga and were able to maintain their original territory within Chishanga. Other groups that could not be identified with a specific territory such as the *Shava-Nhire* were absorbed by the incoming Karanga and incorporated into the new territories carved out by the vaHera the vaDuma clans and Nyajena. Because of these circumstances, the Mhizha have been able to provide more grounded and consistent evidence on pre-Hera Chishanga. This evidence points to the centrality of Zhou mountain and the surrounding cluster of mountains where the Mhizha place their charter myths of how they became a part of Chishanga. They left Zhou in the period immediately before the NeChishanga dynasty was deposed, possibly, after falling out with their Rozvi overlords. They recall this as a period violence perpetrated by the *mandionerepi* (possibly Rozvi armies) which forced them to move to the environs of the Murara valley where they established themselves at Marungudzi mountain.

From this point onwards power relations assume a central position in this study. This is principally because Chishanga is overrun by the Mapanzure dynasty that established political hegemony over what once was Chishanga territory and has maintained a chieftainship that lasts to this day. This study has established that it is misleading to view the Mapanzure chieftainship as inheriting the territory of Chishanga as a geo-political entity. It adopted its administrative concepts of establishing a Rozvi-style centre that controlled a fluid periphery kept in check through a similarly arranged tributary and religious system. As a result, Zhou remained a strategic centre for the vaHera in the same way that it was for the NeChishanga and it is here, that a new Karanga formula of social and political administration was formulated.

To understand this formula this study dug deeper into the functions of the political and social structures established by the vaHera after they defeated the NeChishanga people. In this analysis, it found the theory of ethnogenesis put forward by Igor Kopytoff to be applicable to a large extent. This is essentially a theory that explains how an initial core group of kinsmen can transform itself into a patrimonial political establishment after expanding into a 'frontier'.

Although in a typical way, the study traced how two Hera brothers facilitated the conquest of Chishanga, it did not concentrate on how they established a chieftainship and a dynasty, but on how they changed Chishanga's political geography. In other words, how their descendants populated the landscape of Chishanga, who they found in these areas and how they related to them? This way, it sought to be an inclusive study, not only concentrating on the Hera and how they became powerful in Chishanga, but also an appreciation of the people they overcame or co-existed with. Understanding the power relations that the Hera established is however necessary, and the units of analysis that were used to do this are the various family 'houses' of the vaHera. Tracking each of them within Chishanga details their spatial distribution and the nature of competition amongst themselves as well as that between them and other 'houses' of non-Hera groups. In the final analysis, it was found that although Hera 'houses' were equally represented in the *gadzingo*, they had specific districts allocated to them within Chishanga, some of which were established in regions occupied by other non-Hera groups.

It is essential to note, while considering the spatial distribution of these houses, that Hera territorial configurations were also affected by contemporary movements of other Karanga groups such as Charumbira and Shumba-Chekai, while at the same time, the VaRemba under

Tadzembwa remained a potential threat along the eastern borders of the new Hera territory. Nonetheless, Hera 'houses' determined the politics of the chieftainship and succession to it yet, in the fourth generation of the vaHera in Chishanga, the politics of their chieftainship became more complicated and had ultimately come under one 'house'. This development excluded key 'houses' as well as other important non-Hera actors in Chishanga and, to this extent, the chieftainship ceased to be a legitimate claim to traditional Chishanga. It became a Mapanzure chieftainship which, although founded in the context of Chishanga, was not representative of what Chishanga meant to its people, both Hera and non-Hera alike. This collective identity was only to be expressed in the *gadzingo*, a historical centre accommodating all epochs of Chishanga's past and its people. The *Mwari* cult messengers also operated through this centre and facilitated the establishment of a sacred forest or *rambotemwa* around this centre maintaining a specific continuity with the Rozvi tradition.

It was in this period of change that colonial rule was established. The BSA Company administration was based on the British Indirect Rule system functioning through existing chiefs and their traditional structures. The chieftainship that existed in Chishanga was the corrupted Mapanzure version which had assumed its new shape only a few years back under the monopoly of the Mazorodze 'house'. It was this version that was recognised and, from this point onwards, the colonial government began a process that systematically destroyed the very basis of Chishanga identity. Firstly, settlement in the *gadzingo* was disallowed and everybody was evicted from it signalling the most significant step in detaching the Chishanga people from the physical and symbolic core of their territory. Secondly, the Chishanga periphery was redefined physically, one part being converted into a 'reserve', the other into a Leper colony and the rest

into a Native Purchase Area erroneously named after a neighbouring territory, Mushawasha. Lastly, the Mapanzure chieftainship was itself abolished in 1948.

This study has tried to answer two central questions to the Chishanga problem as it emerged. The first is how did the idea of Chishanga survive this colonial onslaught and the second is why did the idea of Chishanga form a collective rallying point for the reclamation process that was spearheaded by the Mapanzure chiefs from the late 1960s onwards? Answering these questions required that it be acknowledged that throughout the contestations it underwent, Chishanga ceased to be a territory in a political and physical sense and became an imagined geography, a collective metaphor for a contested space.

The Chishanga idea was therefore able to survive all the pressures of the colonial period because of several factors. In the area around the Ngomahuru Leper Settlement every effort to transform it into a Leper Colony of international stature was resisted on the basis that it was desecrating a sacred environment with a disease associated with evil spirits. Equally, the contradictions surrounding its development and management as a medical centre in a British colony made it an island of British imperial civilisation with little or no impact on the local people around it except evicting them from their lands. They were identified collectively as a group of Chishanga 'squatters' who were a perennial problem for the NLB throughout the 1930s and 40s. In the reserve, the Mapanzure chiefs, who had been moved out of the *gadzingo* continued to refer to the territory they supposedly ruled as Chishanga. These were not only claims to a larger territory but to a different sort of hegemony and prestige they enjoyed in the pre-colonial period that was not bound by frontiers or borders in the sense that colonial administrators now wanted to recognise

their chiefly status. On the other hand, in the Mshawasha West Native Purchase Area, Chishanga families that managed to buy farms dominated the scheme and its branch of the SRNA. They gathered around a solidarity coalition that lobbied for its interests as a group of the 'Chishanga section' of the entire purchase area scheme. This section of family farms, like the pre-colonial 'houses', maintained a strong degree of continuity with the pre-colonial spatial arrangements of Chishanga.

With regard to the second question relating to the reclamation process, this study has found that Chishanga and its ideals of a consistent centre with a fluid periphery embodied the very notion of reclaiming a contested territory such as Chishanga was in the pre-colonial period. The Chishanga idea was a rallying point that could accommodate all the different claims by different interest groups, chiefs, farmers and squatters alike. The Mapanzure chiefs or their *dare* appreciated this fact and when the opportunity availed itself to reclaim Chishanga, they preferred to reclaim its 'core' first so that all its other constituents could fit in place according to the varying claims made by these interest groups. This is how the *gadzingo* was successfully claimed in 1976. Gaining control of the centre as in the pre-colonial period was a means of controlling the periphery, this principle applied then as it does now and it is part of what constitutes Chishanga identity.

This study also concludes that the reclamation process was not an event in itself nor was it only confined to the colonial period. It was a process fuelled by the various claims elaborated above as well as the contestations that continue to this day. It has been shown that the liberation war did not facilitate the reclamation process of Chishanga that had gained momentum in the 1970s. It

simply postponed it and, instead, brought about an independence government that introduced a land redistribution programme with no recourse to the restitution that the Chishanga people had initiated or that which they desired. Although the chiefs had spearheaded this, their powers were curtailed by VIDCOs and the dream for regaining Chishanga once again faded. The irony was however that another key aspect of the Chishanga metaphor experienced a revival in the 1990s in the form of the *Mwari* cult-inspired Mbuya Juliana movement. Its calls for the return to the legitimacy of tradition and the restoration of the power of chiefs for the moral health of the entire country rekindled local faith in traditional leaders and their ability to deliver local independence aspirations such as freedom of settlement in ancestral and productive land. This is the context in which the Mapanzure chiefs led the settlement of the *gadzingo* and distributed it amongst all the 'houses' of Chishanga after 1997, as if to completely re-incarnate the old meanings of Chishanga. The question will of course remain what Chishanga was re-claimed and from whose perspective? This becomes yet another study on its own. Suffice it to say reclaiming Chishanga's centre was symbolic of reclaiming its unknown, contested and ever-changing periphery.

The broader implications of the Chishanga study must be emphasised. First, it shows that 'pre-colonial' societies were not organised simply as political units but had several other social and spatial arrangements shaping them. Political institutions such as 'chieftainships' did not necessarily translate to territorial concepts. Ruling dynasties could come and go but territories remained constant factors shaped by the landscape as well as the common people. It was in a bid to control this landscape and its people that successive rulers resorted to universal methods of administration based on centre-periphery notions like the ones we have discussed for Chishanga. Attaching 'chieftainship' to specific territories is a colonial concept that was useful to

administrators that were concerned with creating socio-geographic spaces for their subjects for the convenience of tax collection and other aspects of native administration. Mapping subjects into political units under chiefs and headmen was an essential part of Indirect Rule colonialism that served the purpose of imposing colonial authority in a terrain that was clearly delineated which also made it easy to contain resistance. Most African societies, like Chishanga, kept changing and to understand them we need to appreciate other elements that made them up apart from their political organisation. To do this, we need to transcend narrow colonial classifications and nomenclature which often failed to capture the sophistication of African tradition and social organisation. To this end, colonial sources and archives should be extensively interrogated beyond their simple appreciation of African societies in situ. The Chishanga study has shown the advantages of analysing such societies in the *longue durée*, across the entire chronological spectrum encompassing the various epochs that these societies go through. Chishanga is a story from long ago that is still happening, analysing it as a 'pre-colonial' society, for instance, misses all the dynamics that shaped it in the so-called 'colonial' and 'post-colonial' periods. It is timeless but embodies all the facets of a typical African society.

It is important to conclude with suggesting areas of further enquiry in Chishanga and make some recommendations. Even after extolling the virtues of a *longue durée* perspective of Chishanga, it must be appreciated that such an approach may make the study uneven. This study is quite typical in this sense and, sometimes, the availability of evidence dictates that this is so. It is richer in some areas but not in others, chronologically it moves with a fast pace in some areas and is slower in others. Viewed in the present sense, the study has covered three main areas and their peoples, the Mapanzure communal lands, the Ngomahuru Hospital complex and

Mushawasha West small scale commercial farming area. The Mapanzure chieftainship has received a significant amount of attention, both as a way of understanding its internal make up and demonstrating that its claims to Chishanga are but a part of several other claims by different groups. It has been confined to the Mapanzure communal lands in the way that colonial administrators wanted chiefs to preside over specific reserves. The re-occupation of the *gadzingo* in 1997 has certainly increased the number of headmanships that fall under the powers of Chief Mapanzure. Equally, from 2000 Chief Mapanzure was allowed to establish headmanships in the former Mushawasha West purchase area. It is interesting to note that, while chiefly authority was easily established in the *gadzingo*, it is strongly resisted in the former purchase area farms because it is now freehold area under individual title deeds, but more importantly, because the Chishanga families there, claim that it was never under the jurisdiction of the Mazorodze house in the period before the colonial land policies. The latter reason questions the legitimacy of the Mapanzure chieftaincy which has for long been monopolised by the Mazorodze ‘house’ to extend its powers into other areas of Chishanga traditionally under other ‘houses’ simply because it is now the recognised chieftainship. History still matters in modern Chishanga as it mattered long back and a new study of the area should seek to investigate the various discourses seeking to reform the Mapanzure chieftainship if it wishes to extend its hegemony in a long contested Chishanga territory that it never controlled even before the colonial period. The fact that the appointment of Vhuramayi Vushangwe as Chief Mapanzure IX in 1997 was contested by candidates from some ‘houses’ other than that of Mazorodze, may be a pointer to the growing signs of accommodation in the search for a broader and more inclusive political tradition for Chishanga.

So far as Ngomahuru is concerned, this study has paid more attention to the period when it was a Leprosy institution. It became home to Tuberculosis patients between 1963 and 1969 and since then it has become a well-known mental hospital. The availability of sources permitting, all this institutional history should be pursued and, so too should be, the attitudes of the Chishanga people to the changing nature of this part of their landscape.

We have seen already that the Mshawasha West NPA never became an enclave of yeoman farmers that the Rhodesian Native Land Board wanted it to be. Instead, it reverted to tribal or communal tenure as most farm owners saw their landholdings as family units and mausoleums. They continued to be ancestral lands. This study has captured only a fraction of the difficulties being faced by the former NPAs as a result of family squabbles between generations of farm owners' descendants. They have been transformed into miniature 'chiefdoms' with various 'houses' fighting to control each farm and rendering development there stagnant. This study found it interesting that former NPAs do not feature prominently in the current land reform programme, although they remain sparsely populated, unproductive and underutilised. Instead, as is in the case of Mshawasha West, the struggles over the farms result in the eviction of some family members who either go to their relatives in Mapanzure communal lands or occupy state land as 'squatters'. To all of them, they are still in Chishanga, but the uneven distribution of population within Chishanga that emerges as a result of these displacements means that the Mapanzure communal lands will soon be an environmental disaster. If the former purchase area continues to be occupied communally by poor and squabbling family units, it were better that they be abolished and sub-divided among the family members. The advantage is that it does not involve any sale of property but redistribution of inheritance *nhaka* in a planned way that also

allows for maximum use of land that has been underutilised for years. It also ends the expulsion of family members into vulnerable areas and still contains the people within their ancestral lands.

The last point is a policy issue which concerns the place accorded 'history' in Zimbabwe's post-independence land reform and resettlement exercise. The Chishanga study is also a typical lesson in land restitution, yet the Zimbabwean land reform experience seems to have placed more emphasis on 'equity', 'resettlement' and 'redistribution' both at planning and implementation levels. Cases like Chishanga have become common, where people would prefer to have their historical land claims addressed rather be resettled in new 'productive' areas. Although it goes beyond the scope of this study, there are a number of people from Chishanga who benefitted from the Fast Track Land Reform programme after 2000 who, although 'working' in their new plots in the resettlement areas, continue to maintain residence and presence in their ancestral lands in Chishanga. This is historically significant and this study hopes to be a step in the direction of understanding local interpretations of land as a way of appreciating the core values that can make resettlement meaningful to the resettled.

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Glossary of Terms

<i>Buri</i>		Large family or clan.
<i>Dupo</i>		Parent totem.
<i>Gadzingo</i>		Political and religious centre incorporating an administrative centre and ancestral burial ground.
<i>Gadzingai</i>		Of matrilineal descent or interest.
<i>Gota</i>		Councillor not descending from the Chief's clan.
<i>Sabhuku</i>		village head.
<i>Mapurazeni</i>		Farm, from the Portuguese <i>prazo</i> system, used to refer to former Native Purchase Area holdings.
<i>Madzviti</i>		A collective term referring to the Nguni.
<i>Maguvu</i>		Swazi warriors.
<i>Mandionerepi</i>		Short people, or the San 'bushmen'.
<i>Mashavi</i>		Wandering spirits.
<i>Mashuku</i>		Wild loquat
<i>Matongo</i>		Old home.
<i>Mhiko</i>		covenant
<i>Mhinganidzo</i>		oath
<i>Muchinda</i>		Councillor descending from the Chief's clan.
<i>Muzukuru</i>		Nephew or Cousin.
<i>Ndudzo</i>		War Medicine
<i>Nharirire</i>		Watchman or Sentinel.
<i>Nheyo, Matego</i>		Clan officials strategically settled on vulnerable points of a territory.
<i>Nyusa</i>		Messenger of the <i>Mwari</i> Cult
<i>Mhondoro</i>		Lion Spirit
<i>Nyembe</i>		Chiefly badge
<i>Pfumo-</i>	I	Invading army (aggressor)
<i>Impi</i>		Raiding party

Appendices

Appendix 1: Farmowners in Chishanga and their Totemic Identities

Farm No	. Name of Owner	Totem of Owner
121	Chemhuru Johnsaya Maronga	<i>Ngara-Wamambo (Porcupine)</i>
120	Mataka Matewe	<i>Zhou (Elephant)</i>
119	Gapare Njeru	<i>Shava-Mhofu (Eland)</i>
118	Gapare Madhumbu	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
117	Gutu Tagwireyi	<i>Gumbo Madyirapazhe</i>
127	Mazarire Chikozho.	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
128	Marindo Eliazel.	<i>Shumba Chivige (Lion)</i>
129	Marindo Maronga.	<i>Shumba-Chivige</i>
113	Chipatiso Pesanai.	<i>Shumba-Murambwi</i>
114	Munodawafa Manasa	<i>Moyo-Nyajena (Heart)</i>
115	Munodawafa Samuel.	<i>Moyo-Nyajena</i>
116	Gwande Chitekedza	<i>Shumba-Chitekedza</i>
389	Chivandire Gapare	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
390	Manenji Kutadza	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
108	*Chinatsira Chapwanya	<i>Shoko (Monkey)</i>
107	Tanikwa-Chizema	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
106	Tsikire John Henry	<i>Ngara-Wamambo</i>
131	Chikwavava Rashirayi	<i>Matutu-Gwizhu (Springhare)</i>
103	Mupa Heneri	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
104	Muparangi Pedzai	<i>Moyondizvo</i>
105	Tindiri Munyarari	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
132	Hama Jakuvosi.D.	<i>Shumba-Chitekedza</i>
133	Gara Rangazvukayi	<i>Moyo-Rozvi</i>
134	Takuva Ngwato	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>

97	Chirima Munhundadya	<i>Zhou-Mhizha (Elephant)</i>
93	Bharakiya Dzingisayi	<i>Zhou-Siwani</i>
100	Takuva Hlanai	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
99	Gukurume Mazanhi	<i>Moyo</i>
96	Marange Silasi	<i>Shumba</i>
407	Chikoti Bhiza	<i>Moyo-Nyajena</i>
402	Mabhadhi Tadzembwa	<i>Zhou</i>
404	Mukomondera Simoni	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
403	Karonga	<i>Shoko</i>
399	Nzara Makaranya	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
401	Jaricha Musengi	
399	Muchepfura Tinago	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
391	Chigohwe	
102	Jaya Gideon	<i>Shoko-Mumbire</i>
55	Mupa Chinhema	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
54	Mboweni Ephraim	<i>Moyondizvo-Moto-Chauke</i>
53	Mawarire Maminye	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
52	**MhembereJoseph	
51	Maroveke Mapupu	<i>Moyo-Nyajena</i>
50	Makasi Heppison Maribha	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
49	Chiwawa Taitos David	<i>Shumba-Sipambi</i>
48	Marapira Maremba	<i>Ngara-Wamambo</i>
47	Maronga Tamirepi	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
46	Machekano Willie	<i>Beta</i>
45	Mhini Simoni	<i>Shoko-Marambire</i>
44	Takaindisa Mupanga	<i>Gumbo-Madyirapazhe (Leg)</i>
43	Siwadhi Neka	<i>Shumba</i>
42	Ruvangu Muringa	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
41	Mavhuna Chivurayise	<i>Shava-Mafusire/Matutu-Gwizhu</i>
39	Kanhi Mlilo	<i>Moto (Fire)</i>
111	Dhilwayo Zviyemugwi	<i>Beta-(Termite)</i>
112	Zimuto Pearson	<i>Ngara-Govera</i>

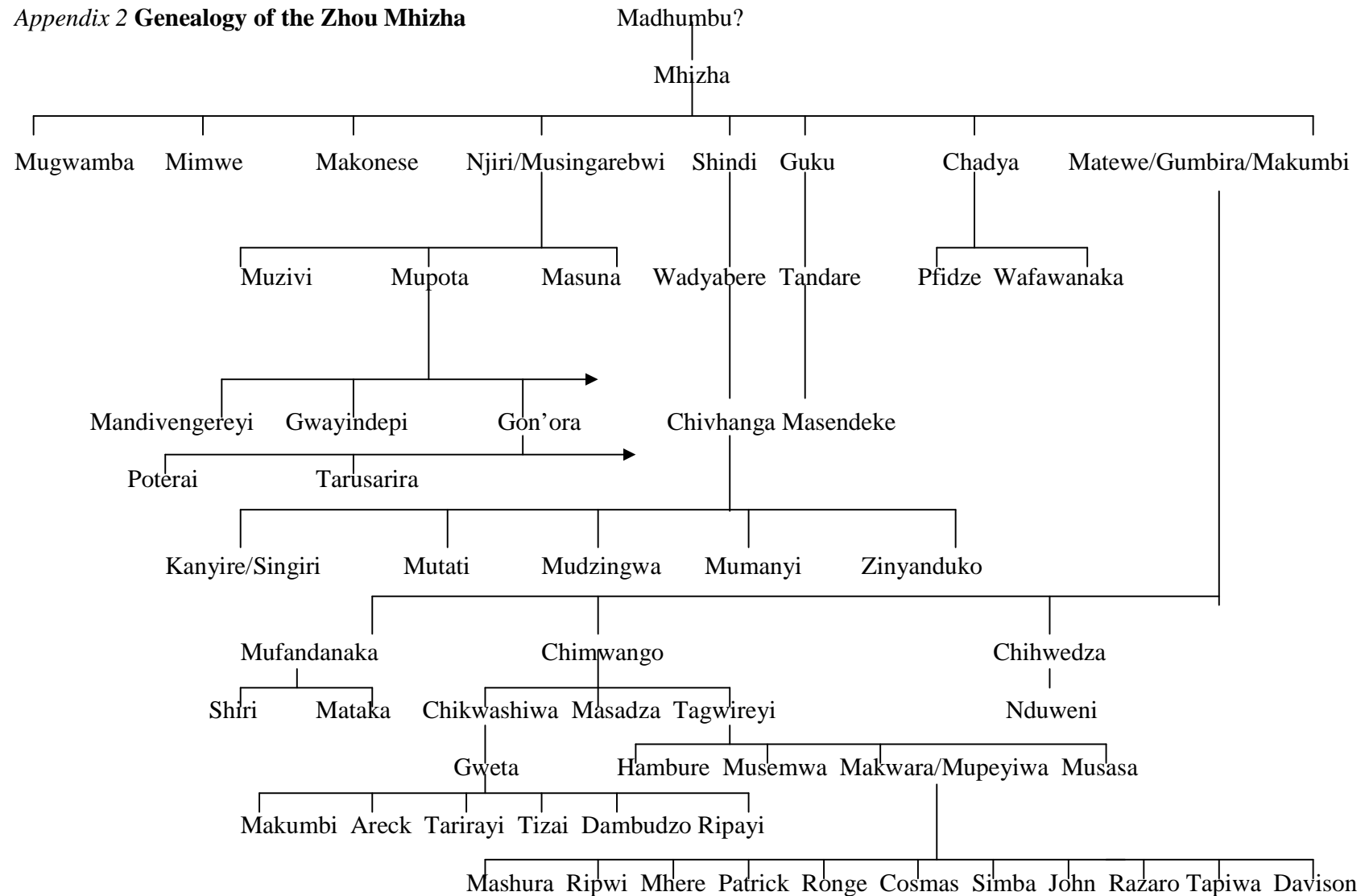
122	Matewe Chipare	<i>Zhou-Mhizha</i>
123	Chisedze Obert	<i>Beta</i>
124	Shindi Jacob James	<i>Zhou-Mhizha</i>
125	Chimwango Mupeyiwa	<i>Zhou-Mhizha</i>
126	Manhingi Mbundira	<i>Beta</i>
136	Gon'ora Mavedzenge	<i>Zhou-Mhizha</i>
137	***Muhera Chinoda	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
347	Mutoti Mujere	<i>Shoko-Mukanya</i>
348	Chitafi Jaji	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
130	Rioga Isaac	
362	Madan'ombe Charumbira	<i>Shumba-Sipambi</i>
365	Chitana Stewart	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
355	Maphosa Zuva	<i>Ngara-Wamambo</i>
	Mandava Runovona	<i>Shumba-Murambwi</i>
352	Musiiwa Mafuva	<i>Ngara-Govera</i>
347	Jaricha Musengi	<i>Gumbo-Madyirapazhe</i>
	Chikukwa Mapipi	<i>Shumba-Sipambi</i>
360	Mavhengere Mhike	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
346	Mutambu Alois	
350	Pedyo Tinago	<i>Ngara-Wamambo</i>
357	Mupanhiwa Musinachirevo	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
351	Gweta Chikwashiwa	<i>Zhou-Mhizha</i>
395	Nhuvira Mhizha	<i>Zhou-Mhizha</i>
	Mudhan'aza Mupandasekwa	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
	Mataga David	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
	Dzinoreva Dennison	<i>Shava-Mhofu</i>
	Mafoko Torerai	<i>Moyo</i>
	Gwenzi Langeni	

* Bought from Mahanya Mugabe (Moyo-Duma)

** Bought from Sandoyi Manjengwa

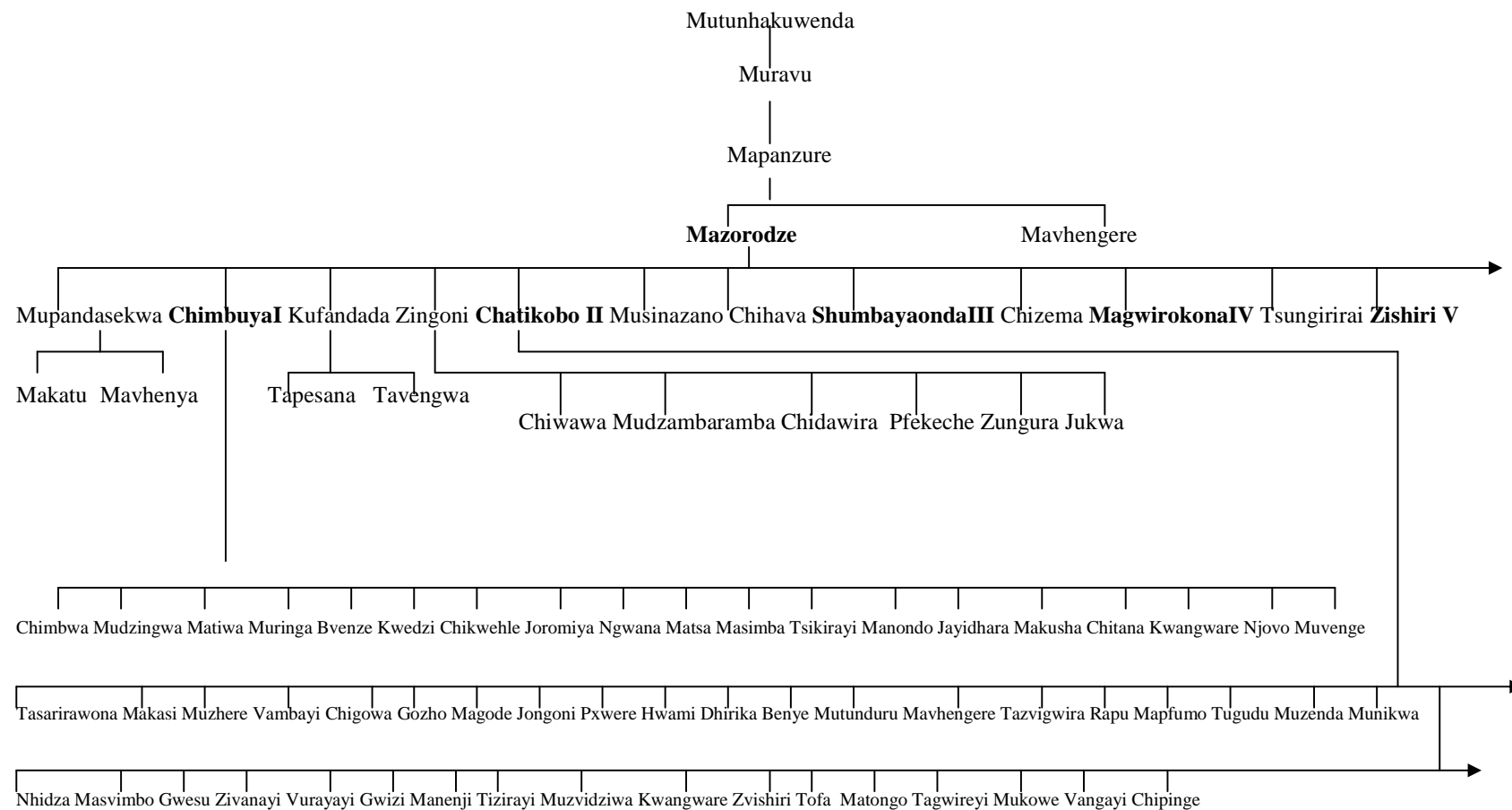
*** Bought from Ndudzo Matsveru (Shava-Mhofu)

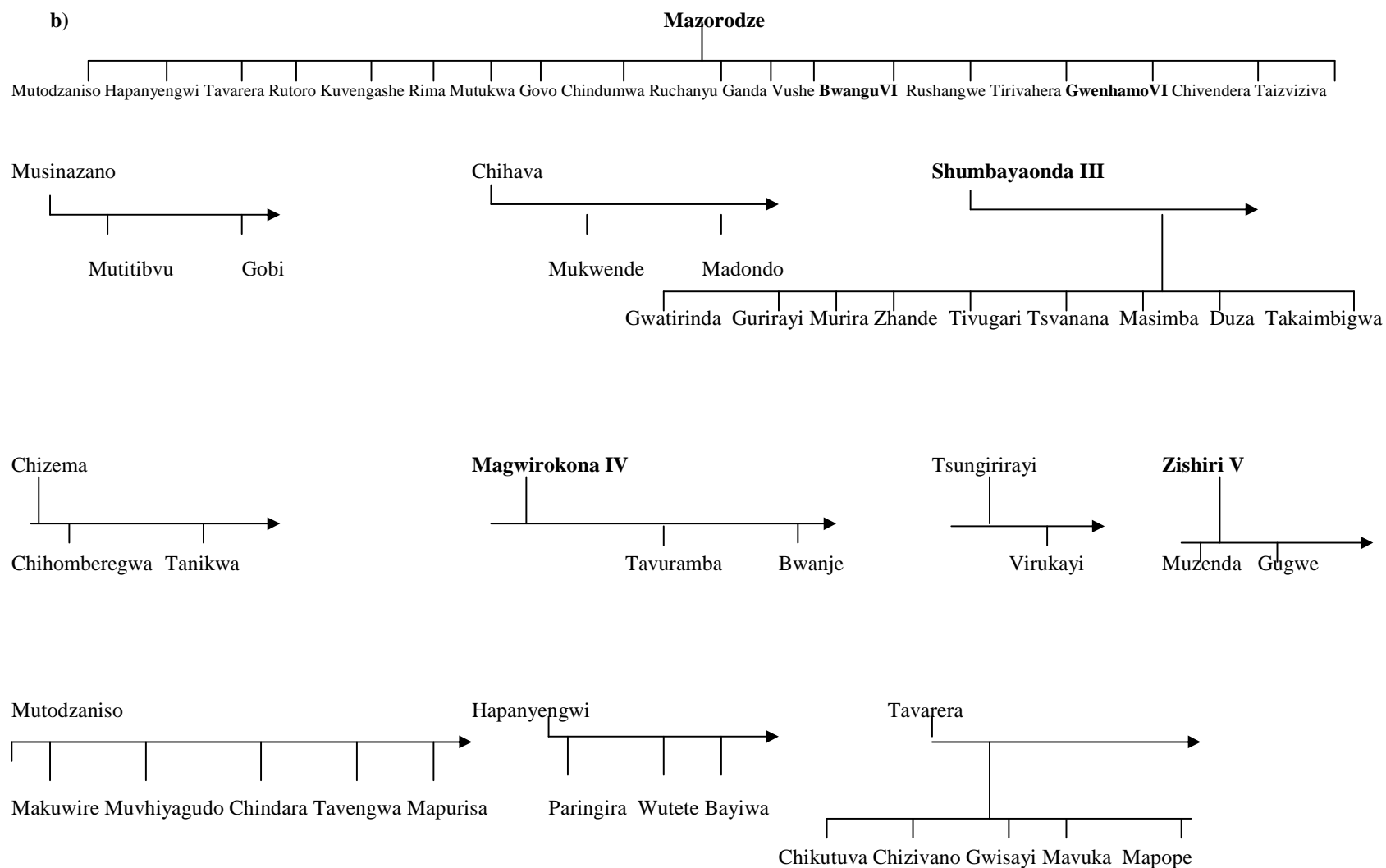
Appendix 2 Genealogy of the Zhou Mhizha



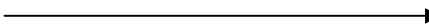
Appendix 3 Genealogy of the Mazorodze House

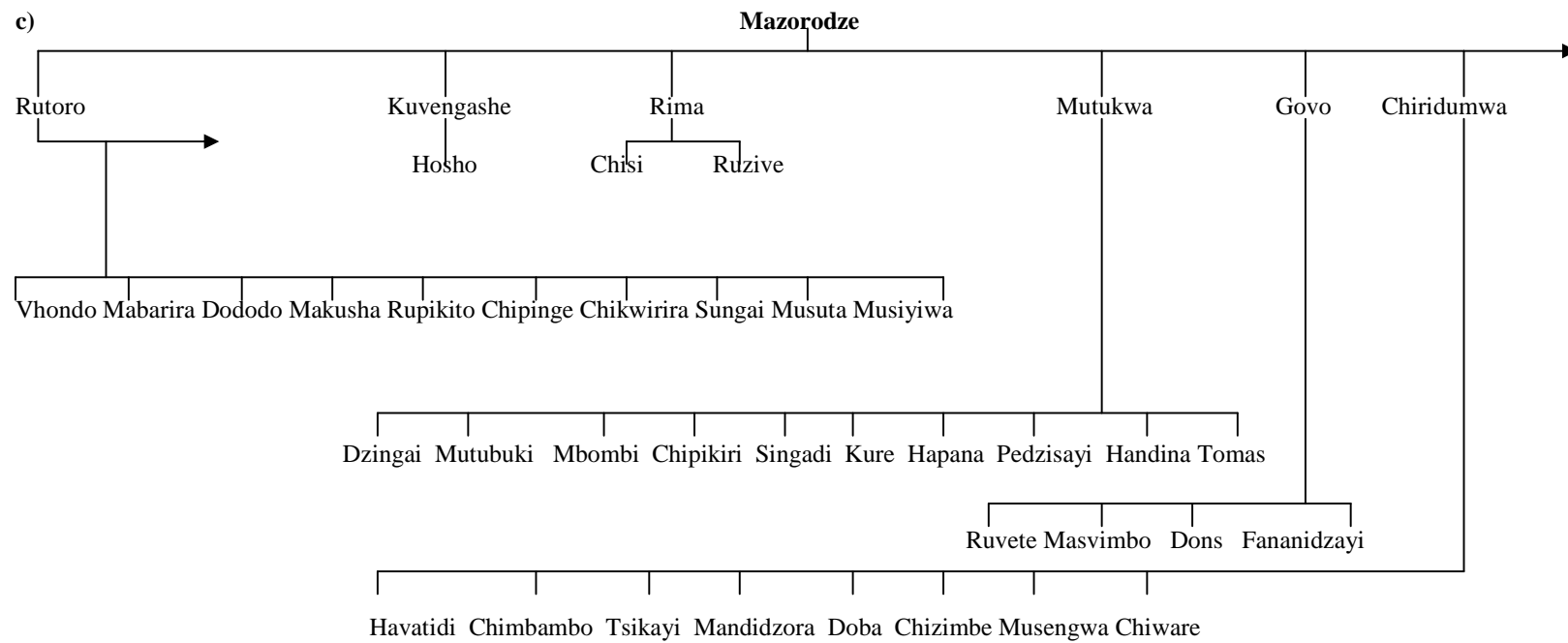
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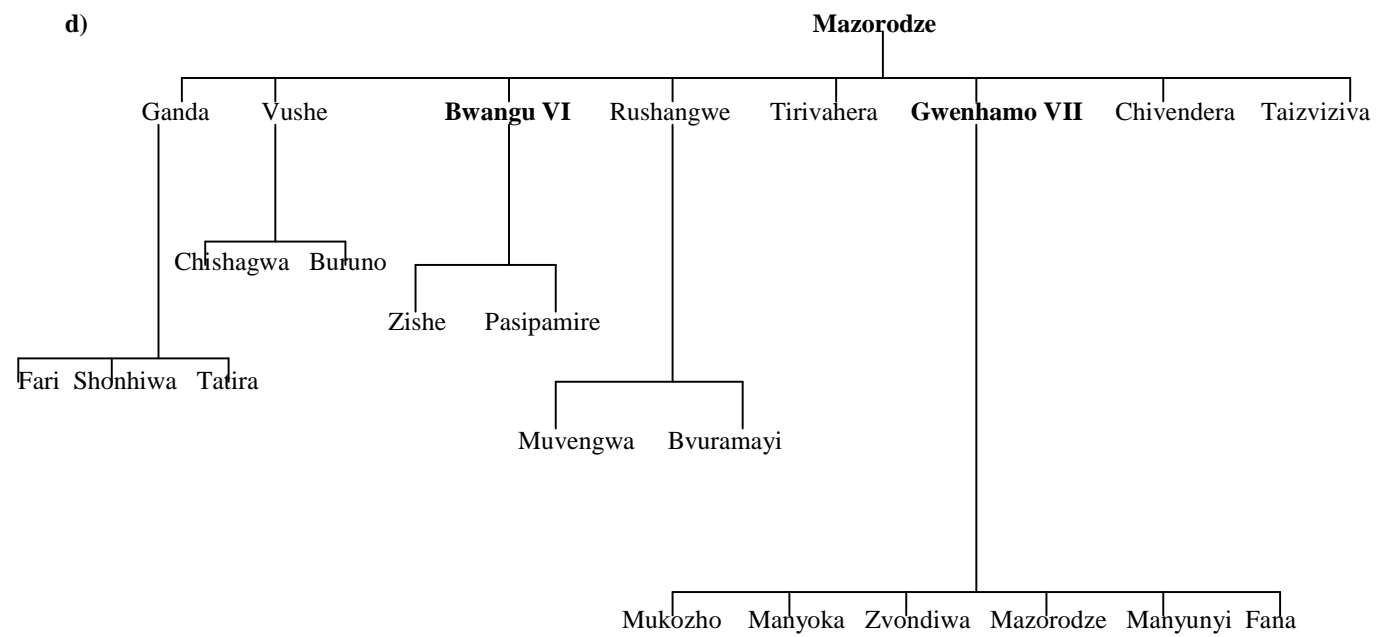




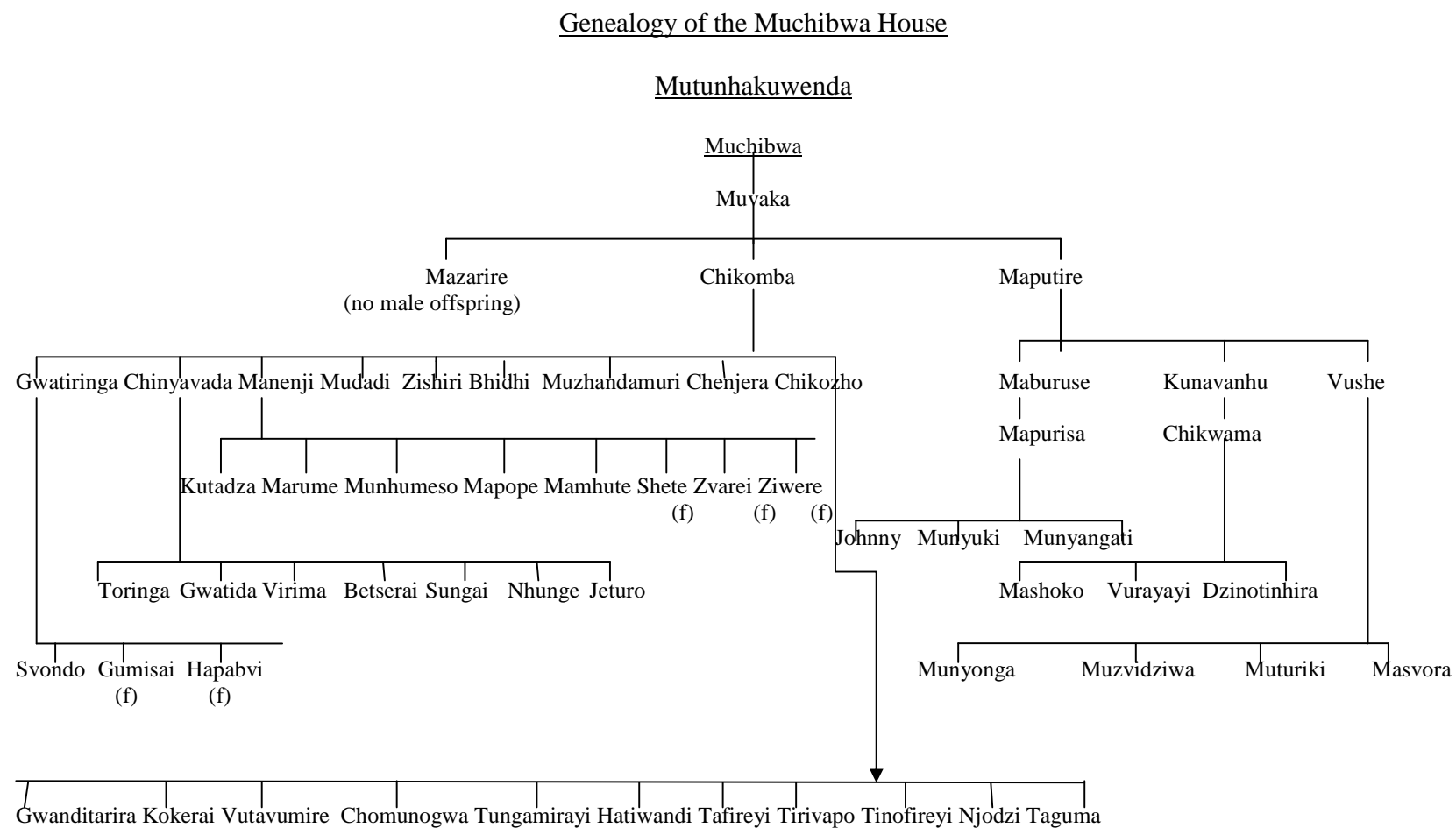
Key

Carried on From Last Page =  (f) = Female





Appendix 4 Genealogy of the Muchibwa House



Appendix 5 : Genealogy of the Gapare House

