

**Living on the fringes of a protected area: Gonarezhou National Park (GNP)
and the indigenous communities of South East Zimbabwe, 1934-2008**

by

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Abstract

This study examines the responses of communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe to their eviction from the Gonarezhou National Park (GNP) and their forced settlement in the peripheral areas of the park. The thesis establishes that prior to their eviction, the people had created a utilitarian relationship with their fauna and flora which allowed responsible reaping of the forest's products. It reveals that the introduction of a people-out conservation mantra forced the affected communities to become poachers, to emigrate from south-eastern Zimbabwe in large numbers to South Africa for greener pastures and, to fervently join militant politics of the 1960s and 1970s. These forms of protests put them at loggerheads with the colonial government. The study reveals that the independence government's position on the inviolability of the country's parks put the people and state on yet another level of confrontation as the communities had anticipated the restitution of their ancestral lands. The new government's attempt to buy their favours by engaging them in a joint wildlife management project called CAMPFIRE only slightly relieved the pain. The land reform programme of the early 2000s, again, enabled them to recover a small part of their old Gonarezhou homeland. The local people opposed the government's later attempt to create a transfrontier park with Mozambique and South Africa, arguing that it would further dislocate their lives. It is, therefore, the contention of this study that the establishment of the GNP created perpetual contestation by indigenous communities during the colonial and post-colonial periods.

Key terms

Conservation, contestation, eviction, fringe, Gonarezhou National Park, indigenous communities, poaching, protest, Shangane & wildlife.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my late young brother Abinomega who was tragically taken away in a horrific car accident on 15 September 2001. I know we would have celebrated the achievement together. You went too soon but I will always cherish the short time we shared *Chibgwa*.

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All said, I bear the full responsibility for the errors and inadequacies that may arise in this study and am solely responsible for the opinions expressed in this thesis.

List of abbreviations

ANC	Assistant Native Commissioner
APA	African Purchase Area
BSAC	British South Africa Company
CAMPFIRE	Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resources Management
CNC	Chief Native Commissioner
DC	District Commissioner
DPWLM	Department of Parks and Wildlife Management
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
EU	European Union
FRELIMO	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GLTFCA	Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area
GLTP	Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park
GGR	Gonarezhou Game Reserve
GNP	Gonarezhou National Park
GRC	Gonakudzingwa Restriction Camp
KNP	Kruger National Park
LAA	Land Apportionment Act
LNP	Limpopo National Park
MCC	Mahenye Campfire Committee
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NC	Native Commissioner
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PA	Protected Area

PEA	Portuguese East Africa
PV	Protected Village
NPWMA	National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority
RDC	Rural District Council
RENAMO	Mozambique National Resistance Movement
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SANParks	South African National Parks
SS	Selous Scouts
SVC	Save Valley Conservancy
TTL	Tribal Trust Land
USAID	United States Agency for Development Corporation
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU (PF)	Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

Glossary of terms

Colonial name	New name
Chibi	Chivi
Chipinge	Chipinga
Fort Victoria	Masvingo
Lundi	Runde
Melsetter	Chimanimani
Nuanetsi	Mwenezi
Rhodesia	Zimbabwe
Sabi	Save
Salisbury	Harare
Umtali	Mutare
Wankie	Hwange

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Historical background to the study

Primarily, before even considering the possibility of making a game reserve, it will be necessary to remove the native population and transfer them elsewhere. These natives are of a most undesirable type, they do not work in Rhodesia and are not properly looked after, being apparently too far away from a Native Commissioner to be visited in person. Also they are in, or claim to be, a perpetual state of semi-starvation as the country has too little rainfall to support crops. Finally it is virtually impossible to have a game sanctuary and a native population in the same area [Acting Secretary of Commerce, 1934].¹

We were born here. Our fathers were born here and our grandfathers were born here-in the days when there was no border fence and no border line. We have many troubles-sometimes the Portuguese worry us, we have no cattle, water is short and arable land is limited. But this is our home! Our ancestral spirits are here. We do not want to move and we want the D.C. to go to Salisbury with our elders and tell the Government this [Headman Xilotlela, 1963].²

The focal point of this study is the Gonarezhou National Park (GNP), a Protected Area (PA) located in the south-eastern corner of Zimbabwe and its interaction with evicted indigenous communities now living on the fringes of the park.³ The study notes that the GNP has been a site of contestation since its establishment in 1934 as its creation was followed by phases of the eviction of indigenous people from it, which went on throughout the colonial period.⁴ When Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980, the new government maintained the park, much to the chagrin of the inhabitants of the area. When the accelerated land occupations began in 2000, the Chisa community located in the northern fringes of the park took advantage of the programme and

¹ *National Archives of Zimbabwe*, hereafter, NAZ: S914/12/1B, Acting Secretary, Commerce and Transport to Col. the Hon. Deneys Reitz, M. P. Minister of Lands, Pretoria, 'Gona-re-Zhou Game Reserve: National Park and Game Reserve Scheme, Government Proclamation Gazetted', 28 September, 1934.

² A. Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, (Cape Town: Cape & Transvaal Printers Ltd, 1972), p. 335. Since the study begins during the colonial period, it will be unavoidable to at times use colonial names in certain contexts. These will be explained under glossary of terms.

³ While Gonarezhou National Park (GNP) will be used consistently to refer to the area of study, there are times when it will be used interchangeably with Gonarezhou Game Reserve (GGR) for, the PA was known as GGR up until 1975 when the name was changed by an act of parliament.

⁴ NAZ: S914/12/1B, Acting Secretary, Commerce and Transport to Col. the Hon. Deneys Reitz, M. P, Minister of Lands, Pretoria.

forcibly occupied the northern section of the game park adjacent to their communal lands.⁵ Further claims to the same land followed from other communities surrounding the park. This heightened tension in the contested area and created clashes in some parts of the park. The study records that by 2008 when the land occupations were declared officially over, the local people had gained some land concessions from the park but the fight for the total recovery of their birthright was yet to be won.

Studies on the GNP to date have tended to glorify the perceived benefits that the local people and the nation derive from the park without fully examining the responses of the displaced communities to the establishment of the game park.⁶ A particular area that has been neglected and, which is the central thesis of this study is the nature of the reaction of the eviction victims. The study, therefore, examines how the creation of the park, through the forced displacement of the indigenous communities of the area, engendered conflict between the park institution and the affected communities. It also investigates how the people's responses during the period 1934 to 2008 shaped park-community relations.

It then follows that this study is about the history of competing ownership claims to the GNP land by constituent communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe that fell under an ethnic formation called the Shangane and the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean state.⁷ It is precisely a narrative of seventy four years of contact between the local people located inside and on the periphery of the park and the

⁵ Colonial historiography erroneously referred to the community as Chitsa. Chisa comes from their praise totem, *Ya Chisa Mlimo* (Fire Burns), hence, *Chisa* (Burn).

⁶ Wright's book, *Valley of the Ironwoods* dwells at length on the benefits that the nation would get from the creation of the GNP. For further insight into the matter, see, NAZ: S1194/1645/3/1, Chief Forest Officer to Acting Secretary, Department of Agriculture & Lands, 8 April 1933, NAZ: S4061, C. Saunders, 'Wildlife and the N. R. B: The Use of Land for Parks and Wildlife', *Wild Rhodesia*, No. 14, July 1972, p. 23, Gonarezhou National Park, General Management Plan, 2011-2021, Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, Harare, undated, pp. 63-65, Gonarezhou Plan: Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, Harare, January, 1994, National Park Act, 1949: Gazetted on 27 January, 1950 & Report of the National Parks Advisory Board for the Year Ended 31/12/50.

⁷ During the colonial period, the name Shangane was erroneously spelt as Shangaan.

state. The study tells the story of conflict and contestation by the forces competing for the control of the park between 1934 and 2008. The narrative begins with an examination of the historical grievances of the local people arising out of the creation of the national park. It then explores the struggles experienced by the Shangane between 1934 and 2008 to access the forests they had communed with for over a century. The account then examines the critical role played by the Shangane at various times of the period under focus to resist imposed state policies in the form of a park. The story then also explores how the changing land tenure systems in the area under contest shaped the history of south-eastern Zimbabwe during the colonial and post-colonial periods. It then critiques why the independence government is perceived to have let the people down when it failed to redefine and restore the people's old relationship with the park.

It is the contention of this study that the creation of the GNP is best understood in the broader realm of the history of racial land alienation that characterised Rhodesian politics. Land alienation intensified soon after Southern Rhodesia attained self-governance in 1923 and accelerated following the government's enactment of the discriminatory Land Apportionment Act (LAA) in 1930 which allocated land usage on a racial basis with the lion's share reserved for white occupation.⁸ The declaration of GGR, through Proclamation No. 3 of 1934 soon after the enactment of the LAA fitted well into the trajectory of colonial land appropriation.⁹ From 1934, the indigenous people of south-eastern Zimbabwe were relocated to places outside the park with more reserves created to accommodate them. As in other areas on the globe where park-induced evictions had taken place, the original inhabitants of what became GNP had built a utilitarian relationship with their land which was changed with the severance of the beneficial interaction

⁸ See, among others, H. V. Moyana, *The Political Economy of Land in Zimbabwe*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984) & R. H. Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, (London: Heinemann, 1977).

⁹ Proclamation No. 3, 1934 & Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, p. 164.

with the environment.¹⁰ The current study, thus, interrogates the impact of such changes on the affected communities.

Broadly, two viewpoints emerge on the contest for the control of the GNP: the official one that says the park establishment has become a *fait accompli* that local people must live with and the unofficial position which suggests that local people should claim back their ancestral land.¹¹ These perspectives are critically examined in order to fully understand the dynamics of the fight for the control of the GNP. The fight should also be understood in the context of the deepening concerns about the “mounting economic, political and moral argument about the fate of the continent’s wildlife, forest, pasture and water resources.”¹²

The name Gonarezhou means a place of many elephants, so named because the area is home to large numbers of elephants. While Mavhunga states that the name was a 19th century Karanga appellation¹³, local folklore has it that it originated from a local tradition where herbalists used to stock lots of medicine in the tusks (*gona*) of elephants (*zhou*), hence, *Gonarezhou* (Elephant Tusks Full of Medicine).¹⁴ The area that became the GNP had been inhabited from *kale kale* (long back) by the Shangane people, also known as the Hlengwe or Tsonga.¹⁵ Other earlier inhabitants, now smaller indigenous occupants of the area were the various Shona-speaking groups. These were

¹⁰ Testimonies of elderly interviewees in the Sangwe area of study revealed the fact. For an overview of the issue, see, H. Zeppel, ‘National Parks as Cultural Landscapes. Indigenous Peoples, Conservation and Tourism’, in W. Frost & C. M. Hall (eds), *Tourism and National Parks, International Perspectives on Development, Histories and Change*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 270 & P. F. J. Eagles & S. F. McCool, *Tourism in National Parks and Protected Areas, Planning and Management*, (Oxon: CABI Publishing, 2002), p. 192.

¹¹ The contradictory position was after 2000 often stated by the then Governor of Masvingo Province, a Shangane who hails from the contested area. His position is understandable.

¹² W. Beinart & J. McGregor (eds), *Social History and African Environments*, (Oxford: James Currey, 2003), p. 1.

¹³ C. C. Mavhunga, ‘The Mobile Workshop: Mobility, Technology and Human-Animal Interaction in Gonarezhou (National Park), 1850 to Present’, PhD Thesis, University of Michigan, 2008, p. 34.

¹⁴ Department of Parks and Wild Life Management, Unpublished Brochure, undated, p. 36.

¹⁵ H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe, Vol. 1*, (London: Macmillan, 1927), pp. 16-19, A. K. Smith, ‘The Peoples of Southern Mozambique, An Historical Survey’, *Journal of African History*, 14, 4 (1973), pp. 565-580 & J. D. Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath. A Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Bantu Africa*, (London: Longman, 1966).

subjugated and some displaced by the Gaza-Nguni in the first half of 19th century. In the 1950s, several Ndebele and Shona-speaking groups were evicted from their own home lands in the Fort Rixon area of Matebeleland and Victoria District respectively and settled in south-eastern Zimbabwe.¹⁶ These groups were to co-exist with the dominant Shangane after they were resettled in the Lowveld.

The park covers a surface area of 5 053 km² of open grasslands and dense woodlands.¹⁷ It is the second largest park in the country, after Hwange.¹⁸ To its east and south east are the Gaza District of Mozambique and Mozambique's Limpopo National Park (LNP). To its south and south west are the Sengwe Communal Lands and across the Limpopo River, the Kruger National Park (KNP). To its west and north is the Matibi No. 2 Communal area, Chiredzi town and Sangwe Communal land. Mutandahwe Ward 29 and Mahenye Ward 30 of Ndowoyo Communal lands under the Chipinge Rural District Council are located on the north-eastern fringe of the park.¹⁹ Surrounding the park, as shown in Map 1.1, are scattered villages of displaced communities falling under chiefs

¹⁶ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp. 57, 197 & 200, J. H. Bannerman, 'Hlengweni: The History of the Hlengwe of Lower Save and Lundi Rivers from the 18th Century', *Zimbabwean History*, 12, (1981), p. 492, R. G. M. Mtetwa, 'The Political and Economic History of the Duma People of South East Rhodesia from the 18th Century until 1945', PhD Thesis: University of Rhodesia, 1976, p. 147, *Masvingo Records Centre*, hereafter, *MRC*: MS 22, Delineation Report on the Sengwe Chieftainship and Community, Sengwe Tribal Trust Land: Nuanetsi District, p. 100, *MRC*: OH/1/CHR/90, An Interview Between W. Muvundla Chiseko (CH) Born on 14 April 1940 at Chiredzi and Mr. Patrick Ngulube (NG) of the Department of National Archives, Masvingo Records on 5 October, 1990, *MRC*: MS 22, Delineation Report on the Chilonga Chieftainship and Community: Chief Chitanga: Matibi II Tribal Trust Land, p. 68, *MRC*: MS 22, Delineation Report on the Masuamele Headmanship and Community: Chief Chitanga: Matibi II Tribal Trust Land, p. 70, *MRC*: MS 22, Report on the Mpapa Headmanship and Community: Chief Chitanga: Matibi II Tribal Trust Land, p. 75 & *NAZ*: S2929/8/4, Delineation of Communities, Nuanetsi District, Victoria Province, 'Tribes in Nuanetsi East', 15 March 1973. A more revealing picture of the eviction experiences was given in interviews with Gogo Lydia Jilongo [80 years old] and Gogo Mabhena [92 years old] who were victims of the Fort Rixon evictions.

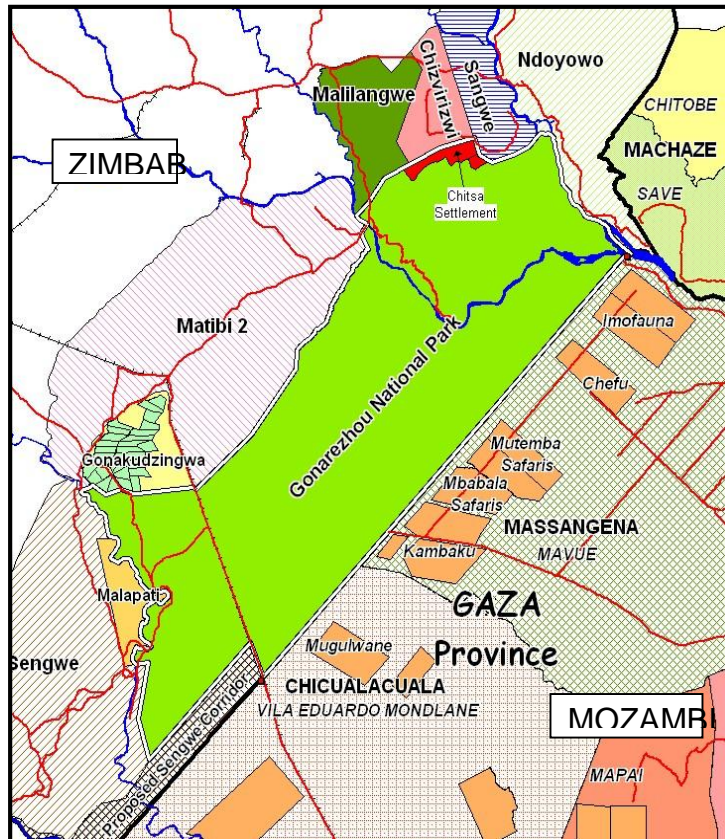
¹⁷ Zimbabwe National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Fund, Gonarezhou National Parks: Synopsis of Sites with Potential for Leasing and Investment, August, 1992, p. 3 & Gonarezhou National Park, General Management Plan, 2011-2021.

¹⁸ Report of the Director of National Parks and Wildlife Management, 1979-80 to Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism, the Hon. Victoria Chitepo, (by Dr G. F. T. Child), p. 21.

¹⁹ Zimbabwe National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Fund, p. 3.

Mahenye, Gudo and Tsvovani in the northern edges of the park and Chief Sengwe in the central part and southern tip of the peripheral game area.

Map 1.1: The GNP and surrounding settlements



Source: Gonarezhou National Park, General Management Plan, p. vii.

Headman Chisa is under Tsvovani, while Chilonga, Masivamele, Gezani, Samu and Mpapa are under Sengwe.²⁰ The chieftainship institution in Zimbabwe underwent several mutations during the colonial period, a calculated move directed at weakening it so that it would be malleable.²¹

²⁰ MRC: MS 22, Delineation Report on the Sengwe Chieftainship and Community, p. 100. At the inception of colonial rule, headmen Chilonga, Masivamele together with Ngwenyeni, Fitchani and Xilotlela were under Chief Chitanga who was later moved to Matibi No. 1 Tribal Trust Land (TTL) and, so, lost control of the headmen to Chief Sengwe.

²¹ For a detailed discussion of the chiefship institution in colonial Zimbabwe, see, T. Makahamadze, N. Grand & B. Tavuyanago, 'The Role of Traditional Leaders in Fostering Democracy, Justice and Human Rights in Zimbabwe', *The African Anthropologist*, 16, 1 & 2 (2009), pp. 33-47.

Headmen such as Chisa, Ngwenyeni and Xilotlela who had offered strong resistance to eviction were punished through demotion or forced removal from their indigenous locales. Chisa's chieftainship, for example, was downgraded to headmanship in 1957.²² His people were forcibly moved from the Save-Runde confluence and settled in an area called Seven Jack in 1957. They were further moved from that area in 1962 and settled in the Ndali area of the Sangwe TTL where they have lived since.²³ GNP was also surrounded by white commercial ranches that had also been created through the displacement of local residents.²⁴

The political boundaries of the surrounding communal areas underwent several adjustments during the colonial period and, by 2008, the larger part of the lands fell under four political units: Chiredzi East, Chiredzi West, Chiredzi South and Chiredzi North constituencies. The area was divided into thirty-two smaller political administrative units called wards.²⁵ Added to these wards were two others on the northern fringes of the park which fell under the Chipinge District of Manicaland.

Aim and objectives of the study

Aim

This study seeks to explore and analyse the collective and individual responses of the indigenous people living on the fringes of the park to eviction from the GNP between 1934 and 2008. It recognises that while some considerable literature has been generated on the broad subject of eviction of indigenous communities to allow for the establishment of national parks in Zimbabwe, there is regrettably limited work on the responses of the affected communities to their

²² S. Mombeshora & S. Le Bel, 'People-Park Conflicts: The Case of Gonarezhou and Chitsa Community in South East Zimbabwe', *Biodiversity Conservation*, 18 (2009), p. 2609.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Interview with Gogo MwaMuzamani, Zibizapansi Village, Sangwe, 17 April 2014.

²⁵ Interview with Acting Chief Executive Officer, Chiredzi Rural District Council, Chiredzi, 15 April 14.

displacements from park-designated areas. The study, therefore, hopes to make a contribution to the historiography of park evictions and indigenous people's responses to them.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are, *inter alia*, to:

- discuss the establishment of the GNP in relation to the eviction of indigenous residents
- examine the nature of responses to eviction from the GNP by local communities at various stages of the period under review
- document the historical development of contestation and conflict that characterised relations between the GNP and the displaced people and,
- assess the socio-political and economic impact of displacement on local communities.

Statement of the problem

This study investigates the responses of the Shangane communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe to the new state conservation initiative that led to their eviction from the GNP and their settlement on areas contiguous to the park between 1934 and 2008. It notes that the establishment of parks in Zimbabwe, as elsewhere on the globe was mostly accompanied by forced and often violent removal of indigenous communities from their traditional lands purportedly to promote modern forms of bio-diversity conservation.²⁶ The overall research problem is that despite the

²⁶ J. Igoe, *Conservation and Globalization, A Study of National Parks and Indigenous Communities from East Africa to South Dakota*, (Belmont: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2004), p. 85, A. Impey, 'Songs of Mobility and Belonging: Gender, Spatiality and the Local in Southern Africa's Transfrontier Conservation Development', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 15, 2 (2013), p. 256, S. Khan, 'Sustainable Development and Community Participation: A Case Study of Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', Unpublished paper, *II Conferencia do IESE Dinamicas da Pobreza e Padroes de Acumulacao em Mocambique, Maputo, 22 e 23 de Abril de 2009*, pp. 12-13, M. Dowie, 'Conservation Refugees: When Protecting Nature Means Kicking People Out', *Orion Magazine*, (2005), p. 1 & M. M. Cernea & K. Schmidt-Soltau, 'Poverty Risks and National Parks: Policy Issues in Conservation and Resettlement', *World Development*, 34, 10 (2006), p. 1810.

marginalisation of the Shangane people as a result of their displacement from the GNP, hardly any scholarly work has examined their responses to eviction from the park.

The current enquiry notes that studies of national parks and the eviction of indigenous people from park-designated areas have become rapidly growing fields of academic enquiry attracting global scholarly interest.²⁷ It observes that since the 1990s, there has emerged a growing corpus of work speaking to the subject of the eviction of communities in order to create national parks.²⁸ The study, furthermore, notes that literature generated on parks like Matopos, Hwange and Gonarezhou has rather focused on the reasons for and the impact of eviction on displaced communities leaving a knowledge gap on the responses of the evicted communities.²⁹

Through interrogating empirical evidence, the current study attempts to offer a fresh perspective within the field of socio-environmental history by teasing out the reactions of the indigenous Shangane communities to their eviction from the GNP and their forced resettlement on lands adjoining the park over time and space. Again, within the broader land dispossession discourse,

²⁷ D. Brockington & J. Igoe, 'Eviction for Conservation. A Global Overview', Unpublished paper, Institute for Development Policy and Management, University of Manchester, UK and Development Anthropology, University of Colorado, Denver, 2006, pp. 1-3. Other than historians, the subject has also attracted the attention of sociologists, anthropologists, geographers and archaeologists.

²⁸ Brockington & Igoe, 'Eviction for Conservation', pp. 3-23, B. King, 'Conservation Geographies in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Politics of National Parks, Community Conservation and Peace Parks', *Geography Compass*, 3 (2009), pp. 1-14, C. M. Hall & W. Frost, 'The Making of the National Parks Concept', in W. Frost, & C. M. Hall (eds), *Tourism and National Parks, International Perspectives on Development, Histories and Change*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), W. Frost & C. M. Hall, 'Reinterpreting the Creation of Myth, Yellowstone National Park', in W. Frost, & C. M. Hall (eds), *Tourism and National Parks, International Perspectives on Development, Histories and Change*, (New York: Routledge, 2009) & M. Adams, 'Negotiating Nature: Collaboration and Conflict Between Aboriginal and Conservation Interests in New South Wales, Australia', *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*, 20, 1 (2004).

²⁹ Among other are works, see, J. McGregor, *Crossing the Zambezi. The Politics of Landscape on a Central African Frontier*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2009), p. 9, W. D. Gale, 'A Soldier's Dream Becomes Life's Work for First Warden', *Rhodesia Calls*, July-August 1978, pp. 11-19, D. Paynter, 'Golden Jubilee of a Great Game Reserve', *Africa Wildlife*, 32, 6 (1978), pp. 36-38 & Report of the National Parks Advisory Board for the Year Ended 31 December, 1949. In his 1999 publication entitled: T. O. Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks: Nature, Culture and History in the Matopos Hills of Zimbabwe*, (Harare: Baobab, 1999), the author examines in detail the history of contestation between colonial park administrators and the indigenous communities of the Matopos Game Reserve. Mombeshora & Le Bel, 'People-Park Conflicts', pp. 2606-2607, again, examine white-black contest over the same game reserve and specifically chronicle how blacks were removed from the area in the 1940s, in 1952 and, again, in 1962 to give way to the park.

the study seeks to analyse how the Shangane of south-eastern Zimbabwe, in their different social statuses, genders and generations dealt with their eviction challenges and how they adapted to living on the fringes of the GNP during the colonial period and in independent Zimbabwe. It also examines how the different forms of responses at different times of the period under focus reflected the changing dynamics of the struggle to recover the lost Gonarezhou land. The study, thus, adds to the limited body of academic work on community responses to evictions. It also sheds light on the continuing legacies of violent displacements and the politics of memory.

Justification of the study

In the 1960s, Allan Wright, the District Commissioner (DC) of the vast Nuanetsi District of south-eastern Zimbabwe noted what he called the general lack of records on the history of the Shangane people of that area. He correctly pointed out that very little had been written about them, hitherto.³⁰ In the same vein, Bannerman observed that studies on the African communities of the southern Lowveld region of the country had largely bypassed the history of the Shangane of Tsvovani, Chisa and Mahenye and that there was an urgent need to correct the lack of interest in the history of these communities.³¹ In a 1977 article, Sparrow, a long-time settler in the Lowveld also noted that very little was known then (1977) about the customs and general way of life of the Shangane of southern Rhodesia.³² To reinforce his point, Sparrow cited some communication generated by the University of Rhodesia's Centre for Inter-Racial Studies which stated that nothing had been written about the Shangane people apart from them being mentioned in an animal book written by some

³⁰ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 200.

³¹ J. H. Bannerman, 'A Short Political and Economic History of the Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye Dynasties of the Ndanga, Chiredzi and Chipinga Districts to CA. 1950', Unpublished paper, undated, p. 1.

³² A. L. Sparrow, 'A Lowveld Rite. A Shangaan Circumcision Lodge', *Native Affairs Department Annual*, hereafter, *NADA*, 11, 4 (1977), p. 396.

official in the Department of Internal Affairs.³³ Pitman concurred with the above when he observed that as late as 1980, not much was known about Gonarezhou and its people.³⁴

On the basis of the foregoing, it is the current study's contention that while some substantial work has been produced on the history of many ethnic groups of Zimbabwe, not much has been documented on the history of the Shangane especially their land eviction experiences and their subsequent reactions to forced removals from their ancestral lands to give way to the Gonarezhou game project. The absence of records on the Shangane past did not, however, mean that they had no history worth recording but simply pointed to the existence of a glaring historiographical gap that this study seeks to fill.

It is the conviction of this thesis, therefore, that the lack of interest in studying Shangane history stemmed from the fact that the Shangane people were located in a remote borderland area. As was the case with many borderland areas of the country, early white settlers showed little interest in studying them as they were considered to be places of limited settler benefits. In the absence of a clear understanding of these areas, colonial authors imposed their own invented myths on them. The people were labelled by authors like Bulpin as wild, unruly and poverty-stricken.³⁵ They were also regarded as backward,³⁶ profligate, obstinate and materialistic in outlook with no sense of service for the sake of loyalty and honour.³⁷ In contrast, and as further confirmation of the limited understanding of the Shangane people, their admirers romanticised them as a sturdy, noble,

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ D. Pitman, *Wild Places of Zimbabwe*, (Bulawayo: Books of Zimbabwe, 1980), p. 18.

³⁵ T. V. Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, (Cape Town: Books of Africa, 1967), p. 121.

³⁶ Bannerman, 'Hlengweni', p. 493.

³⁷ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp. 10, 81 & 342.

disciplined³⁸ and honest people.³⁹ The contrasting descriptions clearly pointed to the urgent need to examine the history of these people in relation to their Gonarezhou land experiences.

Additionally, their land was branded by the same writers as empty, dreary, homogeneous, monotonously flat, semi-arid and largely featureless.⁴⁰ In typical dismissive colonial language, Bulpin described such terrain as land that was unlikely to nurture any glorious civilization.⁴¹ Again, early white settlers considered the area unsuitable for human settlement.⁴² Such observations were in stark contrast to perceptions held by the local inhabitants who revered their forest as land brimming with abundant resources and a rich history of both the living and departed. To them, the seemingly rugged terrain of hills, rivers, valleys, pools and streams were all historic features endowed with rich meaning and memory, the bulk of which was yet to be explored.⁴³

The current study notes the lack of knowledge on the responses of indigenous communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe to eviction from the GNP. In this, it shares Mavhunga's concern that for an area with so much rich history; it was regrettable that it remained on the periphery of the annals of history.⁴⁴ Mavhunga's lamentation was that the history of the PA and that of communities surrounding it had largely remained outside the memory of Zimbabwe's historical studies as, by

³⁸ Ibid. pp. 22 & 27.

³⁹ NAZ: TH10/1/1/361, J. Blake Thompson to Professor Mitchell & Father G. Fortune, 14th June 1958. Blake Thompson, nicknamed *Marhumbini* was a Shabani and Mashaba Mine labour recruitment agent stationed at Marhumbini on the Sabi-Lundi confluence between 1923 and 1960. This was an area that later became part of the GNP. While working there, he became the uncrowned king of the area, a self-appointed consul, a magistrate, a DC and policeman of the area. During his long tour of duty in the area, he made great effort to study Shangane history, cultures and traditions and produced voluminous anthropological and historical literature on the people. His work found its way into the NAZ.

⁴⁰ W. Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions: Conservation and Development in Zimbabwe's Southeast Lowveld*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2007), p. 42.

⁴¹ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 122.

⁴² A. S. Mlambo & E. S. Pangeti, *The Political Economy of the Sugar Industry in Zimbabwe, 1920-90*, (Harare: UZP, 1996), p. 7.

⁴³ Group interview with Chisa villagers, 23 December 2014.

⁴⁴ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 30.

2008, it still had no noticeable historical study devoted to it.⁴⁵ In his observation, supported by the present study, the little that had been written only scratched a small part of a big story.⁴⁶ This thesis, therefore, endeavours to tell the bigger story of the indigenous people's responses to eviction from the park. It notes particularly that earlier scholarship on parks tended to focus on their perceived positive contributions to sustainable development through tourism and employment creation⁴⁷ and ignored the indigenous people's responses to the establishment of such parks, which this study focuses on.

The study certainly concurs with Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau's observations that the injurious effects of park establishments on displaced communities are still a grey area of study requiring further interrogation.⁴⁸ It also agrees with Du Plessis's 2005 UN-authored report that lamented the lack of research on innovative ways of confronting the economic and social costs of relocated communities.⁴⁹ On her part, Jane Carruthers expressed concern about the lack of primary scholarly work on the impact of park-induced displacements which resulted in several myths about parks in Africa taking root.⁵⁰ Writing in 2006, Brockington and Igoe correctly pointed out that available literature on the impact of park-induced evictions was still basically derisory and that the

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Earlier literature on the area was mainly generated by developmentalists like Bannerman, anthropologists like Thompson and bits of it by colonial and park administrators whose biases clearly distorted the history of the area. Lately, more revealing scholarly work has come from scholars such as Mavhunga himself, Wolmer and Mombeshora & Le Bel, among others.

⁴⁷ M. B. Chongwa, 'The History and Evolution of National Parks in Kenya', *The George Wright Forum*, 29, 1 (2012), p. 41, S. Bhatasara, A. M. Nyamwanza, & K. Kujinga, 'Transfrontier Parks and Development in Southern Africa: The Case of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', *Development Southern Africa*, 30, 4-5 (2013), pp. 633 & 636, J. Milgroom, & M. Spierenburg, 'Induced Volition: Resettlement from the Limpopo National Park, Mozambique', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 26, 4 (2008), pp. 436-437, A. Spenceley, 'Tourism in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', *Development Southern Africa*, 23, 5 (2006), p. 652 & J. Hanks, 'Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) in Southern Africa: Their Role in Conserving Biodiversity, Socioeconomic Development and Promoting A Culture of Peace', *Journal of Sustainable Forestry*, 17, 1/2 (2003), p. 139.

⁴⁸ Cernea, & Schmidt-Soltau, 'Poverty Risks and National Parks', p. 1809.

⁴⁹ J. du Plessis, 'Losing Your Home. Assessing the Impact of Eviction', (Nairobi, United Nations Human Settlements Programme-UN-HABITAT, 2011), p. 13. <http://www.unhabitat.org> (accessed on 21/04/13).

⁵⁰ J. Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park, A Social and Political History*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 1995), p. 3.

disquieting silence on the study of the ecology of eviction was a serious cause of concern. The authors observed that while most parks were established before 1980, academic interest in the subject of eviction only emerged in the 1990s, thus, coinciding with the end of the Cold War.⁵¹ The long period between eviction and the generation of displacement literature implied there was still much to be unearthed on the uncharted subject of indigenous people's responses to eviction from parks.

Review of related literature

Much has been written on the broad subject of eviction in various parts of the world. However, in Africa and particularly Zimbabwe, scholars have generally shied away from researching on the responses of evictees to their plight. Meanwhile, the existing global literature, mainly generated by developmentalists, sociologists and anthropologists has mostly focused on the impact of eviction. This section reviews related literature in order to show how it informs the current study. There are four broad themes that emerge from the critical review of the literature: the concept of national parks, indigenous communities and borderland studies, eviction from park- designated areas, and people-park relations.

The concept of national parks

The concept of PAs in the form of modern public national parks was conceived in the United States of America towards the close of the 19th century with the establishment of the world's first modern park in 1872, the Yellowstone National Park.⁵² Sudia records that the Yellowstone National Park, plus many that came up throughout the world and replicated it was modelled on conservation views

⁵¹ Brockington & Igoe, 'Eviction for Conservation', pp. 3 & 12.

⁵² Hall & Frost, 'The Making of the National Parks Concept', p. 3 & Frost & Hall, 'Reinterpreting the Creation of Myth, Yellowstone National Park', pp. 17-29.

that sought to designate a piece of land as some national property to be kept in its natural state and maintained unimpaired for the benefit of future generations.⁵³ Cronon reinforces the viewpoint when he avers that such land was to be reserved exclusively for nature arguing that if nature was to be kept in its natural state, it would have to be kept outside the realm of humans.⁵⁴ Mainstream works authored by Dixon and Sherman further assert that such public domain was to be withdrawn from indigenous people who previously owned it and be protected from them through the erection of artificial barriers such as fences.⁵⁵ Such type of wildlife protection became known as fortress conservation, a philosophy that was a departure from the African methods of living with nature. Its application in the GNP became a cause of contestation with the indigenous communities of the area between 1934 and 2008.

It was, therefore, apparent that the establishment of Yellowstone National Park as a ‘pleasuring ground’ ushered in a conservation paradigm that advocated for the separation of humans from nature.⁵⁶ In support, Rhodesian colonial backers glorified national parks as priceless national heritages whose resources were to be tapped for the good of the nation.⁵⁷ It was suggested that parks be removed from the despoiling activities of humans and that they be ring-fenced with a battery of state laws to protect them. Clapperton Mavhunga and Marja Spierenburg correctly note an inherent contradiction in the park concept when they point out that, while they were saved for the people, they were at the same time protected against the very people they were supposed to

⁵³ T. W. Sudia, ‘Domestic Tranquillity and the National Park System: A Context for Human Ecology’, *The George Wright Forum*, (1982), p. 22.

⁵⁴ W. Cronon, ‘The Trouble with Wilderness; or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature’, in W. Cronon (ed.), *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), p. 81.

⁵⁵ J. A. Dixon & P. B. Sherman, *Economics of Protected Areas. A New Look at Benefits and Costs*, (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd, 1990), p. 13.

⁵⁶ Report of the National Parks Advisory Board For the Year Ended 31 December, 1949.

⁵⁷ A. Wright, *Grey Ghosts at Buffalo Bend*, (Salisbury: Galaxie Press, 1976), p. 14.

serve.⁵⁸ Thus, while parks were meant to be admired and enjoyed by all, they largely satisfied the tastes of the few elites who could afford visiting them.

A corpus of literature has been dedicated to the documentation of the benefits of park establishments. Rhodesia parks were roundly hailed as major destinations of domestic and foreign tourists and engines of economic growth through tourism.⁵⁹ As Mombeshora and Le Bel document, advocates of Rhodesian parks asserted that they contributed immensely to poverty reduction, raked in large amounts of revenue and created jobs for victims of their establishment.⁶⁰ This thesis questions the plausibility of the above arguments in relation to the GNP and, instead, submits that the so-called benefits remained largely elusive throughout the period under review.

As earlier stated, the establishment of modern parks was largely influenced by the fortress conservation mentality that sought to protect nature from human beings by advocating for a people-out approach. The philosophy had deep roots in Western environmental thinking that held the view that the presence of people in parks was detestable as it threatened the survival of wildlife. The overall argument was that there is an inverse relationship between human action and the wellbeing of the environment and that the impact of human beings on parks is damaging. People had to be removed from park-designated areas to allow for the restoration of the ecosystem that had been tampered with by their supposed irresponsible habitation practices. As a result, fortress conservation sought to create boundaries comprising high fences to protect plants and wild animals

⁵⁸ C. Mavhunga & M. Spierenburg, 'Transfrontier Talk, Cordon Politics: The Early History of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park in Southern Africa, 1925-1940', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35, 3 (2009), p. 716.

⁵⁹ Report of the National Parks Advisory Board For the Year Ended 31 December, 1949. Also see, NAZ: S4061, T. Davidson, 'Report on Wankie Game Reserve, October 1928-March 1930', *Wild Rhodesia*, No. 17, October 1978, pp. 3-5, NAZ: S4061, D. Chavhunduka, 'Is there a Future for National Parks in Zimbabwe: What are the Pressures on them?' *Wild Rhodesia*, No. 17, October 1978, pp. 10-14 & T. Davidson, *Wankie. The Story of a Great Reserve*, (Cape Town: Books of Africa, 1967).

⁶⁰ Mombeshora & Le Bel, 'People-Park Conflicts', p. 2602.

from what conservationists claimed to be wanton human destruction of nature. In William Wolmer's opinion, such thinking denigrates indigenous people's environmental management systems and, at the same time, criminalises their use of game.⁶¹ Carruthers concurs when she affirms that fortress conservation celebrates the timely coming of good conservationists (whites) to save game against extermination by irresponsible exploiters (blacks).⁶² The hero-and-villain argument was certainly consistent with the trajectory of colonial historiography.

Igoe poses the argument that wherever parks were established, they were celebrated as wildernesses and places where man was supposed to be just a visitor.⁶³ Wolmer expresses similar sentiments when he asserts that America's wilderness areas were romanticised as symbols of pure nature that had to be preserved uncontaminated by human presence.⁶⁴ Furthermore, he provides a clearer definition of a wilderness when he labels it as a wasteland that is located in a realm beyond human control.⁶⁵ So, both Wolmer and Igoe are in accord when they suggest that the wilderness concept was a Western social construction derived from the European understanding of a wilderness.⁶⁶

The indigenous perception of the wilderness, which was in direct contrast with the Western view of exclusion is aptly articulated by Mavhunga when he states that among the Shona, the forest was called a *jiri* (wilderness), a place of wild animals. It was conserved by local people for its utility (*rimuka*) through indigenous knowledge management systems (*kuremekedza*).⁶⁷ To the Shona, the *jiri* was a nerve centre of economic production and source of livelihood. It was a secondary

⁶¹ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 177.

⁶² Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p. 2.

⁶³ Igoe, *Conservation and Globalisation*, p. 76.

⁶⁴ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 8.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* & Igoe, *Conservation and Globalisation*, p. 69.

⁶⁷ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 62.

granary, after the homestead and a kind of sacred butchery for the communities. All who respected its taboos and conservation etiquette were allowed to reap from it unhindered and benefitted from its yields abundantly. The indigenous people's *jiri*, therefore, could not be withdrawn from them without dire consequences. Mavhunga's conclusion was that, as a source of their livelihoods, humans had all the reason to manage the *jiri* sustainably.⁶⁸ It, thus, appears reasonable to conclude that the differing perceptions of what the wilderness meant to the two groups was bound to cause conflict in the area under study.

The West romanticised the wilderness as an Eden that evoked pristine emotions of a past landscape that was free from human habitation. It was a place that could be rediscovered, restored and resuscitated with the removal of people.⁶⁹ Such a place, as furthermore presented by Wolmer was to be revered and respected for its deep spiritual significance and its symbolism of an earthly Edenic paradise.⁷⁰ It was to be a place of safe retreat for contemplation and reflection away from the decadence of modern urban environments. Bulpin's depiction of the 'Eden of Wankie', cited in Davidson, was a good example of the romantic characterisation of national parks of the country:

What magic-indefinable but real-lures one back there time and again. Is it just the drama of big game...or is it that exhilarating sense of the presence of the spirit of freedom wondering for ever onwards ahead of you, down silent glades? I would hope the latter.⁷¹

And, as Carruthers aptly sums it up, the principle behind the Edenic wilderness was to keep it simple and wild by withdrawing it from humans.⁷² In the context of the above argument, Africa

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Igoe, *Conservation and Globalisation*, p. 75.

⁷⁰ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 13.

⁷¹ Davidson, *Wankie. The Story of a Great Reserve*, p. 1.

⁷² Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p. 104.

and, indeed, Zimbabwe's parks were perceived as untamed Edens whose fortunes lay in their pure preservation by the new colonial masters using modern management systems.⁷³

Again, it is observed that where parks were proposed, concerted efforts were expended on justifying them by portraying park-targeted lands as worthless and generally of limited utilitarian value.⁷⁴ Igoe maintains that such an argument was erroneously based on the premise that such lands had previously been uninhabited by humans because they were uninhabitable. He then indicates how proponents of the thinking reasoned that the lands would only assume a new value once converted into wildlife areas.⁷⁵ Literature on the supposed worthlessness of such lands is copious. For example, the American Congress had to be convinced that there was nothing exploitable in the land designated for Yellowstone Park before granting permission for its creation.⁷⁶ Similarly, in researches carried out on Australian parks, Adams points out that one of the earliest parks in the country was created in the rugged mountainous terrain of New South Wales which were considered to have been of little commercial potential.⁷⁷ In South Africa, Carruthers stresses that the area that became the KNP was conveniently labelled a "tract of country, which is, has always been, and always must remain, of no practical value or utility to man" in order to justify its conversion to a park.⁷⁸ In the case of the KNP, it was also affirmed that no minerals had been discovered in the area implying, again, its low economic value.⁷⁹

⁷³ Ibid, p. 103.

⁷⁴ C. M. Hall & W. Frost, 'National Parks and the Worthless Lands Hypothesis Revisited', in W. Frost, & C. M. Hall (eds), *Tourism and National Parks, International Perspectives on Development, Histories and Change*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 46.

⁷⁵ Igoe, *Conservation and Globalization*, pp. 88 & 94.

⁷⁶ Hall & Frost, 'National Parks and the Worthless Lands Hypothesis Revisited', pp. 45-50.

⁷⁷ Adams, 'Negotiating Nature', p. 5.

⁷⁸ Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p. 33.

⁷⁹ Ibid. Early South African colonialists were mainly interested in mining, a lucrative venture then.

In relation to Zimbabwean parks, Chavhunduka was in total agreement with the colonial perception of the worthlessness of park-designated lands when he labelled them as practically useless for conventional agricultural production. For the Matopos National Park, he judged that only 3% of its land was suitable for agricultural purposes while Wankie, Matetsi and Gonarezhou park lands were lumped together and branded as useless sandy lands.⁸⁰ Mavhunga and Spierenburg reveal that the land which became the GNP was expediently condemned for its aridity in 1928⁸¹ and Wolmer *et al* note that the perception persisted throughout the colonial period and into independent Zimbabwe where the same land continued to be regarded as good for nothing except game.⁸² Articles written in the *Sunday Mail* in 1964 reinforced the notion of the inappropriateness of Gonarezhou land for human settlement.⁸³ From the foregoing arguments, it is fair to conclude that parks were created and preserved not so much for what they were, but for what they were not. What is more significant for the GNP is that it was created against the will of indigenous communities who also happened to have been located in a neglected border-lying area.

Borderland location of indigenous communities

The study of borderland communities has of late attracted wide scholarly interest. Alper and Brunet-Jailly define African borderlands as geographical spaces that continually underwent construction, deconstruction and reconstruction during the colonial and post-colonial periods.⁸⁴ In support, Chaderopa views them as physical, mental and social constructs designed to separate

⁸⁰ NAZ: S4061, D. Chavhunduka, 'Is there a Future for National Parks in Zimbabwe', p. 14.

⁸¹ Mavhunga & Spierenburg, 'Transfrontier Talk, Cordon Politics', p. 720.

⁸² W. Wolmer, J. Chaumba & I. Scoones, 'Wildlife Management and Land Reform in Southeastern Zimbabwe: Compatible Pairing or a Contradiction in Terms?' Unpublished paper, Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa Research Paper, 1 March 2003, p. 6.

⁸³ *The Sunday Mail*, 1 March 1964, 'Slaughter of Game Again' & *The Sunday Mail*, 22 March 1964, 'Gonarezhou Must not Die'.

⁸⁴ D. Alper & E. Brunet-Jailly, (eds), 'Special Issue: Rarely Studied Borderlands', *Journal of Borderland Studies*, 23, 3 (2008), pp. 2-3.

those who are inside from those outside, implying their dividing role.⁸⁵ In line with the above, Momoh, cited in Pophiwa, classifies borderlands into three categories. The first, he calls the zero borderland where people on both sides of the border are diametrically opposite and do not have shared experiences. The second category is what he refers to as the minimal borderland where there is limited cultural and ethnic affinity of people on both sides of the border. He terms the last, the maximum borderland, with extensive political and economic cooperation between peoples across the border.⁸⁶ People across the last two borders develop bonds that are difficult to detach and for border communities in the last category, Pophiwa attests that “ethnic homogeneity and ancestral links are thicker than the water of political sovereignty and the heterogeneity of the state.”⁸⁷ The current study contends that the borderlands of south-eastern Zimbabwe largely fell in the last category and that, during certain times of the period under review, there were temptations from communities of the area to cross into neighbouring countries after the people’s lifestyles were disturbed by Gonarezhou evictions.

Coplan records that while borders in Africa were established by colonial competition at the close of the 19th century, increased academic interest in them was only noticed towards the close of the 20th century.⁸⁸ Concomitant with the above, Pophiwa observes that borderland studies of the past had focused on American and European borders and especially the US-Mexican border.⁸⁹ He then notes that the earliest serious work on African border studies was only initiated by Asiwaju in 1985 although Warhurst’s 1973 pioneering work on the north-eastern Zimbabwe border is

⁸⁵ C. Chaderopa, ‘Cross Border Cooperation in Transboundary Conservation-Development Initiatives in Southern Africa: The Role of Borders of the Mind’, *Tourism Management*, 39 (2013), p. 52.

⁸⁶ N. Pophiwa, ‘Mobile Livelihoods: The Players Involved in the Smuggling of Commodities Across the Zimbabwe-Mozambique Border’, *Journal of Borderland Studies*, 25, 2 (2010), p. 69.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ D. Coplan, ‘Introduction: From Empiricism to Theory in African Border Studies’, *Journal of Borderland Studies*, 25, 2 (2010), p. 1.

⁸⁹ Pophiwa, ‘Mobile Livelihoods’, p. 67.

acknowledged.⁹⁰ In this vein, it is observed that focus on the living experiences of borderland people of Africa, and by inference, south-eastern Zimbabwe is but a recent phenomenon that requires further interrogation. This study contends that the responses of borderland communities of southern Zimbabwe to their treatment by the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean state are still a grey area that requires scholarly enquiry.

Studies of borderlands have approached the subject from different angles. For instance, Brunet-Jailly has argued that, generally, states perceive them as spaces of restriction and illegal activities.⁹¹ In support, Love views them as conduits for smuggling goods, nurseries of rebellious ideas, sources of ethnic conflict, trouble spots and havens of criminals and centres of resistance to central authority.⁹² From a slightly different angle, Schmidt argues that border communities were generally susceptible to attacks by insurgent groups and prone to more violence than interior communities.⁹³ For communities that bordered parks like the GNP, such insurgent groups took advantage of the park to attack and retreat into its safety. This study highlights how the game sanctuary was used by the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (RENAMO) bandits in post-colonial Zimbabwe to the detriment of the area.

A particular area of interest in south-eastern Zimbabwe deserving attention was the poorly defined borderland spot of Crook's Corner. The spot was located where Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe meet. During the early colonial period, it transformed itself into a place of illegality

⁹⁰ Pophiwa, 'Mobile Livelihoods', p. 67. For a detailed discussion of the Rhodesian-Mozambican cross-border activities, see, F. P. T. Duri, 'Antecedents and Adaptations in the Borderlands: A Social History of Informal Socio-Economic Activities Across the Rhodesian-Mozambican Border with Particular Reference to the City of Umtali, 1900-1974', PhD Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2012.

⁹¹ E. Brunet-Jailly, 'Theorising Borders: An Interdisciplinary Perspective', *Geopolitics*, 10, (2005).

⁹² R. Love, 'Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa', *Review of African Political Economy*, 39, 132 (2012), p. 396.

⁹³ H. Schmidt, 'Healing the Wounds of War: Memories of Violence and the Making of History in Zimbabwe's Most Recent Past', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 13, 2 (1997), p. 302.

where criminals from any of the three countries could evade justice by simply crossing the border beacon and for hard core criminals like Cecil Stephanus Rutgers Barnard, nicknamed *Vhekenya*, by even removing the beacon markings to avoid arrest by authorities of the country pursuing him.⁹⁴ At the centre of the Corner was a bustling store called Makuleke so named after a local Shangane chief whose authority overlapped into the three countries. The store harboured an assortment of white petty criminals, outcasts and fugitives from many European countries most of whom were *degradados*. The place was a busy market for ivory trade and, always, teeming with people coming in and going out daily to places of work that Mavhunga refers to as invisible.⁹⁵ It was, therefore, for this reason that Bulpin called it a capital of scallywags, adventurers and wanderers and consequently a place of lawlessness.⁹⁶ Again, its uniqueness was in that it was removed from centres of political power and, so, generally uncontrollable.⁹⁷

On the brighter side, however, Love views borderlands as places of political and economic opportunities for border communities.⁹⁸ Pophiwa agrees when he observes that such communities were able to fruitfully use borders as survival corridors, notwithstanding strict government controls.⁹⁹ Again, focusing on informal cross border activities on the Mozambique-Zimbabwe border, Duri reinforces the argument by illustrating how borders were, indeed, useful conduits of survival for borderland communities during the colonial period.¹⁰⁰ This thesis shows how the

⁹⁴ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 25. *Vhekenya*, whose name is spelt as *Bvekenya* in colonial narratives was a notorious white poacher and labour broker who worked in the area that is now called the GNP between 1910 and 1929. He will be a subject of discussion in many parts of the thesis.

⁹⁵ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 194.

⁹⁶ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 13.

⁹⁷ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 190.

⁹⁸ Love, 'Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa', p. 396.

⁹⁹ Pophiwa, 'Mobile Livelihoods', p. 68.

¹⁰⁰ While Duri's study focuses on the city of Umtali it, nevertheless gives a vivid picture of experiences of border communities in general.

border communities under focus managed to survive within restrictions imposed by the state, following the expropriation of their lands to create the GNP.

The border location of the GNP and the affected indigenous people link up well with borderland studies which argue that such communities are generally neglected.¹⁰¹ The view is backed by Impey's submission that borderland spaces were generally characterised by economic marginalisation, political susceptibility and social volatility¹⁰² while Gupta and Ferguson refer to them as areas of contradictions and zones of displacement.¹⁰³ Similarly, Alper and Brunet-Jailly see them as centres of conflict between local and national perspectives, with the latter subordinating interests of the former.¹⁰⁴ As elsewhere, the border communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe clashed with the state over the legality of their activities. Subsistence hunting was, for example, labelled as poaching, cross-border trade as illicit smuggling and traditional labour migration across the border without passes as trespassing. The state's condemnation of such survival lifelines, thus, resulted in confrontation with these people who incidentally were also displaced from their Gonarezhou homeland.

In their studies, Alper & Brunet-Jailly also maintain that border communities suffer from a crisis of identity as they claim citizenships that transcend boundaries¹⁰⁵, a consequence of arbitrary colonial borders that inconsiderately separated related ethnic groups. Impey echoes the view when he asserts that it is because kith and kin are across the border and, thus, are part of cross-border

¹⁰¹ Love, 'Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa', p. 397, N. Pophiwa & C. Tornimbeni, 'The Construction of Internal Borders in a Borderland Region of Central Mozambique', *Journal of Borderland Studies*, 25, 2 (2010), p. 36.

¹⁰² Impey, 'Songs of Mobility and Belonging', p. 257.

¹⁰³ A. Gupta & J. Ferguson, 'Beyond Culture: Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference', *Cultural Anthropology*, 7, 1 (1992), p. 18.

¹⁰⁴ Alper & Brunet-Jailly, (eds), 'Special Issue: Rarely Studied Borderlands', p. 2.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

family networks.¹⁰⁶ Schmidt agrees that border residents tend to interact more with people across the frontier than those within their own country since there appear to be more opportunities on the other side of the border, whether real or imagined.¹⁰⁷

In a related discussion, Joann McGregor contends that, during the early colonial period when border controls were weaker, borderland peoples crossed them willy-nilly oblivious of and even defiantly indifferent to their existence.¹⁰⁸ Such border residents perceived these frontiers as bridges linking them with their relatives across and not barriers dividing them from their kinsfolk. Again, during the colonial period, these communities distrusted the government arguing that its interest in them was to enforce tax payment and quarantine them into unpopular African reserves; an infringement on their economic and political freedoms. Colonial fencing of borderlands and parks was viewed in the same light; as ways to cut people off their traditional migratory routes and, in the case of south-eastern Zimbabwe, routes to Mozambique and South Africa. They were also seen as attempts to deny them access survival resources across the border. Impey contends that erecting border fences had the aggregate effect of turning the affected people into criminals who had to break the law to visit relatives or source survival commodities, across the border.¹⁰⁹

This study argues that the creation of the GNP was partly an attempt by the government of Rhodesia to manage the remote area. Quarantining the borderland communities into reserves was considered to be a way of dealing with the challenge of having to govern the so-called remote borderland area. The thesis maintains that the border and the game reserve divided the Shangane into three distinct identities, namely; those belonging to Zimbabwe or South Africa or

¹⁰⁶ Impey, 'Songs of Mobility and Belonging', p. 259.

¹⁰⁷ Schmidt, 'Healing the Wounds of War', p. 302.

¹⁰⁸ J. McGregor, 'Rethinking the Boundaries of the Nation: Histories of Cross Border Mobility and Zimbabwe's New Diaspora', *Critical African Studies*, (2012), p. 50.

¹⁰⁹ Impey, 'Songs of Mobility and Belonging', p. 259.

Mozambique. It was a division that forced relatives to live separately in the different countries and to view each other as different. Indeed, governing them separately ended up making them seem different as their identities were re-moulded and tailored to suit the dictates of their colonial rulers. The current study interrogates the implication of the division for the Shangane of southern Zimbabwe in the broader context of park-induced displacements in the region. It seeks to understand how attempts by the Shangane of the region to join their kinsfolk across the borders following their eviction from the GNP were, in the main, frustrated by the different identities created by the colonial states.

Displacement of indigenous communities from park-designated areas

Mainstream scholarship acknowledges that many parks across the world contained large numbers of people who were removed when such parks were established. While in some parks, some residents were allowed to stay under new conditions, in many others such as the GNP indigenous communities were gradually removed as conservation was given priority. Their removal, wherever it occurred on the globe was a cause for conflict between the affected peoples and their states. Available statistics will assist in illustrating the above argument. In South America, for example, 85% of national parks still have people living in them while in India, up to four million people still live inside PAs.¹¹⁰ In the Central African region, approximately 70% of park land is occupied by indigenous communities.¹¹¹ Local residents were, at their establishments, allowed to remain in parts of the LNP in Mozambique and the Central Kalahari Game Reserve in Botswana.¹¹² Wolmer documents that in some parks, those who remained, such as the Maasai of Serengeti National Park

¹¹⁰ Mombeshora & Le Bel, 'People-Park Conflicts', p. 2604.

¹¹¹ Brockington & Igoe, 'Eviction for Conservation', pp. 5-6.

¹¹² Mombeshora & Le Bel, 'People-Park Conflicts', p. 2604.

were dehumanised as primitive and considered as part of the fauna of the area. Their continued stay was to serve as a form of tourist attraction.¹¹³

On the other hand, the creation of the world's first national park, Yellowstone, was followed by the forced eviction of indigenous Indians.¹¹⁴ Similar eviction methods were to be exported worldwide with minor alterations. Adams, for example, observes that large numbers of Australian aborigines were ejected from their traditional lands when the Royal National Park was established in 1879.¹¹⁵ In Canada, Eagles and McCool record that indigenous peoples suffered the same fate during the establishment of the Banff National Park in 1885 and the Algonquin National Park in 1893.¹¹⁶ Adams, furthermore, notes that in Sweden, scores of indigenous Sami communities were also displaced to make way for a game park.¹¹⁷ Similarly, King documents that in Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa and Zimbabwe, large numbers of local peoples were also forcibly removed from their ancestral lands to allow for the establishment of parks.¹¹⁸ Mombeshora and Le Bel reinforce the above when they state that the establishment of the Selous Game Reserve in Tanzania was accompanied by the eviction of up to forty thousand indigenous people¹¹⁹ while Igoe also states that up to four thousand people were evicted from the Mkomazi National Park of Tanzania during its establishment.¹²⁰ In western Zimbabwe, Terence Ranger records that between 1934 and the early 1960s, concerted efforts were expended on removing all residents of Matopos National

¹¹³ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 39.

¹¹⁴ Mombeshora & Le Bel, 'People-Park Conflicts', p. 2605.

¹¹⁵ M. Adams, 'Beyond Yellowstone? Conservation and Indigenous Rights in Australia and Sweden', in G. Cant, A. Goodall & J. Inns (eds), *Discourses and Silences: Indigenous Peoples, Risks and Resistance*, (Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 2005), pp. 127-138.

¹¹⁶ Eagles & McCool, *Tourism in National Parks and Protected Areas*, pp. 6 & 9.

¹¹⁷ Adams, 'Negotiating Nature', p. 2.

¹¹⁸ King, 'Conservation Geographies in Sub-Saharan Africa', pp. 1-14.

¹¹⁹ Mombeshora & Le Bel, 'Parks-People Conflicts', p. 2606.

¹²⁰ Igoe, *Conservation and Globalization*, p. 70.

Park.¹²¹ Overall, Zeppel estimates that globally, over twelve million, mainly hunter-gatherer and pastoral communities have been forced off their lands to allow for the establishment of parks.¹²²

In Africa, evictions were initially guided by white racist beliefs that Africans had no appreciation of the beauty of their natural environment and, so, had no right to be in conservation-designated areas.¹²³ In addition, there was an extended argument that advocated for the exclusion of indigenous people from game-designated areas to save animals from their supposed wanton poaching. What was apparent and ironic, however, was that the wild and natural environment of Africa they were frantically trying to protect was no longer available in the countries where the white park advocates came from since the self-appointed Western champions of environmental conservation had already squandered their 'Edens' through poor conservation practices.¹²⁴ It seems that their belated attempts to save the African game was a disguise to cover their past conservation sins. Therefore, this study will show that the creation of the GNP forced local communities to live on the fringes of their previous ancestral lands as conservation refugees, with changed lifestyles. It will illustrate how this, in turn generated ill feelings towards the game park from the affected communities.

In addition, the establishment of parks in Africa assumed racial overtones when white settlers appointed themselves as custodians of wildlife by virtue of conquest. They, subsequently, monopolised wildlife control by dictating the terms and conditions of game management. As Wolmer has argued, African parks were important mostly for their symbolic construction of racial

¹²¹ Ranger, *Voices From the Rocks*, pp. 136-175.

¹²² Zeppel, 'National Parks as Cultural Landscapes', p. 260. C. Geisler, 'A New Kind of Trouble: Evictions in Eden', *International Social Science Journal*, 55 (2003), pp. 69-78 estimates that the number could be up to fourteen and a half million people in Africa alone.

¹²³ Igoe, 'Conservation and Globalization', pp. 71, 79, 83.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 76.

and national identity for European settlers and for legitimising the conquest of African territories. He affirms that as a result, a European aesthetic nature of wildlife management was imposed on the African space.¹²⁵ Indigenous people were condemned for practising irresponsible wildlife management systems even though there was no scientific basis for the accusation.

The study observes that in celebrating the establishment of parks in Africa, white settlers deliberately forgot to acknowledge the positive role played by the Africans in the sustainable management of the landscape through the application of indigenous knowledge. As Khan points out, pre-colonial Africa had evolved systems and strategies that enabled it to harness local ecological conditions with environmental sustainability.¹²⁶ He, furthermore, argues that such practices were disrupted by colonial expropriation of land and the creation of political boundaries that took little regard of ecological consequences.¹²⁷ The current work interrogates how pre-colonial African communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe applied various forms of indigenous knowledge in the sustainable management of their environment. It also scrutinises how park displacements generated bitterness towards the GNP and heightened conflict with the indigenous communities. Finally, it also demonstrates how, as a result, displaced communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe branded parks as white schemes meant to disguise land seizures.

People-park relations

Relations between indigenous communities and parks have attracted intense interest from a cross section of scholars who include historians, environmentalists, sociologists, developmentalists and

¹²⁵ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 12.

¹²⁶ Khan, 'Sustainable Development and Community Participation', pp. 1-3.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

anthropologists.¹²⁸ While such scholars' presentations on evictions greatly inform this study, the study notes that they tended to gloss over the indigenous people's responses to their displacement. Arguing from a sociological perspective, Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau make an important contribution to the eviction scholarship in general when they examine the effects of displacements on poor communities. They affirm the existence of an intrinsic relationship between involuntary displacement and impoverishment and that, the former triggers off eight impoverishment risks, namely; landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of access to common property and social disarticulation.¹²⁹

Downing endorses Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau's view by identifying three more effects of eviction; loss of access to public services, loss of civil and human rights, and disruption of formal education.¹³⁰ Vine adds physical, psychological, social and cultural impoverishment to the list.¹³¹

The aggregate argument of the above authors is that wherever park-induced evictions occurred, they negatively affected the victims by impoverishing them and denying them basic human rights.

Meanwhile, Du Plessis grapples with the question of how evictions impact on the rights of the displaced communities and establishes that, where forced displacements had taken place, they mainly targeted the most vulnerable groups who happened to be the least resistant. The displaced mostly go without compensation for the losses incurred during their eviction.¹³² It cannot be denied that in most cases, the evicted are the marginalised communities who cannot protect their

¹²⁸ See, *inter alia*, D. Vine, 'The Impoverishment of Displacement: Models for Documenting Human Rights Abuses and the People of Diego Garcia', *Human Rights Brief*, 13, 2 (2006), Cernea & Schmidt-Soltau, 'Poverty Risks and National Parks', Du Plessis, 'Losing Your Home' & Mombeshora & Le Bel, 'People-Park Conflicts'.

¹²⁹ M. M. Cernea & K. Schmidt-Soltau, 'The End of Forcible Displacements? Conservation Must Not Impoverish People', *Policy Matters*, 12 (2003), pp. 44-46.

¹³⁰ 'The Consequences of Development-Induced Displacement', <http://www.forcedmigration.org/research/> (accessed on 25/04/13).

¹³¹ Vine, 'The Impoverishment of Displacement', p. 23.

¹³² Du Plessis, 'Losing Your Home', p. 2.

land rights because of their weak political positions. It is in this context that the current study probes the impact of the creation of the GNP on the rights of displaced Shangane particularly the vulnerable groups such as women, children and the elderly.

This study also profited from Carruthers's illuminating publications on park evictions in Southern Africa. Her study on the KNP reveals the antagonistic relations that existed between the park and indigenous communities of the area. She specifically notes that while local white elites and tourists romanticised the game park as a place of recuperation and spiritual regeneration, displaced communities condemned it as a racial white exploitative project that sought to privatise their wildlife and transform it into an imperial asset.¹³³ Carruthers clearly points out how the displaced communities abhorred the imposed project and, lucidly illustrates how and why, as a result, the KNP became a battle zone between park administrators and disgruntled indigenous communities kicked out of the park. Most pertinent to the present study, though focussing on a different geographical space is her conclusion that benefits accrued from the park had largely bypassed the impoverished indigenous communities living on the fringes of the park.¹³⁴ Wolmer adds a new dimension to the debate when he indicates how colonialists and conservationists created zones of struggles with indigenous people in their attempts to tame the Lowveld wilderness and highlights how the conflict was sharpened by the state's deliberate attempts to completely write out the communities from the landscape.¹³⁵

In contrast, Child refutes the argument put forward by anti-park advocates when he argues that the blanket model of parks as institutions inimical to the interests of indigenous communities and

¹³³ Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p. 2.

¹³⁴ Ibid, p. 100. Her chapter, 'The Other Side of the Fence' in her book, *The Kruger National Park* was particularly informative on the experiences of evicted communities, now living on the periphery of the KNP.

¹³⁵ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, pp. 1-2.

opposed by them was not true for all parks especially those in northern Botswana and the Caprivi Strip of Namibia where people had positively embraced them. In these countries, parks are said to have generated employment for the youth and allowed peaceful co-existence between local communities and wildlife.¹³⁶ In addition, Child reveals that where conflict occurred, it was caused by the way people were treated by park officials rather than a reaction to wildlife itself.¹³⁷ The thesis investigates how the experience compares with that of communities evicted from the GNP.

In south-eastern Zimbabwe, the study of people-park relations was championed by Mombeshora and Le Bel. It is, however, noted that the slant of these social scientists was on revealing the impact of eviction instead of examining the broader intricate relations of the park and the people of the area. Again, they focus on one specific part of the present study area (Chisa) and examine the seemingly intractable dispute between the clan, located on the northern fringes of the GNP, and the state. They disclose how the community protested against being locked out of the park through a battery of state laws and illustrate how such a move generated hostility towards the park and subsequently placed conservation goals in peril.¹³⁸ While the present study shares some common terrain with the authors it, however, differs with their perspective for a number of reasons. Firstly, they focus on one small section of a very large area, a position that does not give a full picture of the people's responses to their eviction. Secondly, their presentation is limited to the post-2000 period when the Chisa community brought down the park fence after invading the PA, an act that earned them the wrath of the state. Thirdly, and missing from their well-articulated research is the

¹³⁶ B. Child, 'The Emergence of Parks and Conservation Narratives in Southern Africa', in H. Suich & B. Child (eds), *Evolution and Innovation in Wildlife Conservation. Parks and Game Ranches to Transfrontier Conservation Areas*, (London: Earthscan, 2009), p. 20.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Mombeshora & Le Bel, 'People-Park Conflicts', p. 2602.

reaction of the Chisa community to eviction. Lastly, and most importantly, they do not address the changed lifestyles of the evicted, now living on the outer edges of the park.

In a related article, Gandiwa, Gandiwa and Maboko examine how the interaction between the Chisa community, living on the margin of the Game Park and Gonarezhou animals, living under protection in the park created seemingly permanent hostile relations between them.¹³⁹ They clearly document the local people's frustrations on being denied access to the park while rogue animals crossed the fence, without 'permits', to terrorise them and destroy their crops. The authors' proposal that a temporary barrier be established in the form of another fence to bar local people from driving their cattle into the park and their suggestion that villagers be schooled to take "ownership of the fences"¹⁴⁰ is not a convincing solution to the problem as it falls in the fortress mantra which was responsible for the impasse between the villagers and the park establishment, in the first instance. This study shows how such piecemeal solutions have failed to resolve the stalemate between the park institution and local communities.

Another informative publication on the GNP was generated by Clapperton Mavhunga, in his unpublished 2008 PhD thesis. In the work, he introduces the concept of mobility in the interaction of people, technology and nature in the land that was to become the GNP.¹⁴¹ Mavhunga addresses three related issues: people and their movement in Gonarezhou, traditional and modern technologies and their impact on the park and the movement of nature in the form of animals, plants and water in the park. The study particularly examines how technology was the driver of the interaction between people and nature, how nature in turn directed what technology to employ

¹³⁹ E. Gandiwa, P. Gandiwa & N. Maboko, 'Living with Wildlife and Associated Conflicts in a Contested Area Within the Northern Gonarezhou Park, Zimbabwe', *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 14, 6 (2012), p. 253.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 258.

¹⁴¹ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop'.

at any given time of the interaction and how people determined both processes. Put simply, his study highlights the alliances forged by nature, technology and human beings in what he calls a mobile workshop, which turns out to be the Gonarezhou forest. His study clearly reveals how such interaction shaped and re-shaped relations between the game entity and indigenous communities during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras. While acknowledging the mammoth contribution made by his work, the current study notes that Mavhunga does not discuss contestation of state policies and practices by the indigenous communities of the area.

There are two autobiographical works and one personal account that deserve mention in relation to south-eastern Zimbabwe. The first is Bulpin's romanticised book, *The Ivory Trail*. This is an epic story of a hunting legend in the name of Cecil Stephanus Rutgers Barnard, nicknamed *Vhekenya* by the local people. In a period spanning nineteen years (1910 to 1929) that he spent in the Gonarezhou and adjacent forests, the legendary elephant hunter singly accounted for the killing of over three hundred elephants.¹⁴² The same poacher was also involved in the illegal recruitment of labour for South African mines in the area and often used brutal methods in his labour conscription escapades. The book, though seemingly fictitious, does provide interesting insights into the history of the area that eventually became the GNP.

Another, *The Valley of the Ironwoods*, written by the DC of Nuanetsi, Allan Wright (nicknamed *Chibgwe*) was a personal record of his ten year administrative experiences in the south-eastern district (1958-1968). Wright, a game conservation lobbyist, claimed almost all credit for the establishment of the GNP during his tour of duty although records of the Department of Parks and Wildlife Management (DPWLM) dispute the claim.¹⁴³ To his acclaim, however, were the

¹⁴² Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 74.

¹⁴³ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 20.

administrative structures such as roads, makeshift bridges, sub-offices and intelligence networks he put in place to ensure the effective monitoring of the area and, in particular, the curbing of poaching in the game sanctuary.¹⁴⁴ His narrative of taming the Gonarezhou terrain, fighting poachers and stewarding local chiefs during his tenure in the Lowveld was particularly interesting. This thesis is undeniably indebted to his account although it registers its reservations on the impartiality of his full story of the Lowveld area given his conflicting role as a state officer.

Yet another book by Jim Parker entitled: *Assignment Selous Scouts: Inside Story of a Rhodesian Special Branch Officer*, chronicles the final years of the Rhodesian war from an insider's point of view.¹⁴⁵ Parker was a Special Branch Liaison Officer with the SS at the Chiredzi base whose work was to conduct cross border raids into the Gaza Province of Mozambique during the critical decade of the armed struggle (1970 to 1980). His narrative inordinately praises Rhodesian army operations against ZANLA guerrillas and, hence, the need to take it with some reservations. Its strength, however, was in that as a senior SS operative, he was able to directly access Rhodesian war records which he used in his book. So, while he was able to tell a detailed story of the war in south-eastern Zimbabwe, it was regrettably a one sided one. However, of particular interest to the present study is his chapter eight that deals with the SS's creation of a pseudo-Shangane army to complement

¹⁴⁴ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp. 88-90.

¹⁴⁵ J. Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts: Inside Story of a Rhodesian Special Branch Officer*, (Alberton: Galago Books, 2006). The period from about 1965 to 1980 witnessed intensified military confrontation between the Rhodesian government and African nationalist guerrilla movements of Zimbabwe; the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and the Zimbabwe African People's Liberation Army. Towards the end of the period, the war became characterised by the use of dirty tactics such as poisoning, killing of innocent civilians and indiscriminate bombings of guerrilla bases in Mozambique and Zambia. The Selous Scouts (SS), Parker's employer, was a pseudo guerrilla group used by the Rhodesian government to conduct such dirty tactics against the nationalist forces. For an extended discussion of the SS, see, J. A. Dzimbahete, 'Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle: A Critical Decade of Zimbabwe's African National Union (ZANU)'s Guerrilla War, 1970-1980', PhD Thesis, University of Fort Hare, 2011, chapter 5.

Rhodesian war efforts in fighting ZANLA guerrillas in and around the GNP.¹⁴⁶ Notwithstanding its limitations, the book is a revealing source of information, from the Rhodesian point of view.

In the recent past, a body of literature dealing with the subject of the co-management of park resources has burgeoned in Southern Africa. In South Africa, such literature focuses on the much celebrated Makuleke restitution scheme where a community that was forcibly removed from the KNP at the height of apartheid won back its ancestral lands in 1998. Today, it is co-managing a section of the park with the SANParks.¹⁴⁷ The recovery of the community's land has, however, not been total as the joint management arrangement is locked in a fifty year deal that bars them from using the recovered land for anything other than wildlife conservation.¹⁴⁸ Similarly, Zeppel documents that in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, the San and Meier communities were awarded 50% shares in the hotel business of the park and rights to develop ecotourism.¹⁴⁹ Moswete, Thapa and Lacey also note that in Botswana, cultural tourism was revived through co-management projects and in the process, employment was generated for many youngsters.¹⁵⁰ The present study explores the extent to which the above scenarios compared with what transpired to the GNP evictees, now living on the fringes of the park.

Independent Zimbabwe witnessed a paradigm shift in wildlife management when attempts were made by the state to rope in indigenous communities into the joint management of the GNP. The state introduced a scheme called the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE). It was a Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM)

¹⁴⁶ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, pp. 64-66.

¹⁴⁷ Spenceley, 'Tourism in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', p. 656.

¹⁴⁸ Mombeshora & Le Bel, 'People-Park Conflicts', p. 2610.

¹⁴⁹ Zeppel, *National Parks as Cultural Landscapes*, p. 267.

¹⁵⁰ N. Moswete, B. Thapa & G. Lacey, 'Village-Based Tourism and Community Participation: A Case Study of the Matsheng Villages in Southwest Botswana', in J. Saarinen, *et al* (eds), *Sustainable Tourism in Southern Africa, Local Communities and Natural Resources in Transition*, (Bristol: Channel View Publications, 2009), p. 195.

programme critiqued by scholars such as Metcalfe, Balint and Mashinya. These authors document that its thrust was on extending benefits to local people living next to the PAs. Underpinning the scheme were a number of assumptions: that it would de-centralise decision making, economically empower grass-root communities, create employment for the indigenous people, open up beneficially mutual partnerships and reduce human-park tension.¹⁵¹ This study quizzes the suppositions in view of the communities' perception that the programme was more about the national park than them, that its driving philosophy was that of conservation not development and that in spite of its participatory rhetoric, it remained a model that failed to equitably distribute the park resources to the supposed beneficiaries.¹⁵²

Another area that has recently attracted academic attention in Southern Africa is the establishment of transfrontier parks that focus on promoting cross-border conservation through joint regional tourism.¹⁵³ Of particular interest to the current study is the establishment of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP) project of three Southern African countries, namely: Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe.¹⁵⁴ The Park was founded on the grand principle of breaking artificial boundaries between the states to allow for unrestricted animal movement; what Spenceley terms the re-establishment of traditional migratory routes of the wildlife of the region.¹⁵⁵ Advocates of the project argue that it has the potential of fostering cultural and political harmonisation of the participating states through the re-establishment of pre-colonial historical links. They further

¹⁵¹ S. Metcalfe, 'Impacts of Transboundary Protected Areas on Local Communities in the Three Southern African Initiatives', Unpublished paper, Paper Prepared for the Workshop on Transboundary Protected Areas in the Governance Stream of the 5th World Parks Congress, Durban, South Africa, 12-13 September, 2003, p. 5 & P. J. Balint & J. Mashinya, 'The Decline of a Model Community-Based Conservation Project: Governance, Capacity, and Devolution in Mahenye, Zimbabwe', *Geoforum*, 37 (2006), pp. 805-815.

¹⁵² Metcalfe, 'Impacts of Transboundary Protected Areas on Local Communities in the Three Southern African Initiatives', p. 7.

¹⁵³ Spenceley, 'Tourism in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', p. 649.

¹⁵⁴ See publications by Wolmer, Metcalfe, Child, Spenceley, Carruthers, Mavhunga and the Peace Parks Foundation, among others.

¹⁵⁵ Spenceley, 'Tourism in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', p. 649.

contend that it would lead to the building of a new Africa without fences and borders¹⁵⁶ and as Van Ameron and Buscher emphasise, it would also promote the spirit of the African renaissance. This was a philosophy that was championed by former South African President, Thabo Mbeki and embraced by many in Africa.¹⁵⁷ Spenceley, however, refutes the delivery prospects of the Transfrontier Park project which he accuses of propagating Western elitist values and, thus, not representing true indigenous values.¹⁵⁸

Mavhunga and Spierenburg's work on the GLTP deserves mention as it exposes the various debates surrounding the park.¹⁵⁹ Of interest to this study and, deserving further interrogation is the proposition by the GLTP advocates that the project would enhance regional peace and cooperation and that it had the capacity to reduce poverty. Arguing from a slightly different angle, Metcalfe highlights the major concerns of affected Southern African communities and concludes that the benefits they have reaped have been minimal.¹⁶⁰ In support, Wolmer reveals how the affected people view the project as nothing but a ploy to bring under control borderlands that have for a long time been considered to have been too far away from the centres of power.¹⁶¹ The current thesis interrogates the effects of the GLTP project on the Sengwe-Tshipise communities.

Research design and methodology

The study uses the qualitative phenomenological research paradigm to select, organise, interpret and analyse the material gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The qualitative

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ M. Van Ameron & B. Buscher, 'Peace Parks in Southern Africa: Bringers of an African Renaissance?' *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 43, 2 (2005), p. 2.

¹⁵⁸ Spenceley, 'Tourism in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', p. 654.

¹⁵⁹ Mavhunga & Spierenburg, 'Transfrontier Talk, Cordon Politics'.

¹⁶⁰ Metcalfe, 'Impacts of Transboundary Protected Areas on Local Communities in the Three Southern African Initiatives', pp. 3-7.

¹⁶¹ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 12.

research approach engages in the study of a phenomenon over a period of time. The design involves the collection of information that pertain to people's lives; their stories, opinions, habits, behaviours, social movements, attitudes and relationships.¹⁶² It is an approach that employs the technique of continuously describing while at the same time analysing the material gathered. More specifically, the method presents and analyses findings on the basis of the research experiences.¹⁶³ In addition, the design formulates important principles of knowledge and proffers solutions to significant problems.¹⁶⁴ It also engages in the “measurement, classification, analysis, comparison and interpretation” of the sourced material.¹⁶⁵ Overall, the paradigm takes on a holistic approach to the enquiry of a historical phenomenon by viewing it from the perspective of those involved.

The strength of using the qualitative design in relation to GNP is that it is grounded on empirical research. It discusses the experiences of the Gonarezhou people in their social context. Moreover, the information collected is analysed inductively.¹⁶⁶ Through the use of interviews, the researcher gets to capture the ideas and views directly from people who experienced events. In addition, and in relation to GNP, the researcher is able to interrogate empirical archival and secondary documents as experienced and given by the people of south-eastern Zimbabwe. Again, the approach allows the researcher to use purposeful sampling that give the researcher the leeway to choose the range of interviewees that best represent a cross-section of people in the Gonarezhou study area.

¹⁶² A. Chindanya (ed), *Student's Research Handbook*, Unpublished, Great Zimbabwe University, 2010, p.19 & B. W. Tuckman, *Conducting Educational Research*, (New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1994), p. 366.

¹⁶³ D. K. Kombo & D. L. A. Tromp, *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction*, (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2010), p. 10.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 10.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Chindanya (ed.), *Student's Research Handbook*, p. 20.

The cornerstone of the study was primary material on the GNP obtained from the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) in Harare. Material consulted included original correspondences of government officials on the PA, veterinary reports, annual reports of Park Boards and those of Native Commissioners (NCs) of Nuanetsi and Ndanga districts, diaries of wardens of the park and game rangers, memos and diaries of travellers who had contact with the national park and testimonies of park rangers and wardens. Furthermore, police and court records on game poaching crimes, parliamentary records of the colonial and post-colonial eras, government statutory documents and reminiscences of government officials were also extensively consulted and, so, greatly informed the study.

Primary material was also obtained from Delineation Reports generated by the Native Department and recorded oral testimonies on chieftainships of the area. These were sourced from the Masvingo Records Centre, a depository of the NAZ. Delineation Reports were archival documents generated by the Native Department on African chieftainships. Such reports had investigated and recorded African lineages with the purpose of legitimising local chieftaincies. The idea was to pigeonhole local people's ethnicity, invent traditions for them and, at times even create chiefs for the communities. The big picture was to make African 'tribes' more visible to European administrators and, thus, make it easier to govern the Africans.

Also consulted was primary material from a colonial publication called the Native Affairs Department Annual (NADA). NADA contains proselytising accounts of white colonial officials whose understanding of 'natives' was clearly biased and almost uniform. The idea behind NADA's ethnographic research was to fully understand the African in order to make it easier to govern

him/her.¹⁶⁷ In the main, NADA narratives denigrated Africans as a down-trodden race destined to be governed by their white masters.¹⁶⁸ In studying the ‘native’, colonial officials ended up inventing myths and creating stereotypes of their subjects in order to suit their line of thinking.

In examining the primary material of the colonial period, the study was mindful of its shortcomings and particularly that it was replete with myths, biases and inherent contradictions. Moreover, such literature relied heavily on interpreters whose knowledge of the indigenous languages and cultures that they interpreted was rudimentary.¹⁶⁹ Besides, in interpreting the information given to them, colonial officials tended to add their subjective interpretations, thus, creating exaggerated and often inaccurate accounts.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, the sources tended to glorify and blatantly support the status quo and, so, articulated the voices of the rulers while those of the subaltern were suffocated. However, the material proved to be of some value when read against the grain and checked against other sources.

This research also drew heavily on information obtained from oral testimonies of residents of the area. Fieldwork commenced in earnest in October 2013. It was then conducted extensively and intermittently throughout the last quarter of 2013 and into 2014 and 2015 in villages situated on the fringes of the park, in Chiredzi town and in the GNP. In all, fifty six interviews were conducted of which twelve were group interviews and seven were with anonymous respondents. At times, these interviews were conducted more than once to check on and ascertain certain facts. Key informants who included thirty males and twelve females were drawn from various backgrounds.

¹⁶⁷ E. Worby, ‘Maps, Names and Ethnic Games: The Epistemology and Iconography of Colonial Power in North-Western Zimbabwe’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 20, 3 (1994), pp. 380-382.

¹⁶⁸ Mavhunga, ‘The Mobile Workshop’, p. 31.

¹⁶⁹ E. MacGonagle, *Crafting Identity in Zimbabwe and Mozambique*, (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 36.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

They included representatives of all generations and all the ethnic groups of the area. The range encompassed villagers, politicians and traditional leaders. The interviews specifically sought to capture the experiences and memories of the affected community members and, so, the respondents were deliberately selected. The capturing of a wide range of views was meant to allow for extensive comparison during the analysis of the sourced information.

Where interviewees consented, recordings were made for later transcription. For those who declined to be recorded, their fears were generally understandable given Zimbabwe's volatile political environment especially since the watershed general election of 2000 and coming hot on the heels of the heavily contested July 31, 2013 election.¹⁷¹ However, all prospective interviewees were assured of the authenticity of the research and the confidentiality of the exercise by the approval letters from the local and national political structures that the researcher always carried and presented to prospective interviewees.

Formal and informal interviews were mostly conducted in the indigenous languages of the area to allow for effective communication. The researcher took advantage of his proficiency in the main languages spoken in the area namely; Shangane, ChiShona and IsiNdebele. To ensure that nothing was missed, the researcher was assisted by research assistants from the area. These became valuable assets throughout the research period as they also assisted in identifying prospective interviewees. Interviews were conducted in people's homes, at shops, at public gatherings and at Development Constituency meetings where the researcher was always generously invited by the Member of Parliament for Chiredzi East Constituency. The researcher also went on guided tours

¹⁷¹ The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) entered the political arena through its participation in the 2000 election. Faced with a strong opposition the Zimbabwe African National Union-ZANU (PF) party unleashed a reign of terror on its opponents especially in rural area. Thereafter, many people feared to express their political views openly, especially to strangers.

of the park in order to observe the contested spaces. In addition, the researcher participated in the 2013, 2014 and 2015 Great Limpopo Cultural Fairs organised by the Chiredzi-based Centre for Cultural Development Initiatives, also called Gaza Trust. The Fairs showcased Shangane/Tsonga cultures of the three countries of Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe that constituted the GLTP. The researcher also traversed the length and breadth of the villages along the park border, noting the extent of the physical fence barrier erected to keep people out.

The study also profited from documentary interrogation of the abundant secondary literature that spoke the broad subject of eviction and park administration. The material was sourced from books, academic theses, journal articles, park guidelines, workshop proceedings, tourism literature, minutes of park deliberations and newspapers. Secondary literature accessed also included electronic sources. Major educational libraries such as the Great Zimbabwe University, the University of Zimbabwe, the University of Pretoria and Chipinda Pools library provided invaluable literature for the study. The researcher also perused material stored at the headquarters of the National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (NPWMA).

Chapter outline

The thesis is organised into eight chapters, including the introductory and conclusion chapters. The chapters take on a thematic approach which also recognises the principle of historical chronology. Cutting across the chapters is the central theme of conflict and contestation to eviction from the GNP. This introductory chapter sets out the scope of the study by mapping out the broad temporal and thematic parameters of the thesis. The second chapter locates the indigenous people and their identity on their landscape before colonial occupation to demonstrate their indigeneity and original claim to the Gonarezhou space. The chapter then sheds some light on the intertwined relationship

between the Shangane and nature in order to bring out how forced removal from their original homes ruptured the economic and social bases of their survival. The chapter refutes the colonial notion that pre-colonial Africa wilfully degraded its environmental milieus and, instead, stresses that the Shangane had managed their environment positively and sustainably before colonial rule.

Chapter 3 analyses the early colonial phase in the broader context of the land alienation discourse and particularly examines the debates surrounding the erection of fences and the removal of indigenous people from their geographical space. It essentially places the area of study within the broader context of the economic history of colonial Zimbabwe. The chapter illustrates how the demarcation of exclusive borders drew battle lines between the colonial government and the indigenous inhabitants of the area. It particularly examines how early state efforts to tame the landscape and its occupants created new lines of division between the white and black people of the region. The final part of the chapter addresses how various indigenous institutions and individuals of the different classes, genders and generations were mobilised to oppose the unjustified eviction from the park and assesses the extent of their success in doing so.

Chapter 4 examines how the historical grievances arising out of the removal of people from the GNP turned the indigenous people into ‘poachers’ in colonial parlance and how this in turn intensified conflict between them and the state. It, furthermore, examines how some in protest left for South Africa in search of employment. The chapter avers that the increased cross-border migration was an attempt to cover up for the lost income as a result of their displacement from their Gonarezhou work place. The chapter also surveys contestation to the establishment of the park in the broader political discourse of African resistance to colonial rule. It reveals how the location of the Gonakudzingwa Restriction Camp (GRC) right inside the park in the 1960s to quarantine prominent African nationalists catapulted south-eastern Zimbabwe into the limelight of

national politics. In addition, the chapter explores how the unresolved park grievance provided fertile ground for the mobilisation of the Shangane people in defence of their identity and rights.

The next two chapters focus on the post-colonial era. Chapter 5 is dedicated to the revival of indigenous claims to the park land following the attainment of Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. It particularly highlights the local people's excitement on the prospects of the post-colonial government assisting them to restore their rights and claims to the GNP and their disappointment when the state refused to accede to their demands. The chapter reviews the CAMPFIRE project in light of the local people's contestation to the GNP. It challenges the notion that the programme was capable of positively transforming the lives of indigenous communities. Instead, it contends that its perceived benefits remained largely elusive throughout the period of its implementation.

Chapter 6 examines how the land reform programme that began in 2000 triggered new forms and levels of protest that came with the physical occupation of some parts of the GNP and almost all white commercial farms surrounding the park. It reveals how the bringing down of the fence by the Chisa community was a manifestation of such protest. The chapter also examines the political and environmental impact of the invasion of the park. The penultimate chapter 7 unpacks the various debates surrounding the establishment of the GLTP project. As in chapter 5, chapter 7 questions the presumed benefits of such a mega-developmental project for local poor people and, instead, submits that such deliverances have been limited. The chapter also scrutinises the role of external forces in the project and attempts to reconcile local and international interests in the scheme. Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by reflecting on the salient arguments proffered, major insights examined and the conclusions arrived at in the study. It highlights the results of the research findings as a way of provoking further research on Zimbabwe's parks.

CHAPTER 2: THE LAND OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Introduction

The GNP and the surrounding settlements lie in a hot and dry region of the country's southern Lowveld. It was, for almost a century prior to colonial occupation, home to the Tsonga, also known as the Hlengwe or Shangane. The area, like many others in the country had experienced a number of movements that saw the Gaza-Nguni taking control at the turn of the 19th century. They remained dominant until the advent of colonial rule. In later years and during the colonial period, the area was to accommodate Ndebele and Karanga evictees from the Filabusi area of Matebeleland and the Victoria District.

While guarding against generalising and romanticising the pre-colonial domestic economy of the Shangane, this chapter argues that the people's long settlement in the area had enabled them to cultivate utilitarian relations with their fauna and flora.¹⁷² The relationship had enabled them to survive for almost a century in the generally hostile climatic environment of the region. The Gonarezhou forest provided them with land for cultivation, meat from the many animals of the bush, pastures for their livestock, fish for their protein diet and unlimited fruits and vegetables. The forest was also home to the spirits of the departed and ancestral shrines. As a result, the inhabitants of the Gonarezhou milieu revered the forest and constantly sought its protection and blessings. The place was also respected because the Shangane conducted their male and female initiation ceremonies in it.¹⁷³

¹⁷² This chapter notes and concurs with what Hopkins calls the 'Myth of Merrie Africa'; an over-glorification and, thus, over-simplification of pre-colonial Africa. The myth exaggerates Africa's past achievements by labelling it as a continent "in which generations of Africans enjoyed congenial lives in well integrated, smoothly functioning societies." See, A. G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa*, (London: Longman, 1973). pp. 9-10.

¹⁷³ Group interview with Chisa villagers, 23 December 2014.

This chapter provides a historical background to the study by identifying and placing the indigenous communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe in the Gonarezhou landscape before and during the early years of colonial rule. It traces the movement of the various groups into the region and discusses how and why the Shangane had become the dominant ethnic clan of the area by the inception of colonial rule in 1890. The chapter concerns itself with how the Shangane had over their many years of occupying the area developed a special kind of correlation with their land that enabled them to make it their permanent homeland notwithstanding its climatic hazards.

The chapter notes how the Shangane used their wide indigenous knowledge, acquired over years of living in the Lowveld terrain, to assist them sustainably manage their milieu. It also examines how Shangane survival in the generally dry and harsh countryside was made possible by their successful engagement in a mixed economy and how they were able to make appropriate economic adjustments as and when the weather, nature and political conditions directed. The chapter, thus, provides background information to contextualise the Shangane responses to their subsequent removal from their Gonarezhou homeland.

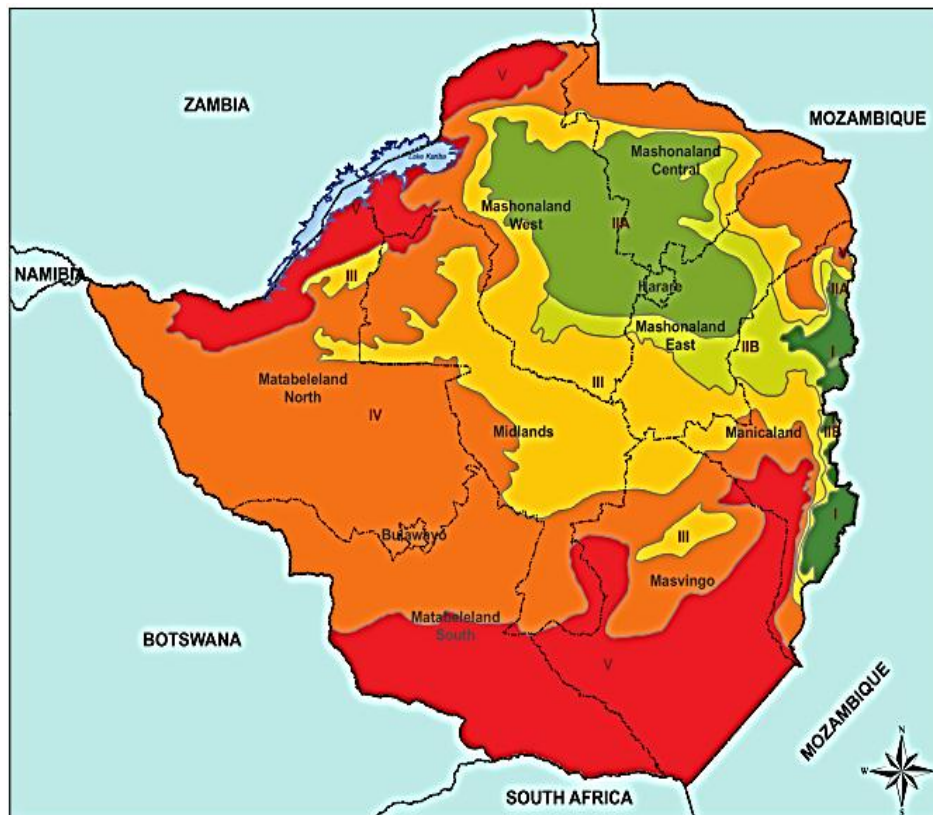
The land

South-eastern Zimbabwe, alternatively known as the Lowveld is a low and flat expanse of land lying 700 metres above sea level. It is bounded by the eastern highlands in the north and north-east, the middle veld in the north-west, the Limpopo River in the south and the Mozambican border in the south east.¹⁷⁴ The veld is dissected by a number of large rivers such as the Save, Runde, Mwenezi, Bubi, Mutirikwi, Tugwi, Chiredzi and Mkwesine. There are also many tributaries that

¹⁷⁴ NAZ: S914/12/1B, Report on area in Crown Lands Between Matibi No. 2 Native Reserve and Portuguese East Africa Border Line: Re-Game Reserve. B. V. Brewer.

feed into these rivers such as Tsikambedsi, Ramusikana, Chitungudzi, Nyachiri, Nyamapanda, Mutondwani, Guluwene, Nyarwamba and Tshingwesi. While the rivers and streams of the Lowveld are exceedingly dry in winter, they turn turbulent and awe-inspiring in summer. Also spread across the area are water pans, the biggest of which are the Tembohata and Machiniwa which are located in the vicinity of the Save-Runde junction and the Gorhwe and Sokwe, situated in the central areas of the park.¹⁷⁵

Map 2.1: Zimbabwe’s ecological regions showing the Lowveld’s region 5



Source: Zimbabwe-Agro Ecological Zone Map, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/7BFF49F0B55F020085257664007D5442-map.pdf>.

¹⁷⁵ Gonarezhou National Park, General Management Plan, 2011-2021, p. (v).

The Lowveld area of southern Zimbabwe lies in the country's natural region 5 (V), shown in Map 2.1. It is a generally hot and dry region with Marhumbini, found on the confluence of the Save-Runde Rivers recorded by Wright as the hottest and lowest place in all of Rhodesia and yet romanticised by the same author as a place with the finest climate in the world during the months of May, June and July.¹⁷⁶ The southern areas of the Matibi No. 2, the Gonakudzingwa African Purchase Area (APA) and the Sengwe Communal Area are the driest of the region. The whole of south-eastern Zimbabwe also experiences low and often uncertain rainfall ranging between 300 mm and 700 mm per annum and falling between October and April.¹⁷⁷ It is an area that was, during the colonial period, considered to be suitable only for game and dry-land cropping under irrigation. Experience was that a good harvest would be recorded only once in four years.¹⁷⁸

South-eastern Zimbabwe is endowed with rich blackish loam soils which require little or no application of fertilizer and in a season favoured with good rains, produces a bumper harvest.¹⁷⁹ Fertile silts that pile on the banks of major rivers were lifelines of pre-colonial riverine communities. The upper Runde and its tributaries were particularly fertile areas and this accounts for why they were densely populated areas.¹⁸⁰ In the past, the vegetation of the area used to be largely riverine grass interspersed by thick forests concentrated along major rivers. The dense savannah mupani trees, sometimes emerging into dry deciduous sandveld woodland and shrub,

¹⁷⁶ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp. 12 & 33.

¹⁷⁷ Mlambo & Pangeti, *The Political Economy of the Sugar Industry in Zimbabwe*, pp. 3 & 6.

¹⁷⁸ NAZ: S1542/91/1, CNC to the Minister of Commerce and Transport, 13 November 1933.

¹⁷⁹ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 20.

¹⁸⁰ H. De Laessoe, 'Ordinary Meeting, August 28th, 1906, The Lundi and Sabi Rivers', *Proceedings of the Rhodesian Science Association*, 6, 2 (1907), pp. 121-123.

dominated the veld. The southern part of the area was also home to the *bauhamia* plant species.¹⁸¹ The region, therefore, nurtured a variety of plants that sustained the lives of the indigenous people.

The peopling of south-eastern Zimbabwe

Pre-colonial Zimbabwe experienced various inward migration phases and the area which later became the GNP had its own share of these movements. Such movements saw the area becoming a meeting point of many ethnic groups brought together by opportunities, destiny and adventure. The groupings included a number of Shona-speaking people, the Tsonga, Hlengwe and the Gaza-Nguni (Shangane). At different times of their occupation and control of the area, the groups claimed indigeneity to the land. At the time of white occupation in 1890, the land had, through conquest become the ethnic home of the Shangane people.¹⁸² It is because of Shangane dominance on the eve of colonial occupation that the study mainly focuses on them.

In order to situate the study in its proper historical context, pre-colonial communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe are traced back to the 17th century, for two reasons. Firstly, the period from the 17th century is well documented by early explorers, hunters, missionaries, anthropologists, ethnographers and even adventurers. Many of the early accounts, ultimately, found their way into the Rhodesian archives, thus, provided invaluable information on pre-colonial communities of the region. Secondly, Vansina and Henige contended that oral testimonies, upon being put through the historical methods of scrutiny do provide reliable information for periods of up to five hundred

¹⁸¹ NAZ: S914/12/1B, Acting Secretary, Commerce and Transport to Col. The Hon. Deneys Reitz, M. P, Minister of Lands, Pretoria & An Economic Survey of Southern Rhodesia, Part II, Agro-Economic Survey, Salisbury, Government Printer, 1961.

¹⁸² Wolmer, *From the Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 2. For an elaboration of indigeneity to the area, see, Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 11.

years before the present.¹⁸³ Consequently, the thesis also relied on recorded oral testimonies of the people of the area which together with oral interviews conducted in the field of study complemented archival and written records to build the history of the communities of the region.

Early Shona-speaking inhabitants

Portuguese records from the 17th century reported mass movements of Shona-speaking Rozvi peoples into the Save Valley of south-eastern Zimbabwe, an area which later became the GNP. These were the Ndaus of the *Moyo* (Heart) totem.¹⁸⁴ They were led into the area by Shiriyedenga, their famous *jinda* (warrior) who founded the Mutema, Musikavanhu, Mapungwana, Garahwa and Gwenzi dynasties.¹⁸⁵ Shiriyedenga's people claimed to have found the countryside largely unoccupied, noting only the presence of a few *Dziva* (Pool) settlers whom they conquered and incorporated into their state.¹⁸⁶ Musikavanhu was reported to have been a powerful magician with rain-making powers which was passed down the clan generations.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ For perspectives on oral traditions, see, among others, J. Vansina, 'Oral Tradition and Its Methodology', in J. Ki-Zerbo (ed.), *General History of Africa* 1 (1981), pp. 142-165 & D. P. Henige, *Oral Historiography*, (Essex: Longman, 1982).

¹⁸⁴ Almost every African in Zimbabwe believes in and belongs to a totem (*xibongo/mutupo*). Totemism was associated with people's daily interactions with plants, animals and physical features such as pools. Examples of common totems are: *Zhou* (Elephant), *Shumba* (Lion), *Mbizi* (Zebra), *Nungu* (Porcupine), *Shoko* (Monkey), *Ngwena* (Crocodile), *Nkomo* (Cattle), *Moyo* (Heart), *Gumbo* (Leg) and *Dziva* (Pool of Water). Subscription to totems was a way of controlling plant and animal destruction as one would not dare offend clan gods by eating or destroying plants or animals of one's totem, as the consequences were said to be dire. For perspectives on totemism, see: H. M. T. Meade, 'The Origin and Universality of Taboo and Totemism', *NADA*, 1 (1923), pp. 73-79, R. H. Baker, 'The Mutupo Among the Wamanyika', *NADA*, 1 (1925), pp. 48-54 & C. Bullock, 'On the Origin and Nature of Totemism', *NADA*, 1 (1931), pp. 10-15 and on pre-Gaza Nguni settlements in the area, see, L. C. Meredith, 'Melssetter District-History of Native Tribes and Chiefs', *NADA*, 11, 3 (1976), pp. 338-341 & MacGonagle, *Crafting Identity in Zimbabwe and Mozambique*, pp. 2-4, 45 & 57.

¹⁸⁵ MacGonagle, *Crafting Identity in Zimbabwe and Mozambique*, p. 57.

¹⁸⁶ Meredith, 'Melssetter District-History of Native Tribes and Chiefs', p. 339.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p. 341. Also see, J. K. Rennie, 'Some Revitalization Movements Among the Ndaus and Inhambane Thonga 1915-1935', Unpublished paper, History of Central African Religious Systems Conference, Lusaka, Zambia, August 30 to September 8, 1972, p. 2 & Mtetwa, 'The Political and Economic History of the Duma People', pp. 169 & 172.

The first Mapungwana chief to settle in south-eastern Zimbabwe was Chimoto, so named because he is said to have discovered the fire-making technique of rubbing dried sticks together. Faced by Shangane raids in the first half of the 19th century, Chimoto fled to the land of the Duma. Mutogwa, his successor became so unpopular with his subjects that it is reported that nearly all of them left him until Muzunyi, the rightful heir, was restored to the throne.¹⁸⁸ The Garahwa people also settled in the area that later became the GNP with their kingdom extending into Mozambique. Chief Garahwa was later killed by the Shangane and his successor son, Chavuna, driven out by Gungunyana after accusing him of digging his father's bones probably for magical reasons.¹⁸⁹ Gudo's people, an offshoot of the Garahwa family, settled on a strip of land between Save and Mkwazine Rivers in the second half of the 18th century.¹⁹⁰ The Duma, Romwe and Rembetu were found west of Chiredzi River. After 1821, the clan suffered regular raids from the Gaza-Nguni.¹⁹¹

The Tsonga/Hlengwe

The name Tsonga was a 19th century Zulu-created term, pejoratively used to describe the people located north of Zululand.¹⁹² The people who became known as the Tsonga were originally resident along the east coast between Sofala and Nyaka (Maputo). They had advanced into the interior along major rivers of the area from about 1750.¹⁹³ While some Tsonga speaking people occupied the eastern corner of southern Zimbabwe, their larger population was found in southern

¹⁸⁸ Mtetwa, 'The Political and Economic History of the Duma People', p. 172.

¹⁸⁹ Meredith, 'Metssetter District-History of Native Tribes and Chiefs', p. 344.

¹⁹⁰ Mtetwa, 'The Political and Economic History of the Duma People', p. 65.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. pp. 65, 147 & 172 & MRC: MS 18, ZAKA, Report on the Gudo Chieftainship and Community: Sangwe Tribal Trust Land, Zaka District.

¹⁹² P. Harries, 'Exclusion, Classification and Internal Colonialism: The Emergence of Ethnicity Among the Tsonga-Speakers of South Africa', in L. Vail (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, (London: James Currey, 1989), p. 83.

¹⁹³ J. H. Bannerman, 'Towards a History of the Hlengwe People of the South of Rhodesia', *NADA*, 12 (1978), p. 486.

Mozambique and a smaller percentage in the colonial Transvaal Province of South Africa.¹⁹⁴ The largest of the Tsonga sub-groups that settled in and controlled the area that later became the GNP was called the Hlengwe (people of an unbearable place), so called because the area had limited rainfall and was a tsetse-fly zone.¹⁹⁵

There were four sub-groups of the Hlengwe: the Chauke, Mavube, Mbezana and Magumane. The majority of those who ended up settling in what became Rhodesia belonged to the Chauke sub-group.¹⁹⁶ At the time of European occupation, the Hlengwe of the Chauke *xibongo* were spread across the southern part of Chipinga District under Chief Mahenye, in present-day Chiredzi and Ndanga Districts under Chief Tsvovani, in what is now Matibi No. 2 and Sengwe Communal Areas under Chief Sengwe and in Matibi No. 1 in Nuanetsi District under Chief Chitanga.¹⁹⁷ Hyatt, cited in Bannerman, recalled that in 1896 there was also a Hlengwe community of the Chauke sub-group living south of Chivamba in Ndanga TTL.¹⁹⁸

Bannerman also documented that at the inception of colonial rule, there were scores of Hlengwe people living by the Runde and Save River junction in the present day GNP.¹⁹⁹ It shall be noted that at the beginning of colonial rule, the international boundary drawn between Rhodesia and PEA cut a straight line right through the old Hlengwe villages artificially dividing the same people and effectively bringing them under different colonial administrations.²⁰⁰ The arbitrary border did not,

¹⁹⁴ NAZ: S2929/8/4, Delineation of Communities, Nuanetsi District, Victoria Province, 'Tribes in Nuanetsi East', 15 March, 1973, p. 28.

¹⁹⁵ Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, pp. 16-19.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 18 & Bannerman, 'Towards a History of the Hlengwe People', p. 486.

¹⁹⁷ Wright, *Grey Ghosts at Buffalo Bend*, p. 118.

¹⁹⁸ Bannerman, 'Towards a History of the Hlengwe People', p. 490.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ J. Ford, *The Role of Trypanosomiasis in African Ecology. A Study of the Tsetse-Fly Problem*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 311.

however, stop cross-border movements of people and animals partly because it was poorly defined and inadequately policed²⁰¹ but mainly because the border inhabitants deliberately ignored it.²⁰²

The founding father of the Hlengwe clan was Matsena, of the Chauke *xibongo*. All Hlengwe chiefs of the Lowveld: Mahenye, Tsvovani, Sengwe and Chitanga and their headmen: Ngwenyeni, Chisa, Mpapa, Chikwalakwala, Vurumela, Samu, Gezani, Chilonga and Masivamele trace their origin to Matsena.²⁰³ Oral tradition has it that sometime towards the close of the 18th century, the Hlengwe of the Chauke *xibongo* moved from the coastal area towards the Sheshane River where they met the Sono or Hlungwana of the *Tihlaga* (Reeds) *xibongo*, another Tsonga sub-group. Matsena's son is alleged to have stolen the fire-making technique of the Sono. The stolen glowing cinder of fire was brought to his people in a shell (*humba*). The incident is reported to have sparked a war between the Hlengwe and the Sono which the Hlengwe won because they were reported to have grown stronger due to the fact that they were now eating cooked food.²⁰⁴ For his feat, Matsena's hero son was given the name '*Xinyori-xha-humba*' (he who brings fire in the shell) and so *Nzilo* (Fire) and *Humba* (Snail) were added to the Chauke *xibongo*.²⁰⁵ As a result, the Chauke people do not eat *humba* and if a Chauke burns his or her fingers, he or she is not supposed to put them in the mouth as such an action is tantamount to eating one's *xibongo*, *Nzilo*.²⁰⁶

Matsena had initially settled in an area that he called *svikundo* (place of small shrubs) between Galupo and Chitolo Rivers around 1750.²⁰⁷ His son Mangule later crossed Galupo River and

²⁰¹ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 183.

²⁰² Interviews with Mahenye community members along the Zimbabwean border revealed that the defiance went on throughout the colonial period and has continued in independent Zimbabwe.

²⁰³ Bannerman, 'Towards a History of the Hlengwe People', pp. 487 & 494.

²⁰⁴ For detailed accounts of the conflict between the Hlengwe of the Chauke *xibongo* and the Sono, see: Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* & Smith, 'The Peoples of Southern Mozambique'.

²⁰⁵ Bannerman, 'Towards a History of the Hlengwe People', pp. 494.

²⁰⁶ MRC: MS 22, Delineation Report on the Chilonga Chieftainship and Community, p. 70.

²⁰⁷ MRC: MS 22, Report on the Gezani Headmanship and Community: Chief Sengwe: Sengwe Tribal Trust Land, p. 106.

settled in an area between Chepfu and Dadache Rivers in the 1770s. Mangule's son, Zhari crossed Dadache and Lichangalimi Rivers and settled along the Mange River around 1830. One of Zhari's sons, Mihingo crossed the Runde at its junction with Pombadzi, conquered the Chivonja people and took over their territory in the 1830s. The other son of Mangule, Mavube, established his settlement south of the Save-Runde junction in an area straddling Marhumbini. The larger part of his area fell under Portuguese control at the inception of colonial rule.

Mihingo had two sons, Banga (Mahenye) and Chisa who were to found their own dynasties east of the Save-Runde junction between 1850 and 1870. Banga settled in an area that was to become southern Chipinga during the colonial period and there, conquered the Garahwa and Makoni of the *Moyo* totem. Chisa remained at the Save-Runde junction south of the Chivonja range near the border between Rhodesia and PEA until the 1950s when he was forcibly removed to give way to the full establishment of the GNP scheme.²⁰⁸ Another of Zhari's sons, Tshovani, settled by the Chiredzi-Runde junction around 1840 in an area part of which was to become the Hippo Valley and Triangle Estates. There, he absorbed the *Shoko* and *Dziva* and the Duma of upper Runde.²⁰⁹

The land in the south, between the Mwenezi and Chitolo confluence was settled by Xigombe, another son of Matsena who displaced the VaNyai of the *Shoko* totem and the BaVhezha of the area.²¹⁰ Xigombe's sons, Xikovele and Xingwauza expanded the empire westwards between 1824 and 1845. One of Xikovele's sons, Chikwalakwala settled south of his grandfather's old domain

²⁰⁸ NAZ: S3106/11/1/8, General Report-Sabi Valley, 1953 to 1955 & MRC: MS 18 Delineation Report on the Chitsa Headmanship and Community, Chief Tsvovani: Sangwe T.T. Land: Zaka District, p. 2.

²⁰⁹ Mtetwa, 'The Political and Economic History of the Duma People', pp. 66 & 72. Also see, G. Mazarire, 'Reflections on Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe, c. 850-1880s', in B. Raftopoulos & A. Mlambo (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe, A History from the Pre-Colonial Period to 2008*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2009), p. 31.

²¹⁰ NAZ: TH10/1/1/361, J. Blake Thompson to Professor Mitchell and Father G. Fortune, 14th June, 1958. For other occupation perspectives, also see, MRC: MS 22, Report on the Sengwe Chieftainship and Community, p. 100, MRC: MS22, Report on the Samu Headmanship and Community: Chief Sengwe: Sengwe Tribal Trust Land, p. 100 & E. Axelson, *Portugal and the Scramble for Africa*, (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1967), p. 281.

between the lower Mwenezi River and the left bank of the Limpopo River.²¹¹ Chikwalakwala's son, Sengwe moved further westwards along the Limpopo to establish his state between the Bubi and Mwenezi Rivers around 1850.²¹²

Xikovele's second son, Hokwanye, had a son named Mateke who occupied the lower Mwenezi country by the Mateke Hills. He was killed in a power struggle by his brother M'aimi. Mateke's son, Vurumela fought his uncle with the assistance of the Ndebele but was also forced, together with another of Mateke's son, Gezani, to move west and south to the Bubi and Malibangwe areas.²¹³ Xilovele's brother, Xingwauza, had two sons one of whom was Mpapa who settled north of the Chivumbulu Hills.²¹⁴ Ndalega, another Matsena offspring settled in Sengwe before his son, Chitanga, moved to the Mukume-Lundi junction area where he subjugated the Karanga of the area.²¹⁵ At the time of colonial occupation in 1890, his people also occupied part of an area that was to become Nuanetsi Ranch. The area adjoined what also later became the GNP.

The Gaza-Nguni phase

The Shangane were a product of the Gaza-Nguni incursions into southern Zimbabwe. They were led into the area by Soshangane Manukusa of the Xhumalo *xibongo* and Ndwandwe clan. Manukusa was a renegade chief of Shaka, who fled from Zululand with about one thousand warriors and entered southern Mozambique just around 1821. There, he founded his state through conquering the Tsonga, Hlengwe, Ndau, Chopi, Ronga and the Tswa of southern Mozambique,

²¹¹ H. von Sicard, 'Chikwarakwara Chauke and His People', *NADA*, 10, 3 (1971), p. 97.

²¹² *NAZ*: S2929, Delineation Reports Nuanetsi, Ministry of Internal Affairs: B. P. Kaschula, 'Report of the Gezani Headmanship and Community, Chief Sengwe, Sengwe Tribal Trust Lands', 1967.

²¹³ *NAZ*: N3/33/8, Vurumela Tribe. Bashlangwe (Hlengwe) People, Mtupo is *Moto*, undated, p. 12.

²¹⁴ *NAZ*: S2929/8/4, Delineation of Communities, Nuanetsi District. p. 29.

²¹⁵ *NAZ*: N3/33/8, Tshitanga Tribe. Bashlungwe (Bahlangwe) People. Mtupo is *Moto*, undated, p. 12 & *MRC*: MS 22, Report on the Chilonga Headmanship and Community, p. 68.

southern Zimbabwe and northern Transvaal.²¹⁶ His warriors married local women, thus, creating a solid ethnic group that became known as the Shangane, after Soshangane.²¹⁷ The new clan's language became interchangeably known as XiHlengwe or XiTsonga or XiChangane which was basically the language of the original Hlengwe with a strong influence of Nguni phonology.²¹⁸

Manukusa's reign lasted until about 1859 when he was briefly succeeded by his son Mawewe who was shortly after overthrown by a rival son, Mzila Sibhakuza Nyamande in 1862. Mzila governed his father's kingdom until his death in 1889 when his son, Gungunyana Umdungazwe, succeeded him. Umdungazwe's reign was short-lived as he became a victim of European imperialism six years down the line. The Gaza-Nguni had, before its demise in 1895 remained the undisputed overlords of the area that now constitute southern Zimbabwe.

The extent of Gaza-Nguni influence on the subjugated people has been a subject of intense debate. One school argued that Gaza influence was immense and lasting as the conquered were forced to accept a Shangane way of life. The school of thought submitted that Soshangane's conquest of local groups was so effective that many conquered clans proudly associated with their Shangane overlords.²¹⁹ Again, it was Omer-Cooper's contention that Gaza rule had such a lasting impact on the subjugated people that the conquered ethnic groups desired to be known as Shangane. They were said to have gladly served in the Nguni *impi* (army) and gave total loyalty to the king.²²⁰ Some Hlengwe are reported to have adopted lifestyles of their new overlords such as wearing the

²¹⁶ NAZ: N3/33/8, Tshitanga Tribe, p. 12, MRC: Report on the Chitanga Chieftainship and Community, p. 61, Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath*, Mazarire, 'Reflections on Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe, C. 850-1880s', in Raftopoulos & Mlambo (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe*, pp. 31-34, R. P. Warhurst, 'The Scramble and African Politics in Gazaland', in E. Strokes & R. Brown (eds), *The Zambezi Past*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), pp. 47-61 & P. Henning, 'A Summary of 19th Century Shangaan History' Unpublished paper, 1976.

²¹⁷ G. J. Liesegang, 'Aspects of Gaza Nguni History 1821-1897', *Rhodesian History*, 6 (1976), pp. 1-14.

²¹⁸ Wright, *Grey Ghosts at Buffalo Bend*, p. 118.

²¹⁹ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 196.

²²⁰ Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath*, p. 59.

Nguni head ring and piercing their ear lobes. Many adopted the language of the rulers and took great pride in being absorbed in what became the new Shangane nation.²²¹ Again, some of the conquered Shona-speaking groups changed their names and totems, re-naming their clans using the nearest Nguni equivalent; for example, the *Dziva* became *Myambo* or *Mlambo*, the *Moyo* became *Sithole*, the *Mbizi* became *Mhlanga* and the *Shoko* became *Simango*.²²² In another example of total submission, the Sanga and Dombo Shona groups of the Melsetter District are alleged to have abandoned their own language altogether in favour of the Nguni language.²²³ Stevenson-Hamilton, cited in Sparrow, was convinced that the conquered were assimilated in such a way that to be Shangane became a great honour and privilege desired by many.²²⁴

The contrasting school contended that Gaza-Nguni influence was generally overstated as it was basically negligible since the influence was in both ways and not always favouring the Nguni conquerors. Mtetwa, one of the proponents of the persuasion challenged the views of the earlier school asserting that their interpretation of Gaza influence was a mistake propagated by colonial academics of Rhodesia and South Africa. He alleged that such scholars were, apparently, confused by the loose use of the Shangane appellation at the beginning of colonialism and, so, assumed Gaza-Nguni cultural and linguistic impact on the conquered was enormous. Mtetwa contended that compared with their Ndebele neighbours, Gaza linguistic and cultural influence on their

²²¹ Among others, the views of the school have been presented by: Bannerman, 'A Short Political and Economic History of the Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye Dynasties', p. 6, MacGonagle, *Crafting Identity in Zimbabwe and Mozambique*, pp. 24 & 101, Mtetwa, 'The Political and Economic History of the Duma People', p. 160 & Mazarire, 'Reflections on Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe, C. 850-1880s', in Raftopoulos & Mlambo (eds.), *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p. 31.

²²² J. K. Rennie, 'Christianity, Colonialism and the Origins of Nationalism Amongst the Ndau of Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1935', PhD Thesis, Northwestern University, 1973, p. 15 & MacGonagle, *Crafting Identity in Zimbabwe and Mozambique*, pp. 54, 98 & 101.

²²³ H. F. Child, 'The History and Extent of Recognition of Native Law in Southern Rhodesia', *NADA*, 9, 40 (1963), p. 29.

²²⁴ Sparrow, 'A Lowveld Rite', p. 396.

subjects remained slight due to their low numbers.²²⁵ In support, Bannerman submitted that Shangane control on the southern Hlengwe groups was by no means complete as the clans were not total vassals. For example, while the Nguni language was encouraged among the subject people, many continued to speak their original languages.²²⁶ Gungunyana was known to have preferred speaking ChiNda, the language of his influential mother. Mtetwa was, therefore, persuaded to conclude that, in the Gaza-Nguni case, it was the Nda who assimilated the Nguni rather than the other way round as was the case in the Ndebele setting where the subject people were fully assimilated because many of the Ndebele women were Nguni speaking.²²⁷

So, while the Hlengwe, Nda and Duma borrowed many Nguni words in their vocabularies, they largely retained their languages and to some extent, their cultures. Mtetwa's contention was also that Gaza influence, though strongest in the economic and military spheres was absent in the political sphere.²²⁸ It, therefore, was a fact that the influence was two-way. What was disputable, however, was that Gaza political influence was absent for in order to exercise economic and military control on a people, the state had to first take full charge of the political sphere which point Mtetwa appear to be missing.

Inventing a Shangane identity

The term Shangane, as used in south-eastern Zimbabwe has been greatly distorted as the inhabitants of the area were not always known as such and do not all want to be known thus.²²⁹ According to

²²⁵ Mtetwa, 'The Political and Economic History of the Duma People', p. 157.

²²⁶ Bannerman, 'Towards a History of the Hlengwe People', pp. 489-490.

²²⁷ Mtetwa, 'The Political and Economic History of the Duma People', pp. 157-158.

²²⁸ Ibid, p. 161.

²²⁹ There is, currently, an on-going debate on the use of the term Shangane in schools in the area. Revisionists are arguing certainly rightly so that the generic Shangane term refers specifically to those people who were fully absorbed by Soshangane. The use of Tsonga is, therefore, considered broader and more encompassing.

Mtewa, the designation was first used by accident in 1884 when Richards, a colonial official based in Natal referred to Mzila's emissaries to the High Commissioner in Natal as 'Amashingani', the people of Soshangane.²³⁰ The appellation was, thereafter, loosely used on all occupants of south-eastern Zimbabwe and by 1900, had largely replaced Tsonga and Hlengwe.²³¹ Shangane and Hlengwe were then used interchangeably with Shangane gaining more prominence. At the commencement of colonial rule, the term found greater expression with European colonialists in both Rhodesia and South Africa. Because colonial administrators did not know who the exact Shanganes were, they ended up erroneously but probably expediently applying the term to all the people in the former Gaza controlled areas.²³² Again, while in Zimbabwe Shangane was accepted and used more liberally to refer to the Hlengwe people of the Lowveld, the Tsonga across the Limpopo refused to be known as such, considering the appellation an insult.²³³

The term Shangane was, therefore, a colonial invention arising out of cultural confusion. Its use on all the people of the Lowveld region was apparently incorrect and created a false Tsonga/Hlengwe/Shangane historiography in the 20th century much of which is, however, believed by the Tsonga and Hlengwe themselves.²³⁴ In reality, the designation should be used only on the direct descendants of Soshangane as strictly speaking, the Tsonga and Hlengwe were not

²³⁰ Mtewa, 'The Political and Economic History of the Duma People', p. 159.

²³¹ Rennie, 'Christianity, Colonialism and the Origins of Nationalism', p. 156. Also see, L. Vail, 'Introduction: Ethnicity in Southern African History', in L. Vail (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, (London: James Currey, 1989), pp. 1-7. The scholarship fell into the Ranger/Vail 'Invention Theory' genre; a school that argued that ethnicity in Africa was conveniently created by colonialists and their African intermediaries to suit the colonial jigsaw of dividing Africans and make it easy to govern them. For more on the 'Invention Theory', see, T. O. Ranger, *The Invention of Tribalism in Zimbabwe*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1985), T. O. Ranger, 'Missionaries, Migrants and the Manyika: The Invention of Ethnicity in Zimbabwe', in L. Vail (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, (London: James Currey, 1989), pp. 120-150 & E. Msindo, *Ethnicity in Zimbabwe: Transformations in Kalanga and Ndebele Societies, 1860-1990*, (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2012).

²³² Mtewa, 'The Political and Economic History of the Duma People', p. 159.

²³³ Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, p. 16 & Harries, 'Exclusion, Classification and Internal Colonialism', pp. 85-87.

²³⁴ Bannerman, 'A Short Political and Economic History of the Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye Dynasties', pp. 7.

Shangane.²³⁵ Just as was the case with the term Shona, Shangane identity was invented by colonial administrators aided by their African agents, missionaries, anthropologists and sociologists, and in the process, many Tsonga and Hlengwe acquiesced.²³⁶

In certain situations, the Hlengwe conveniently called themselves Shangane in order, for example, to obtain employment in the South African and Rhodesian mines. This was because Shangane employees were preferred to other ethnic groups for being willing, hardworking and disciplined workers.²³⁷ The NC of Chipinga's 1943 Annual Report was explicit on the position when it stated that Shangane mine boys were considered a cut above the rest by Transvaal mine employers.²³⁸ Again, as confirmation of its preference for Shangane employees, the Rhodesian government had during the early years of colonial rule gone out of its way to 'steal' the 'true Shanganes' of Mapungu in Mozambique and settle them in the south-eastern corner of Chipinga District so that they work in Rhodesian mines.²³⁹ The Ndau and the Duma also often dishonestly passed themselves as Shanganes to gain entry into lucrative mine employment.²⁴⁰

Late arrivals

The late arrivals into south-eastern Zimbabwe were the various Ndebele and Shona-speaking groups who had been evicted from their own homelands in the 1950s and 1960s. One group with

²³⁵ NAZ: S2929/8/4, Delineation of Communities, Nuanetsi District.

²³⁶ Harries, 'Exclusion, Classification and Internal Colonialism', pp. 83 & 87. For the Shona, and according to a 1924 NADA article (p. 17) written by Rev. A. Burbridge, the linguistic word Shona was imposed on the indigenous communities of central Zimbabwe by the colonial regime. The people were reviled by it- '*vanotinyomba*' (they are mocking us).

²³⁷ NAZ: N9/1/7-8, Annual Report, Ndanga District, For Year Ending 31 March, 1901. Also see related reports on the same subject: NAZ: N9/1/17, Annual Report of the Native Commissioner, Melssetter For the Year Ending 31 December, 1914, NAZ: S235/505, Ndanga District, Report of the Native Commissioner, Zaka For the Year Ended 31 December, 1927, NAZ: S235/505, Annual Report, Report of the Native Commissioner, Chibi For the Year Ended 31 December, 1927 & NAZ: S235/505, Report of the Assistant Native Commissioner Nuanetsi For the Year Ended 31 December, 1927.

²³⁸ NAZ: S1563, NC Chipinga Annual Report, 1943.

²³⁹ Mtetwa, 'The Political and Economic History of the Duma People', p. 160.

²⁴⁰ NAZ: NVB1/2/1, Assistant NC Bikita to NC, Particulars for Annual Report for 1917.

about two hundred and fifty tax-paying Ndebele adults which is documented in Table 2.1 was removed from the Fort Rixon and Godhlayo Purchase Areas of Insiza (Filabusi) District between 1952 and 1956 and settled in Nuanetsi East, an area on the southern tip of Matibi No. 2 Reserve.²⁴¹

Table 2.1: Showing tax-paying resettled Ndebele families

Name of Headman	Number of Registered Tax Payers
Mapolisa (Leader)	40
Matanasa	67
Jackson	54
Samuel	24
Manzini	38
Mtetwa	22

Source: MRC: MS22, Report on the Sengwe Chieftainship, p. 100.

Another small Ndebele group, belonging mainly to the *Siziba* (Pool) and *Mlilo* (Fire) totems found its own way to the Lowveld in 1952 and by special arrangement, settled in Ray Sparrow's Farm just by the Chiredzi River.²⁴² Evictions from Insiza District were only but a mirror of what was taking place throughout the country. Black communities were being moved out of targeted farms to reward white veterans of the Second World War.²⁴³ Wright bluntly stated that they were being moved because they were illegally occupying European Land.²⁴⁴ The irony of it all was that while these outsiders were being settled in the Lowveld, local Shangane residents were at the same time

²⁴¹ More on narratives of resettlement, see: MRC: MS 22, Delineation Report on the Sengwe Chieftainship and Community, p. 100 & Bannerman, 'Towards a History of the Hlengwe People', p. 492.

²⁴² Interview with Lydia Jilongo, Masvingo, 11 April, 2014. Also see, Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 6.

²⁴³ A large group of the Dumbuseya people were moved from the Fort Rixon area of Filabusi in 1948 and settled in the Pfumbi area of Mazetese in Nuanetsi District. They were of Swazi origin, initially brought into the Fort Rixon area by Mzilikazi during the Mfecane. See related reports: NAZ: S160/LS103/2/50, 'Movement of Natives 1951-55: Land Apportionment Act', Secretary, Natural Resources Board to The Secretary, Department of Native Affairs, 28 February 1951 & NAZ: S160/LS/100/3A/50-106/1/50, 'Removal of Natives from Bolo Farm: Insiza District', Native Commissioner to the Provincial Native Commissioner, Matabeleland, 16 January 1950.

²⁴⁴ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwood*, p. 200.

being removed from the adjacent GNP ostensibly because the area was considered unsuitable for human settlement. Such an argument smacked of double standards on the part of the government.

Table 2.2: Showing Karanga tax-payers moved to Matibi No. 2 TTL

Karanga Leader	No. of Tax Payer
Panganayi	91
Takunyayi	7
Mapfumi	9
Chifamba	?
Makechenje	?
Chinyatu	12
Vingirayi	11
Gwanetsa	19
Ranganayi	15
Mabande	16
Takawira	10
Kandira	11
Munyuki	9
Charuza	24
Matiza	8
Mabikwa	11
Gundan	14
Musakanda	13
Madhlavira	17
Gonakudzingwa	10
Jona	11

Source: NAZ: S2929/8/4, Delineation of Communities, Nuanetsi District, p. 29.

Table 2.2 lists the Karanga group of settlers that was moved to south-eastern Zimbabwe in the 1950s and 60s. They were moved from the Victoria Reserve and the Chikwanda area of Gutu. They were then resettled in the Matibi No. 2 TTL, an area already occupied by the Shangane and earlier Ndebele groups who were reported to be reluctant to share the land with the new-comers.²⁴⁵ They were to co-exist with the earlier groups under difficult circumstances.

²⁴⁵ NAZ: S2929/8/4, Delineation of Communities, Nuanetsi District, p. 29.

Indigenous people's co-existence with nature

At the time of European occupation, the dominant ethnic group in south-eastern Zimbabwe's Gonarezhou forest were the Shangane. They had over the long period of occupying the area fostered a special kind of relationship with their ecology whose value they fully understood. For the inhabitants, the forest was their permanent homeland and a place that supplied them with the daily needs. They got meat and fish from the forest, land for grain production, pastures to nourish their stock and fruits and vegetables to add on to their diet. The forest also provided them with other livelihood essentials such as firewood. Furthermore, Gonarezhou land was home to their departed and, so, a revered shrine for the living. Looking after the ecosystem was a shared responsibility with community leaders providing guidance on measures to be followed in promoting sustainable utilisation of the forest resources. These included controls on the over-exploitation of certain plant and animal species and the application of specific indigenous knowledge in the conservation of the flora and fauna of the Gonarezhou veld. The same elders also came up with rules of reprimanding those who broke the community management ethos.²⁴⁶

Indeed, the inhabitants of the Gonarezhou land had a wide understanding of the habitat they lived and worked in. Surviving in the forest demanded that they apply their elastic knowledge in the management of plant and animal resources of the veld. Their daily economic activities were regulated by a calendar whose months were named after the cropping seasons and the animals of the Gonarezhou terrain. January was *Hoho*, the month of joy and celebration of the ripening of the *nkanyi* fruit. February was *Mhlanga*, the month of the sprouting of the young grains in the fields and March was *Jubamsoko*, the month when the area turned green, if rains came. April was

²⁴⁶ Interview with Bava Mukwakwani, Mupinga, 18 April 2014.

Mkwekwezi, the month of the first fruits harvest and May was *Sandwela*, the busy month of reaping. June was *Sheremela*, the month of preparing for the start of a new agricultural season and July was *Konyane*, when the reaped grain in the storage huts was “ripe, dry and golden”. August was *Komkulu*, the month when trees are beginning to bud and September was *Sekanwane*, the month of keen anticipation when *marula* flowers bloomed and the “Shangaans feel the first pangs of their coming thirst” of *marula* drink. October was *Kanamkulu*, when the *marula* fruits were growing big and promising a possible big harvest and November was the month of *iMpala*, so named because it was the time when the *mpala* (antelope) bred and filled the bush. December was *Nkokoni*, so named because *nkokoni*, the wildebeest, gave birth to its young and by this event, the Shangaans knew the year was over and once again, eagerly waited for the merriness of *Hoho*.²⁴⁷

The Gonarezhou veld was pregnant with a variety of plant species that sustained the lives of the indigenous people in several ways such as providing them with timber, grass, reeds, medicine and fruits. Such plants were exploited wisely to benefit both the present and future generations. Trees were of great value to the indigenous people of the Gonarezhou land. The *xanatsi* (mupani) tree was the most commonly available. It was found throughout the open and grassy countryside called *imbaleni*.²⁴⁸ Its wood was preferred for hut construction and fencing because it was straight, tough and termite resistant. *Xanatsi* leaves were food for both domestic and wild animals. Its thick leaves provided good shade to the same animals as well as hunters. Again, its leaves had medicinal value if eaten green as they prevented cattle diseases.²⁴⁹ During years of drought, *xanatsi* trees survived longer than most other tree species, thus, providing valuable food to animals during critical times.

²⁴⁷ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, pp. 129-131.

²⁴⁸ Mavhunga, ‘The Mobile Workshop’, p. 65.

²⁴⁹ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwood*, p. 349.

Xanatsi tree leaves were also favoured by the protein rich *masonja* (caterpillar worms) which blossomed in the summer of each year and provided nutritious relish to the people.

The *simbiri* (ironwood) tree was found in abundance in the Runde-Mwenezi basin of the Gonarezhou forest and in the KNP across the Limpopo where it was called *lebombo*. *Simbiri* was one of the hardest timbers in Africa. It was termite resistant, thus, required no treatment before use.²⁵⁰ Because of its durability, it was used for the construction of huts, granaries and cattle kraals. It also made good charcoal. The Shangane also made strong hoe handles, wood ploughs and other digging instruments from the *simbiri* wood. In addition, the tree's juice was used as hunting poison and for pest control.²⁵¹ Again, its leaves were preferred by animals of the park. The tree was also favoured by the shade-loving tsetse-fly and it was for this reason that tsetse control measures of the 1950s destroyed most of the tree in an attempt to eliminate the bug.²⁵²

The *shimuyu* (baobab) tree served many purposes. It was fruit, food, drink and medicine for both people and animals. It was found in abundance in the *umsagari* (white sandy) soils of the Gonarezhou veld where it stood out lifting its "bloated trunk and tentacle branches to the heavens, like a grim old god of an ancient world summoning his vegetable followers to worship."²⁵³ *Mabuu* (fruits) were mainly eaten as fresh fruits. During years of drought, *shimuyu* seeds were collected in large quantities and pounded into mealie-meal. The roasted and ground up seeds also made good coffee.²⁵⁴ The leaves of *shimuyu* were also cooked to make relish during drought years. The tree barks were pounded into medicine that treated oral thrush.²⁵⁵ The Shangane used their indigenous

²⁵⁰ Interview with Shalati Chauke, Chizvirizvi, 23 December 2014.

²⁵¹ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 63.

²⁵² Wright, *Valley of the Ironwood*, pp. 51-52.

²⁵³ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 17.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 110-111.

²⁵⁵ Interview with Hlasela Maphini Ngwenyeni, Ngwenyeni, 24 July 2014.

skills to extract pure water from the base of the *shimuyu* stem and the hollow trunk also made comfortable sleeping quarters for hunters when away from home.²⁵⁶

The other useful tree of the Gonarezhou forest was the evergreen *mothoma* (ebony) whose dried and ground seeds made palatable porridge.²⁵⁷ The bark of *umtonto*, a deciduous thorn-less tree was used to construct canoes.²⁵⁸ *Toma* and *mkwakwa* barks were ground into powder that was used to arrest a running stomach (*kutshungula*). Elephants loved the *sheshengwe* leaf and the cows chewed it and gave it to their calves to treat stomach upsets.²⁵⁹ Shangane women induced the onset of delayed child labour by drinking a concoction made from the bark of a wild pear found in abundance in the Gonarezhou forest.²⁶⁰

The drought resistant *nkanyi* (marula) ripened in January and was gathered communally, thereafter. Shangane women made succulent wine from the *nkanyi* fruit. The hard nut was cooked and the residue sieved and left for some days to ferment into the sweet wine.²⁶¹ The nut was pounded to produce *timongo* (edible nuts) which were rich in protein and also had high oil content. The Shangane even named a season, *Mkanye*, in recognition of the importance of the plant.²⁶² Again, the *nkanyi* tree was significant in a Shangane home as it was under its shade that traditional rituals of appeasing ancestral spirits (*kuphahla*) were conducted.²⁶³

²⁵⁶ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 67.

²⁵⁷ Wright, *Grey Ghosts at Buffalo Bend*, p. 113.

²⁵⁸ St. V. Erskine, 'Third and Fourth Journeys in Gaza, or Southern Mozambique, 1873 to 1874, and 1874 to 1875', *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 48 (1878), pp. 42-43.

²⁵⁹ Interview with Hlasela Maphini Ngwenyeni, Ngwenyeni, 24 July 2014.

²⁶⁰ J. B. Blake Thompson, 'Native Herbal Medicines', *NADA*, 3 (1931), p. 94.

²⁶¹ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 22.

²⁶² *Ibid*, p. 129.

²⁶³ Interview with Munyamani Boyi Chauke, Chitanga, 2 August 2014.

Elephants also loved the *nkanyi* fruit and often travelled long distances to access it. They had, as a result devised an ingenious way of harvesting it:

They trample the ground smooth beneath the boughs. Then they shake the trees to bring the berries down, blow the berries into a heap with their trunks and eat them. If the berries are over-ripe and fermented the elephants will go home singing [dead drunk].²⁶⁴

Njemani, another tasty and highly intoxicating traditional brand of wine was made from the *kwangwali* palm. *Ilala* plants were also carefully nurtured for their value in wine manufacturing. The sap from the *ilala* plant provided what Bulpin commended as the world's tastiest liquor.²⁶⁵ Again, the drink was a favourite of wild animals like baboons and old elephant bulls who often 'stole' the wine from unsuspecting manufacturers as they had to leave it hidden in the bush for some days to mature. *Ilala* leaves were woven into hats, mats, bags and baskets. The plant was also used for thatching huts and as fodder for livestock.²⁶⁶

The indigenous people of the Gonarezhou landscape lived well on the fruits of the veld especially during times of food scarcity. They supplemented their diet with fruits such as *kwakwa*, a tasty wild orange-shaped fruit that had a pleasant scent. *Kwakwa* was eaten either in its fresh form or dried and ground into powder for later consumption.²⁶⁷ The Shangane also made some coffee drink from *kwakwa*. The seeds were dried on fire to give them a smoke flavour and then pounded and mixed with honey to make the pleasant drink. The residue from the process was converted into *xigutsu* (cooking oil).²⁶⁸ People and wild animals often competed for the *kwakwa* fruit.

²⁶⁴ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 90.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p. 128.

²⁶⁶ Interview with Munyamani Boyi Chauke, Chitanga, 2 August 2014.

²⁶⁷ *MRC*: OH/2/CHR/90, An Interview Between the Late Lisenga Tsvovani (Chief Tsvovani) (TS) Born C. 1919 and Patrick Ngulube (NG) of the Department of National Archives, Masvingo Records Centre, Assisted by Mr Alexio Muchena (MU), Cultural Officer in Chiredzi District on 05/10/90.

²⁶⁸ Interview with Munyamani Boyi Chauke, Chitanga, 2 August 2014.

Another common Gonarezhou fruit was *imbongwa*, an orange-sized and yellowish juicy fruit. Its seeds were fermented into some inebriating brew that was inordinately praised by a white traveller passing through Shangane land in 1878 as “a very pleasant wine, decidedly the best drink prepared by the natives.”²⁶⁹ *Timbyinda* (some wild plum) was another sweet fruit of the Gonarezhou forest. *Masala* were small, round and pumpkin-like fruits with a sweet smell and a pleasant flavour. The *shututza* (wild chicory tree) made good coffee. Other fruits of the Gonarezhou veld were *tinyii*, *saraji*, *mapimbi*, *zvikuhlorhu*, *kuwane*, *dasasandu*, *kolokotso*, *hlatshwa*, *madokomela*, *mahumbi*, *vhili*, *ntsengele* and *chechenyi*.

A variety of wild vegetables also grew in the Gonarezhou forest. Among these were special kinds of bush spinach called *nyapape* and *mowa*. These vegetables were delicacies when cooked with milk cream. *Chikowa* (mushroom) sprouted in the bush during the rainy season and the Shangane consumed it in its fresh form or dried it for consumption in summer. They also harvested a type of *marhakarhaka* (cucumber) that grew wild in the bush. Another vegetable called *gwangwate* was ground to produce porridge. Other types of vegetables that grew in the Gonarezhou forest were *guxe* (okra), *bangala*, *xidlasa*, *mirhoho*, *tsandzandlopfu*, *hlarho* and *kaka*. There was also a special type of *byanyi* (grass) called *monjo* that was a favourite of game and domestic animals. Other types of grasses harvested for thatching purposes were *limpfani*, *mbuwi*, *xilungwa*, *shajana* and *xisekwe*.

Special trees and plants were preserved for the important purposes they served in the community. Such trees included the *ntjopha* (wild custard apple) and *mkono*, which species the Shangane could not use as firewood as it was believed that this would invite lightning to strike the offending homestead. The *mudungulu* was also a protected tree as its seeds were ground to make porridge

²⁶⁹ Erskine, ‘Third and Fourth Journeys in Gaza’, p. 43.

during drought years.²⁷⁰ Again, people believed that the sausage (*mveva*) tree protected them from whirlwinds and many kept its fruits in their huts for such protection. It was also believed that when its leaves were soaked in water and then sprinkled on one's hunting weapons, this would bring good luck to the hunter.²⁷¹ It was also believed that random cutting down of trees would bring about drought or cause hailstorms.²⁷² Taboos attached to such trees and plants were certainly designed to conserve them.

Another useful Gonarezhou plant was the dark green *phalavurha* shrub whose rough leaves were used as sandpaper to polish the hunters' bows and arrows. The *mvimbangwenya* (that which stops the crocodiles) was a beautiful bright yellow flowered tree that grew especially along the Limpopo River. It was used as a warning sign of the moods of crocodiles. When the tree was in flower, the reading was that crocodiles were hungry and vicious. When it shed off its flowers, the people believed the crocodiles were less aggressive and then cautiously went about with their riverine activities.²⁷³ The seeds of a plant called *utsulu* produced a strychnine-type poison that had a deadly effect on animals when used on hunting weapons. When properly prepared, such poison was lethal enough to kill an animal or human being almost instantly. Yet, the local people had a cure for it. If someone was accidentally pricked by a poisoned arrow, his hunting companions would quickly remove the arrow, cut off the poisoned flesh, wash the wound with water and apply traditional antibiotics in the form of herbs.²⁷⁴

Indeed, herbalists used their knowledge of the bush to cure the people. They knew where to get *murhi* (medicine) for the treatment of different ailments and also how to prevent various illnesses.

²⁷⁰ Interview with Phillip Mbiza, Chikomedzi, 22 July 2014.

²⁷¹ F. McCallum, 'Venerable Trees... Sacred Trees', *NADA*, 11, 3 (1976), p. 295.

²⁷² Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 58.

²⁷³ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, pp. 171-172.

²⁷⁴ Erskine, 'Third and Fourth Journeys', p. 44.

Murhi was an antidote made from various roots of trees and plants of the area. Herbalists knew how to manufacture them into antibiotics. A good example was how they came up with a tsetse-fly preventive *murhi*. Domestic animals would be fed with a few dead tsetse-flies to make them immune to the fly through digestive familiarity. They also used buffalo dung to ward-off tsetse-flies. Mosquitoes were repelled by burning the leaves of a plant called *bhunga shunu* whose fumes drove them away.²⁷⁵ A snake bite was treated by mixing the bark of *sakwakwakwane* root with the snake's venom to produce the *butshungu* antibiotic. The Shangane had learnt about the cure from *manghovo* (mangoose), the medicine digger who always dug the shrub after a fight with a snake and ate the root as treatment for the snake bite.²⁷⁶ Such were some of the advantages of living in the forest area with wildlife.

Shangane economic activities in the Gonarezhou forest

The delicate nature of the Shangane environment forced them to practise a mixed economy right up to the time of their eviction from the Gonarezhou land. It was an economy based on hunting, subsistence crop production, stock keeping and fishing. The different sectors of the Shangane economy, thus, complemented each other and enabled them to survive in their generally harsh environment. The people used their indigenous knowledge, guided by the weather to determine which sector to concentrate on at any given time and in any given year. The coming of colonialism witnessed concerted efforts to interfere with these economic activities of the Shangane, This was done through either discouraging or criminalising them.

²⁷⁵ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 69.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 89.

Thus, the Shangane were content with what their environment provided. Admittedly, the area was a generally dry one with a good harvest coming only once after every three or four years but the people had developed survival tactics that saw them through *malembe endlala* (years of hunger). This made it possible for them to make the place their permanent home. The area was occasionally attacked by *timera* (locusts), *masengani* (mice), *zvingozi* (quelea birds) and *zvidhongoti* (army worms), which, in spite of their destructiveness came in handy as nourishing relish.

During *malembe endlala*, they also varied their diet by making porridge from some edible grasses called *bunga* and *mbavani*. They also ate roots of drought-resistant creepers called *mapfipfa*, *swisiri*, *shungwa* and *shukutsu*.²⁷⁷ The *mongwa* and *ndhungila* roots made juicy drinks. Cattle loved them together with another tuber called *zombwe*. People were often directed to the location of these tubers by cattle.²⁷⁸

Hunting

The Shangane were depicted by white chroniclers as a hunting clan that was highly skilled in bush craft.²⁷⁹ The position was graphically asserted by Erskine:

The [Shangane] tribe are essentially people of the bush, more so than others. In most parts of it they live entirely upon meat, and are like bloodhounds in the chase. Should an animal be hit so as to drop blood, they follow it, and sleep on the spore until they get it. They seem, like vultures to find meat apparently beyond human ken.²⁸⁰

Parker compared their hunting and tracking skills to those of modern soldiers: “they could track a buck over any terrain for days on end—a rare and valuable skill in our business.”²⁸¹ It was alleged

²⁷⁷ A. P. Jackson, ‘Ample Food Without Ploughing’, *NADA*, 7, 31 (1954), p. 63.

²⁷⁸ Group interview with the Kambako Cultural Club, Malilangwe Conservancy, 5 September 2014. The group also demonstrated how the roots prepared the drinks.

²⁷⁹ NAZ: N3/33/8, History of Ndanga & Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, pp. 82 & 126.

²⁸⁰ St V. Erskine, ‘Journals of a Voyage to Umzila: King of Gaza, 1871-72’, *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 45 (1875), p. 92.

²⁸¹ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, p. 208.

that every Shangane village and homestead had a trademark of a hunting people; the *vrha ne paxa* (bow and arrow). The Shangane were said to be such expert hunters that they could even kill an elephant with just one shot of an arrow.²⁸² Because of their meat-rich diet, and in typical white stereotyping language, the Shangane were portrayed as well filled people with rounded physical features “not found among natives confined to a meatless diet”²⁸³, presumably the Shona.

The Shangane hunters had wide knowledge of their hunting habitat. Wildlife education was imparted to all boys at an early age as a way of equipping them with life-long survival skills. Since hunting involved skilled tracking, the hunter needed knowledge on footprints of different game habits and movements. Shangane trackers, for example, knew that if they were to successfully follow the spoor of animals, they had to start off very early in the morning before dew had dried. Reading footprint signs was one of their areas of specialisation for they knew that if the prints were dark, it meant the animal (s) had passed that place in the night and if they had sharply cut edges, the animals had passed in the morning. The interpretation enabled them to estimate the possible distance of the animals being pursued with some relative precision.²⁸⁴

During pre-colonial times and especially before the advent of commercial hunting, the Gonarezhou forest had plenty of game. Animals of the forest included *mhofu* (eland), *mpfuvu* (hippopotamus), *mhou* (ostrich), *ngwenya* (crocodile), *ndlovu* (elephant), *malembe futsu* (rhinoceros), *manghovo* (mongoose), *hlokwa* (wild dog), *nyari* (buffalo), *khumba* (bush pig), *nkhota* (the white fronted bee-eater), *pfundla* (hare), *ingwe* (leopard), *mhala* (impala), *lithoho* (monkey), *isimba* (spotted genet), *halakavuma* (pangolin), *fenhe* (baboon), *ungulungundu* (warthog), *mungwa* (zebra) and *hongonyi*

²⁸² NAZ: S1194/1645/3/1, Secretary, Law Department to The Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Lands, Special Patrol, B.S.A. Police, Victoria District: August 5th to September 13th, 1932, ‘Game Reserve and Shooting’.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, p. 124.

(wildebeest). There were also *tinyanyani* (birds) of various kinds. The local people had, prior to the advent of commercial hunting put great effort in managing the animals sustainably.²⁸⁵ The position changed with the introduction of destructive commercial hunting from about the beginning of the 19th century. *Vhekenya*'s three hundred elephant kill was testimony to the plunder that came with rifle hunting.²⁸⁶ It is important to record that early European hunters heavily depended on the local African hunters' ability to decode the signs of nature.²⁸⁷ Thus, the local hunters became both mentors and accomplices in the decimation of the game of the Gonarezhou.

Pre-colonial hunting had been basically subsistence in nature as game was killed for fresh meat and for making biltong. Game killing was selective as the forest was a highly regulated workplace where the hunter had to abide by prescribed hunting rules.²⁸⁸ Shangane hunters, therefore, killed only enough game at a time to satisfy local consumption needs, which needs Bulpin mistakenly depicted as few but correctly noted could be fully taken care of by the forest.²⁸⁹ Since the indigenous people depended on the game of the forest for their meat needs, there was every reason for them to ensure its infinite availability through responsible harvesting.

The conservation of game came through the application of various forms of hunting etiquette. Mavhunga averred that the forest was certainly not a terrain that one could just blindly invade. Those who dared do so, paid dearly as they were bound to fail in their hunting endeavours. It was believed that the Gonarezhou forest was a place that could give or refuse to give products, depending on how one approached it.²⁹⁰ These were poured in abundance where the hunters

²⁸⁵ Wright, *Grey Ghosts at Buffalo Bend*, p. 109.

²⁸⁶ *Vhekenya*, as earlier stated was an early 20th century Gonarezhou poacher who had traversed the area and killed large numbers of both large and small game during his nineteen years of poaching in the area.

²⁸⁷ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 101.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.* p. 81.

²⁸⁹ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, 128.

²⁹⁰ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 12.

respected the hunting rules.²⁹¹ Hunting parties had to approach the forest through the *gagaos* (herbalists) for their blessings. During Mzila's time, a pre-hunting protection ritual called the *pahla umhamba* was mandatory on all hunting parties venturing into the Gonarezhou hunting ground. The procedure had the dual purpose of ensuring the protection of the hunters from the avenging spirits of the forest and directing hunters on which game to conserve.²⁹²

Shangane hunters were discouraged from killing certain animals and reptiles such as *mpfuvu* (hippopotamus) and *ngwenya* (crocodiles) as it was believed that their killing would cast bad omen on the people.²⁹³ Such beliefs also served the dual purpose of conserving the species. There were also times when the hunting of certain animal species was strictly forbidden, again, as a measure of controlling the over-exploitation of such animals. The killing of the *mpfuvu* was discouraged at all times as it was believed that it would cause drought. It appears the Shangane of the Gonarezhou veld generally respected the rule for a 1932 report on the population of the *mpfuvu* of Chipinda Pools in GNP noted the absence of alarm on their part when visited, an indication that they had been free from molestation.²⁹⁴ Under exceptional circumstances, however, *mpfuvu* could be killed especially for persistently destroying the villagers' crops.²⁹⁵

The crocodile (*ngwenya*) was a feared and respected reptile due to the belief that it was a tool of witches and wizards. As a result, *ngwenya* were spared from random destruction as they were found in large quantities in every large pool of the Save and Runde Rivers.²⁹⁶ When killed, under

²⁹¹ For hunting rules elsewhere in the country, see, Mandebele, 'Mandebele's First Elephant Hunt', *NADA*, 10, 5 (1973), p. 67.

²⁹² Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', pp. 77 & 128.

²⁹³ Interview with Esther Musesenyani, Chitanga 4 August 2014.

²⁹⁴ NAZ: S1194/1645/3/1, Secretary, Law Department to The Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Lands.

²⁹⁵ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 132 & A Correspondent, 'Native Tribes of the South, A Superstitious Race. The Fate of the Rain-Maker', *NADA*, 9, 3 (1966), p. 37.

²⁹⁶ Interview with Esther Musesenyani, Chitanga, 4 August 2014.

special circumstances, a crocodile would be skinned in the presence of the chief or his representative who would take the stone in the stomach near the gall bladder to use as *ndalama* (charm). It was believed that the *ndalama* gave someone a long life when swallowed. A dying chief known to have swallowed such a stone was always forced to vomit it before he died so that his successor would in turn swallow it and also live long. The gall bladder of a crocodile secreted a poison that could be mischievously used against enemies. It, therefore, had to be burnt in the presence of the chief or his representative to prevent its abuse.²⁹⁷

Crocodiles were also considered to be useful weather forecasters since they had a wonderful hearing capacity and would warn the people of impending floods by moving away from deep pools in advance of the heavy rains, as they hated floods.²⁹⁸ It was, therefore, believed that killing them would hold back rainfall. An interesting case, recorded by Bensusan was of a team of white hunters that killed one in the Sengwe area of Gokwe and took away its skin. Sometime later, a deputation from the village where the crocodile had been killed came complaining that they had not had rains since its killing and that until the skin of the animal was properly buried, they would not have any. After the white hunters had complied, heavy downpours are said to have fallen a few days later.²⁹⁹

There were also specific elephant hunting rules. A *muhloti* (hunter) who killed an elephant was supposed to hand over the tusk that hit the ground first to the chief. The chief was also entitled to the portion of meat on the ground side of the fallen elephant, a symbolism of the connection with the land.³⁰⁰ After killing an elephant, as was the case in other parts of the country, a *muhloti* was supposed to cut-off the tail to ensure it was really dead but also to prevent stomach ache after

²⁹⁷ C. J. W. Fleming, 'Systems of Land Tenure', *NADA*, 11, 1 (1974), p. 59.

²⁹⁸ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 168.

²⁹⁹ *NAZ*: S4061, A. M. Bensusan, 'Ingwenya', *Wild Rhodesia*, No. 17, October 1978, p. 28.

³⁰⁰ Fleming, 'Systems of Land Tenure', *NADA*, 11, 1 (1974), p. 59. Also see, Jackson, 'Native Hunting Customs', *NADA*, 1 (1950), pp. 39-40.

eating the meat.³⁰¹ During his reign and in recognition of the importance of the elephant, Mzila introduced some stringent hunting protocols:

Occasional elephant hunters, whether white or black in colour receive permission to hunt some of these animals only by considerable presence of guns, and of the trophies of the slain animals the tusk which touches the ground always belongs to the chief, whilst the other might be bought at a price set by the chief. When the hunt ended, he was to receive another present....³⁰²

It was crucial then that hunting, especially of elephants for ivory be controlled as the product had become an important state commodity that raked in substantial revenue.

The Shangane of the Gonarezhou forest employed various methods in their hunting, most of which were cognisant of the need to exploit game responsibly. The most common was the use of the *vrha ne paxa* (bow and arrow). This was a primordial hunting method used by most Bantu groups of Zimbabwe. The method was considered less destructive as its killing was selective. There was a time when Mzila restricted hunting to the use of the bow and arrow precisely for the reason.³⁰³

The arrows were barbed and often laced with *utsulu* poison to make them fatal. The *utsulu* bearing plant grew in large quantities in the lower parts of Ndanga and Melssetter districts.³⁰⁴ The steel-steeped arrow was darted like a missile at the targeted animal, with a lethal killing effect.³⁰⁵ After an animal kill with a poisoned arrow, the meat around the poison contact was quickly removed and the rest eaten, avoiding only the hazardous portion in the vicinity of the wound. Western

³⁰¹ Mandebele, 'Mandebele's First Elephant Hunt', p. 68.

³⁰² K. Mauch, 'The Journals of Karl Mauch, 1869-72', (Translated by F. O. Bernhard and edited by E. E. Burke, Salisbury, 1969), pp. 227-228.

³⁰³ W. Mhlanga, 'The Story of Ngwaqazi', *NADA*, 1 (1948), p. 70.

³⁰⁴ *NAZ*: S1194/1645/3/1, Secretary, Law Department to The Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Lands.

³⁰⁵ P. J. Odendaal, 'The Bow and Arrow in Southern Rhodesia', *NADA*, 1 (1941), pp. 23-24.

science disagreed with the reasoning behind, insisting that if the animal had been killed by the poison, it followed that the whole carcass was also poisoned and so, unsafe for consumption.³⁰⁶

The snare was another common Shangane technique of killing game without the hunter being physically present. The hunter would delegate the killing task to the snare while giving oneself more time to hound other quarry.³⁰⁷ Snares with loops made to specifications of targeted animal were suspended from tree branches. Animal victims were strangled and died painful and distressing deaths. This was undoubtedly a cruel hunting method as the snarer often caught more animals at one time than he could cart away. Controls however, were enforced by restricting snaring in certain areas and at certain times of the hunting season.

Associated with snare hunting was also the digging of pitfalls that mainly targeted big game such as elephants, buffaloes, elands, kudus, zebras and hippopotamus. The method was also destructive because of its indiscriminate way of killing game.³⁰⁸ Selous, the famous Rhodesian hunter, condemned it as unsportsmanlike.³⁰⁹ While the method was undeniably wholesale in its killing, it was only used sparingly, following the granting of permission by the chief.³¹⁰

The pits were usually dug in mountain passes and near water holes. The digging demanded considerable communal effort and time as it often took a whole clan up to six months to dig one trench. The pit could stretch for up to kilometres, with a depth, at times, of up to three metres. Sharpened stakes, camouflaged with tree branches and grass and, laced with *utsulu* would be planted at intervals in the trenches in such a way as to impale any animal that fell on them. Walls

³⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 24.

³⁰⁷ A. Thomas & F. Kolbe, 'African Hunting and Trapping Methods', *African Wild Life*, 24, 1 (1970), p. 49.

³⁰⁸ Mhlanga, 'The Story of Ngwaqazi', p. 70.

³⁰⁹ F. C. Selous, 'Big Game Hunting in Africa', *British Sports and Sportsmen*, 1914, p. 10.

³¹⁰ Interview with Bava Mukwakwani, 18 April 2014.

were then built to direct the game into the pass and those falling into the pits would be finished off with spears and axes.³¹¹ Hundreds of animals would fall into one pit and the hunters would, often, take up to days skinning the dead animals and drying the biltong.³¹² It was not always, however, that animals fell into these traps. Sagacious elephants often evaded them while hippopotamus hardly fell into them as they had a high sense of detecting danger.³¹³

The acquisition and use of guns in the 19th century introduced a highly destructive hunting phase which witnessed the extinction of some animal species in the Gonarezhou forest, a situation that also obtained in the KNP across the Limpopo.³¹⁴ Contact with white foreign hunters forced the Shangane to abandon their old practice of classical conservation hunting with the bow and arrow and joined the furore of game destruction through the use of rifles and muzzle-loaders which were more lethal in killing game. Hunting in the Gonarezhou veld became a joint effort with the European hunters supplying the deadly weapons while the Shangane *bahloti* (hunters), now transformed to *maphisa* (professional hunters) and *mpfumba* (professional carriers) providing bush knowledge and general ancillary support.³¹⁵ The combination of white rifle hunters and *bahloti* had a deadly effect on the game population of the Gonarezhou land.

Cropping

Early white narratives on Shangane agricultural practices were widely erroneous. The Shangane were, for instance, labelled as lackadaisical agriculturalists. It was claimed that their inability to

³¹¹ Selous, 'Big Game Hunting in Africa', pp. 9-10.

³¹² Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 83.

³¹³ Interview with Bava Mukwakwami, Mupinga, 18 April 2014.

³¹⁴ Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p. 8.

³¹⁵ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', chapter 5.

engage in full scale agriculture arose from the unsupportive nature of their dry region.³¹⁶ It was also alleged in the Nuanetsi Assistant Native Commissioner (ANC)'s 1927 Annual Report that Shangane failure to engage in agriculture was due to their indolence:

Apart from the purchase of 63 additional ploughs, natives are, with few exceptions, apathetic when efforts were made to inculcate them with more modern methods of agriculture, appearing to consider that the extra labour involved is incommensurate with the results to be obtained.³¹⁷

The ANC for Nuanetsi's 1948 report endorsed the above view and came up with further claims on the Shangane's supposed care-free attitude to agricultural production and life in general:

I feel...more pressure should be brought to bear on the natives to adopt improved methods of agriculture. The large expanse of virgin soils in this district, plus the natives' inclination to a very lazy form of life and indifference to the future, make it difficult to get all the enthusiasm one might wish for improvements that require some effort. ...To illustrate this indolence I mention that some weeks after the commencement to the rains in October the larger proportion of last season's abundant crops were still lying unthreshed and unprotected. No effort had been made by a very large number of the Shangaans to build shelters, grain huts or bins. Crops were simply left to the mercy of the weather and firm action was essential to get the necessary precautions. ...This unconcern of the Shangaans is difficult to understand when one thinks of the terrible famine that they have just experienced.³¹⁸

The bottom line was that Shangane men were not good agriculturalists and that they left most of the subsistence farming to their women folk as they preferred working in South Africa.³¹⁹

Interviews conducted by Wolmer in the Lowveld in 1999 propped up the colonial perception that Shangane focus on agriculture was a recent phenomenon largely influenced by the Karanga (Shona-speakers), now living with them:

³¹⁶ For the different perspectives, see: NAZ: S2929/8/4, Delineation File: Nuanetsi, Wright, *Valley of the Ironwood*, p. 201, Bannerman, 'Towards a History of the Hlengwe People', p. 493 & Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 82.

³¹⁷ NAZ: S235/505, Report of the Assistant Native Commissioner, Nuanetsi for the Year Ended 31st December, 1927.

³¹⁸ NAZ: S235/518, ANC Annual Report, Nuanetsi, 1948.

³¹⁹ NAZ: N9/1/17, NC Annual Report, Chibi, 1914.

A lot of the people in this part of the country are Shangaan and historically, they were hunter-gatherers. They aren't pastoralists at all; cattle and cropping is a relatively recent phenomenon...This part of the world had tsetse fly and malaria-humans and cattle couldn't survive-only hardened people like Bushmen and Shangaans. They moved on a seasonal basis to hunt game and moved into safer regions higher up (around the Zimbabwe ruins) and came down for hunting sorties. There is no ancient evidence of farming here. People were basically nomadic.³²⁰

The preceding views were certainly consistent with beliefs held by colonial agricultural administrators that African methods of production were wasteful, slovenly and ineffective and that if they were allowed to continue they would ruin the country's agricultural sector.³²¹

What is true in the foregoing statements is that the area had its own hazards arising from the unpredictable weather and peculiar bugs but what is mythical is that there was no evidence of cropping in the region. What was also not true was that the Shangane were lackadaisical agriculturists who lived a lazy form of life and that cropping was a recent importation. Facts on the ground spoke otherwise. Observations made by Potgieter, a Boer leader on the Great Trek in 1836 on the Shangane of Lower Nuanetsi gave a picture of an agriculturally-oriented community:

The climate is rather hot and there is little difference between summer and winter. Vegetables grow everywhere spontaneously and luxuriously. We were there in the month of July, saw all kinds of fruit in growth and blossom and got from the gardens sweet potatoes, millets and various vegetables. There is an abundance of water to irrigate the ground, and one might say not sufficient ground for the number of fountains....³²²

Elton's account of the land between Nuanetsi and Lipalule Rivers was more telling:

The land is highly cultivated, sesame, maize, hocus, sweet potatoes, tobacco, manioc, the castor-oil plant, the hemp plant and groundnuts being raised in great quantities...The district being rich and alluvial-wild cotton grows luxuriantly, large timber borders the river, and the crops adjoining the kraals yield abundantly-it would if colonised by

³²⁰ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 32.

³²¹ E. D. Alvord, 'Agricultural Life of Rhodesian Natives', *NADA*, 2 (1929), p. 9.

³²² Bannerman, 'A Short Political and Economic History of the Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye Dynasties', p. 14.

Europeans, rapidly become a fertile and important centre, monopolising a considerable trade with the interior.³²³

Junod's comments on the agricultural production of the southern Tsonga of Mozambique who were close relatives of the Shangane of south-eastern Zimbabwe were equally revealing:

As regards agriculture, it cannot be said that the Tsonga tribe is in a very backward stage. Tsongas, as well as most of the South African Natives, are essentially agriculturists, and they succeed in obtaining their food in abundance from the soil although it is not very rich. The variety of their cereals is indeed remarkable; but they have never developed their cultivation to any great extent, because they did not wish to harvest more than was necessary for the immediate needs: there would have been no market for a surplus.³²⁴

A Rhodesian Schools Exploration group that visited the Sabi-Lundi junction area of Gonarezhou on an educational tour in 1962 recorded that the Shangane were avid crop producers who literally lived on the soil.³²⁵ Oral testimonies of Mahenye community members confirmed the practice of winter cultivation of river banks (*gumbini*) to grow *xifake* (maize), *mandunghu* (pumpkins) and *muhlate* (sweet potatoes).³²⁶ The Marhumbini headman, Ngwenyeni Maguwu summed it all:

Our country [Marhumbini near Save –Lundi junction], it was marvellous country (sic). This was because we cultivated among the small streams along the Lundi River. During the dry spells we were always assured of having a crop. We could irrigate with water close at hand. We could grow pumpkins, maize and sweet potatoes.³²⁷

Again, early white travellers' accounts referred to Crook's Corner as a miniature Egypt because of its high riverbed agricultural practice³²⁸ and with some exaggeration, claimed the Lowveld land was "unsurpassed in fertility anywhere in the world."³²⁹ Other travellers passing through the Shangane country in summer reported seeing industrious people in the fields tending many

³²³ F. Elton, 'Journey of an Exploration of the Limpopo River', Unpublished paper, Paper Read Before the Royal Geographical Society During the Session 1871-72, London, Royal Geographical Society, 1873.

³²⁴ Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, pp. 31-32.

³²⁵ Report, Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society, Gonarezhou Expedition, 1962, p. 68.

³²⁶ Group interview with Mahenye villagers, 5 August 2014.

³²⁷ Bannerman, 'A Short Political and Economic History of the Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye Dynasties', p. 13.

³²⁸ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 71.

³²⁹ De Laessoe, 'Ordinary Meeting, August 28th', p. 122.

hectares of land under irrigation.³³⁰ Such travellers noted that the area from Mazimbe Village on the headwaters of the Chepfu down to the forests of Limpopo River was visibly green with crops. They, furthermore, observed that in a good season, evidence of the hard work was supported by the many *ngula* (granaries) that were filled with grain.³³¹ Such observations certainly testified to the importance of cropping in the area.

Though sounding somewhat negative, De Laessoe's report acknowledged that even with their inferior methods of cultivation, the Shangane producers still managed to raise two and even three crops annually from the land. The report noted that during the rainy season, the area was covered with mud-blackish soil and "natives appear to find the mud flats very productive and cultivate them assiduously."³³² They were also known to have cultivated crops along flatly drained river beds where the limited rainfall "soaks into the ground slowly, and the crops receive the full benefit of it."³³³ The missionary Wilder, quoted by Rennie, recorded that the inhabitants of Jobo near the mouth of Busi River had varied agriculture as they had the advantage of a lush climate that encouraged high production.³³⁴ In an earlier 1899 report, the Chief Native Commissioner (CNC) of Melsetter had noted great heaps of "kaffir corn" produced by the Garahwa people of the district after a good rainy season and recorded that because of the rich black soils of the area, the people rarely suffered from starvation.³³⁵ This was, again, a tacit acknowledgement of the key role played

³³⁰ Selous, 'Big Game Hunting in Africa', *British Sports and Sportsmen*, London, 1914, p. 8.

³³¹ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 150.

³³² De Laessoe, 'Ordinary Meeting, August 28th', p. 123.

³³³ *Ibid.*

³³⁴ Rennie, 'Christianity, Colonialism and the Origins of Nationalism', p. 136.

³³⁵ NAZ: N3/16/12, Report on Country South of Lichtheim's Block', Chief Native Commissioner to The Chief Secretary, 26 September, 1899.

by cropping in the mixed economy. The inhabitants of south-eastern Zimbabwe also grew drought resistant small grains such as *xibedlani*, *xitichi* and *gangala* to cushion them against famine.³³⁶

In extremely bad years such as the 1910/11, the 1926/27 and 1930/31 seasons, beside surviving on roots, *ilala* palm, and edible wild fruits, the Shangane also fell back on grain produced in previous seasons³³⁷, a confirmation of the production of surplus grain in good years to mitigate bad seasons. During such years, they also cultivated the drought resistant *manioc*. The plant was easy to grow and gave a large return in both quality and quantity.³³⁸ They also survived on an evergreen shrub called *umtshungutsi* from which they manufactured a sweet drink.³³⁹ Again, during drought years, they subsisted on *vuhlarhu*, a concoction made of hides and a fruit called *nhlaro*. The processing of *vuhlarhu* is described below by Jackson:

Hides were removed from any game animal snared, killed with the aid of dogs, or by carnivora. These hides were dried and after all hair had been removed by burning, boiled for many days. A sort of glue resulted and was poured into a calabash..., then the rest of the hide was returned to the fire for further boiling. The *nhlaro* fruit having been collected and dried is then stamped in a *duri* (wooden mortar) till the outside pulp is separated from the pip. This pulp is then boiled and the thick liquid squeezed from it and added to the glue already obtained. A chemical reaction apparently takes place and the mixture turns white. It is boiled and becomes of a consistency rather more fluid than ordinary porridge, but much thicker than the native porridge known as *sadza*...³⁴⁰

It is on record that the Shangane of the Lowveld region of Zimbabwe did experience drought every three or four years³⁴¹ but because of the local people's high knowledge of traditional weather forecasting, they were able to read weather signs well in advance of each cropping season and

³³⁶ For a detailed discussion of the production of traditional grain crops to mitigate drought, see, B. Tavuyanago, N. Mutami & K. Mbenene, 'Traditional Grain Crops in Pre-Colonial and Colonial Zimbabwe: A Factor for Food Security and Social Cohesion Among the Shona People', *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 12, 6 (2010), pp. 1-8.

³³⁷ NAZ: N9/1/15, NC Annual Report Chibi, 1911 and 1912, NAZ: S235/505, Report of the Assistant Native Commissioner, Nuanetsi for the Year Ended 31st December, 1927 & NAZ: S235/509, NC's Reports, 1931 Nuanetsi Sub-District, Report of the Assistant Native Commissioner, Nuanetsi, For the Year Ended 31st December, 1931.

³³⁸ De Laessoe, 'Ordinary Meeting, August 28th', p. 125.

³³⁹ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 73.

³⁴⁰ Jackson, 'Ample Food Without Ploughing', NADA, 7, 31 (1954), p. 63.

³⁴¹ Bannerman, 'A Short Political and Economic History of the Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye Dynasties', p. 14.

adjusted their cropping accordingly. As a result, they had over the years, managed to adapt their agricultural practices to the low rainfall by conducting shifting cultivation on dry lands and permanent irrigation cultivation on wetlands and riverbanks. So, while their land was admittedly a dry terrain, the occupants ensured they grew crops that were suitable to the environment at each given time and employed production technologies that were consistent with the dry veld.

So, if their annual agricultural production did not compare with that of their Karanga neighbours or meet the colonisers' standards, it was not because of lack of agricultural aptitude but more a result of the constraints of the milieu. Their supposed lack of interest and skill in agriculture was certainly overblown and deliberately misrepresented by colonial authors. In his 1914 report, for example, the NC of Ndanga recorded that out of a total of thirty nine ploughs in use in the district, thirty three were owned by the Hlengwe (Shangane) and all the five scotch-carts in the district were all owned by the Shangane.³⁴² In two earlier reports, the people's engagement in agriculture and adaptation to the modern plough had been noted:

The people inhabiting this southern area are the most advanced natives that I have met in Mashonaland. They are commonly called Shangaans, and, though living in the most remote corner of the district, are fast acquiring the benefits of civilization, without its disabilities. Ploughs are being purchased readily, the ordinary native axe has ceased to exist and every kind of European tool is found in the kraals... These natives are physically finer than the Mashonas and are far more intelligent, particularly in their ability to follow a European's reasoning and train of thought. It is noticeable that the Mashonas living among them have not profited in the least from their example.³⁴³

In agriculture natives are commencing to use ploughs... Hitherto ploughs have only been used by the Shangaans and natives of Matibi who have been continually in contact with the Northern Transvaal natives, but of late the Muklanga [Karanga] of the upper portion of their district have bought seven ploughs, and the other headmen are showing keen interest in the matter.³⁴⁴

³⁴² NAZ: N9/1/17, Ndanga District. Report For the Year Ended 31st December, 1914.

³⁴³ NAZ: N9/1/11, NC Ndanga to CNC, 31 December, 1908.

³⁴⁴ NAZ: NVC1/1/8, NC Chibi, SON 15 December, 1909.

It was also recorded that in Ndanga District, the Shangane were being hired to plough for their Duma neighbours for a fee.³⁴⁵ If the number of ploughs owned and the use thereof was anything to go by, one could only conclude that the Shangane had undeniably embraced modern cultivation methods much quicker than their Karanga counterparts and that, on the contrary, it was the Karanga who were learning the modern farming techniques from their Shangane neighbours. The evident abundance of *ngula* (granaries), *tshurwi na mutswi* (mortar and pestle) and *guyo na mbwanyo* (grain grinding stones) at every homestead was testimony to the importance of crop production within the community. It is, therefore, a fact that where conditions allowed, Shangane producers were easily adaptable and that in spite of drought constraints and plagues that regularly befell them, cropping remained an important branch of their mixed economy. Land for cultivation was abundant and quite a large part of it fertile and requiring no application of manure or artificial fertiliser. Mzila's move to Buchanibude, south of Mount Chirinda, for example, was a purely agro-technological decision as he strongly believed that corn would do well in that part of the country.³⁴⁶

The Shangane cultivated the fertile *ndzovolo* (basalt soil) and *nthlava* (sandy soil) which were ideal for *mahuvu* (millet) and *mpowo* (finger millet). The *seke* (salic alluvial soil) was good for *xifake* (maize), *mbowa* (vegetables), *makavathla* (water melons), *mandunghu* (pumpkins) and *muhlata* (sweet potatoes) while the *chilakataka* (black basalt soil) nurtured a variety of sorghum grain crops such as *maxalane*, *xibedlani*, *xikombe*, *gangala*, *xihumani*, *xitishi*, *xiponda* and *mutode*.³⁴⁷ The grains were ground into mealie-meal that prepared *dinditi* (thick porridge also called *sadza*). They were also fermented to make beer.³⁴⁸ The Shangane also grew *matimba* (sweet reeds) and

³⁴⁵ NAZ: N9/1/17, Ndanga District. Report For the Year Ended 31st December, 1914.

³⁴⁶ Mhlanga, 'The Story of Ngwaqazi', p. 72.

³⁴⁷ Interviews with elderly members of the Shangane community in the Sangwe Communal area in January and February 2015.

³⁴⁸ Ibid. Also see, Report, Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society, Gonarezhou Expedition, 1962, p. 70.

leguminous crops such as *timanga* (groundnuts), *tinyawu* (bambara groundnuts) and *tindluvu* (peas). *Liminga* (sesame) was manufactured into cooking oil and *fole* (tobacco) was produced along river beds. Every successful cropping season was celebrated through a thanks-giving ceremony called *mundada* which was presided over by the spiritual leaders of the clan.³⁴⁹

Stock raising

Early colonial accounts were in total agreement that the herding of cattle was not a prominent activity among the pre-colonial Shangane people. Such narratives alleged that the Shangane were bad stockmen as in the past, their cattle population had been kept low by bugs like tsetse-flies, rinderpest, foot and mouth disease and theileriosis.³⁵⁰ On the contrary, archaeological records of the Early Iron Age period pointed to the raising of many cattle in the Malipati Area of south-eastern Zimbabwe, Mapungubwe in north-western Transvaal and Manekwani in southern Mozambique, all areas within the historical fly belt of the Lowveld.³⁵¹ In support, Rennie proffered that the Gaza economy was oriented more to the rearing of cattle than to crop production, thus, dismissing the notion that cattle raising was a peripheral activity in the Shangane economy. Rennie noted the existence of large cattle kraals in all the major towns of the Gaza-Nguni state which were capable of holding thousands of cattle stock.³⁵² Because the state had gone to great lengths to acquire large numbers of cattle, it devised resourceful methods of protecting them by applying indigenous knowledge techniques to fight, for example, the tsetse menace. Such methods included the concentration of cattle close together, the eradication of nearby game and strict control of cattle

³⁴⁹ Interview with Mhlava Chauke, Mahenye, 4 August 2014.

³⁵⁰ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwood*, pp. 259-260.

³⁵¹ P. Garlake, 'Pastoralism and Zimbabwe', *Journal of African History*, 11, 4 (1978), p. 483 & Report, K. R. Robinson, 'Archaeological Report, Rhodesian Schoolboys Expedition to Buffalo Bend', Salisbury, 1961.

³⁵² Rennie, 'Christianity, Colonialism and the Origins of Nationalism', p. 136.

and game movement. In the 1860s, for example, Mzila ordered a dense resettlement of his people in the Msilizwe Valley close to him (*sondela enkosini*) in order to push the fly-belt back.³⁵³

In 1908, NC Howman reported on the high quality of cattle owned by the Shangane:

Cattle held by the Shangaans [the Hlengwe] are noticeable for their size and condition at all seasons. Many years ago, [after the rinderpest panzootic] cattle were bought from the Northern Transvaal, which were often cross breeds from Afrikaner bulls, the result has been a much improved breed. The whole of the Shangaan country is covered with buffalo grass [*Panicum coloratum*] and along the rivers are salt deposits, which the cattle eat.³⁵⁴

During Mzila's reign, there was a time when he decreed all pitfalls that had been dug by game hunters to be filled up as cattle were falling into them, another strong statement on the importance of protecting cattle in the Gaza economy.³⁵⁵ Shangane reluctance to sell their cattle at market places (*marhikete*) during the colonial period was, therefore, a calculated move to restore the cattle lost during several calamities that befell them as a result of the vagaries of the weather and recurrent attacks by plagues. Furthermore, since colonial occupation, the Shangane had developed a strong suspicion of the intentions of their colonial masters. Attempts to improve cattle breeds for sale, for example, were suspiciously viewed as a ploy to deprive them of their cattle.³⁵⁶ Goats and donkeys, also kept in large numbers were favoured domestic animals because they had a high capacity to survive harsh conditions. They could easily survive on shrubs and switch their diet to plants with small quantities of moisture such as twigs, bulbs and roots.³⁵⁷ Headman, Kapitene, on

³⁵³ For the Gaza cattle conservation methods, see, R. S. Roberts, 'African Cattle in Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe', *NADA*, 12, 2 (1980), pp. 86-87. For the application of similar tsetse-control methods in East Africa see, H. Kjekshus, *Ecology Control and Development in East African History: The Case of Tanganyika, 1850-1950*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1977).

³⁵⁴ Bannerman, 'A Short Political and Economic History of the Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye Dynasties', p. 20.

³⁵⁵ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 41.

³⁵⁶ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwood*, pp. 232 & 240.

³⁵⁷ Report, Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society, Gonarezhou Expedition, 1962, p. 68 & Wright, *Grey Ghosts at Buffalo Bend*, p. 45.

the border with Portuguese East Africa (PEA) kept many goats and Ngwenyeni also kept large numbers of goats and fowls due to tsetse-fly attacks.

Fishing

Innumerable fish, of all varieties, were found in the Save, Runde and Mwenezi Rivers, among others and the ponds of Chasuku, Tswele, Tembohata, Phokweni, Muguu and Chivhileni.³⁵⁸ That the Shangane of Marhumbini lived on fish was probably an exaggeration but certainly a confirmation of the importance of fish in their diet.³⁵⁹ At the Save-Runde Marhumbini junction, fish belonged to the Ngwenyeni paramount head and across the border in PEA, to Chief Mavube. On both sides of the border, permission to fish had to be obtained from the traditional leadership, a measure meant to regulate the activity and in the process promote sustainable harvesting of the resource. The position was acknowledged by Bannerman when he noted that “these primitive tribesmen” practised high level fish conservation by making sure that all under-sized fish were deliberately allowed to escape through the *mambule* (nets) during fishing.³⁶⁰ It was, however, interesting to note that, as late as 1968 the National Parks Advisory Board seemed oblivious of the fact when it bemoaned the adverse nature of traditional fishing methods.³⁶¹

Fish found in the Gonarezhou rivers and ponds included the barbell, tiger, bream, tarpon, hydrocynus, alestes, tilapia, melanopleura, placida, timossambira, labeo, clarias, cat-fish, eel and trout. The Shangane names were: *sihhiwane*, *mbayivayi*, *chimonze*, *likatya*, *kwelele*, *chinyabanga*, *hunga*, *mukunga*, *mulamba*, *musopa*, *ndaha* and *sila*. The cardinal rule was that if one caught the

³⁵⁸ Interview with Samuel Khumbani, Mahenye, 4 August 2014.

³⁵⁹ ‘The Shangani at Home, Life on the Banks of Lundi’, *The Rhodesian Annual*, 1 (1926/7), p. 71.

³⁶⁰ Bannerman, ‘A Short Political and Economic History of the Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye Dynasties’, pp. 40 & 47.

³⁶¹ Report of the National Parks Advisory Board for 1968 by the Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management to the Minister of Lands, the Hon. Philip van Heerden, M. P. p. 24.

tiger royal fish, it was supposed to be surrendered to *hosi* (ruler).³⁶² Fish were eaten fresh or dried over a fire, smoked and then salted before consumption.³⁶³ Fishing itself was an all-year round activity conducted by both genders. The height of the fishing season was in summer when waters were warm and breeding was high.³⁶⁴ Women and children were barred from fishing in deep waters to protect them from crocodile attacks. Their fishing was, therefore, confined to river banks where they caught small fish using *mambule*. Fishing, like hunting was mostly communal and a co-operative activity and the Shangane were known to organise annual fish hunts known as *tsheva*, whose yields were high.

A variety of fishing methods were employed. One of these was the wood-stake barriers where barricades were planted metres apart in the sand and supported by *tihlanga* (reeds) and *mambule* (nets). Up to thirty fish-mongers would hold the fences at the bottom in both hands and stretch from one end of the shore to the other and advance. They would then converge in a circle near the further bank and complete the catch.³⁶⁵ Bows and arrows were also used to particularly target mud fish. The use of pointed sticks to kill fish was dramatically presented by Cocksoft:

During the hot October month water holes are low and the thirst-crazed cattle rush into the pools in the eagerness to quench the thirst. Soon the water is trampled into black muddy fluid. The silver fish are in danger of suffocation and must come to the surface to breathe. A small ripple, then a mouth appears on the surface eagerly gulping the much needed air. A picannin [African] is standing quietly on the water's edge with stick upraised, then 'crack' and a stunned fish floats on the surface to be collected for a midday meal.³⁶⁶

Poisoning pools with plants called *tsokela* and *zombwe*, although often used was largely discouraged by community leaders as it indiscriminately destroyed fish in the pools.³⁶⁷ In later

³⁶² Bannerman, 'A Short Political and Economic History of the Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye Dynasties', p. 10.

³⁶³ Interview with Hlasela Maphini Ngwenyeni, Ngwenyeni, 24 July 2014.

³⁶⁴ NAZ: TH10/1/1/171, 'Re: FOS/95/28.8.55 Fish on the Lundi-Sabi Rivers S.R.', 22 December, 1955.

³⁶⁵ 'The Shangani at Home', p. 71.

³⁶⁶ I. G. Cockcroft, 'Hunting', *NADA*, 3 (1934), pp. 94-95.

³⁶⁷ Interview with Hlasela Maphini Ngwenyeni, Ngwenyeni, 24 July 2014.

years, those who had worked in South African mines brought dynamite which they then used to blow up fish. Again, while the method was a fishing innovation it was, largely, discouraged for its wholesale destruction of fish.³⁶⁸ The use of the rod and line came much later when the Shangane adopted white people's fishing methods and it was preferred for being a less destructive method.

The Shangane spiritual and traditional world

It is worth noting that pre-colonial Shangane people had a special spiritual relationship with the forest of the Gonarezhou. They believed in the spirits of the departed, although Blake Thompson alleged that they were not as obsessed with religion as their Karanga neighbours.³⁶⁹ The Gonarezhou forest was the resting place of the departed, thus, making it a venerated site of supplication that had to be respected and protected at all times.³⁷⁰ Offerings at ancestral burial places (*ntimu*) were conducted by the *mutameli we ntimu* (guardian of the cemetery). People were not allowed to cut down trees, collect firewood, herd stock, burn fires nor enter the *ntimu* areas without permission. It was believed that mysterious happenings occurred at these places and the people avoided them as a sign of respect but also in fear of the alleged strange happenings.³⁷¹ The Gonarezhou veld had many such sacred places where unexplained sounds of crying babies, singing and drumming were often heard at night and early in the morning.³⁷² The fear and respect of these *ntimu* resulted in their conservation and the subsequent blossoming of the vegetation of the places. It was believed that if the burial places were properly looked after, the departed ancestors would in turn be obliged to protect the living and provide them with abundant food from the forest.

³⁶⁸ Group interview with Chibwedziva villagers, June 2014.

³⁶⁹ NAZ: TH10/1/1/361, J. Blake Thompson to Professor Mitchell & Father G. Fortune, 14th June, 1958.

³⁷⁰ MacGonagle, *Crafting Identity in Zimbabwe and Mozambique*, p. 85.

³⁷¹ J. E. S. T. 'Spirit Trees', NADA, 1 (1936/7), pp. 33-35.

³⁷² Interview with Game Ranger (anonymous), Chipinda Pools Sub-station, 15 April 2014.

The Nyamatongwe sacred hill inside the park was one such revered shrine. The spirits of Nyamatongwe had to be placated on a regular basis to prevent misfortunes from befalling the community. The hill was also the home of *Shikwembu* (God). *Shikwembu*, working with *mikwembu* (spirits) was responsible for protecting local residents from all dangers at all times.³⁷³ The *mikwembu* of *Mapokole* (Gonakudzingwa) took care of the living through providing for rainfall, soil fertility, hunting success, wealth accumulation and protection from evil spirits.³⁷⁴ The places where *mikwembu* resided were very welcoming if one entered them with their permission but one could get lost (*kudzimira*) or go mad if he or she did not *hlonipa* (revere) these places.³⁷⁵ In situations where *mikwembu* were aggrieved, they had to be appeased through cleansing rituals called *kuhanda kelekele*.³⁷⁶

The Gonarezhou forest was also a place for Shangane traditional practices such as *kuchineliwa* (male) and *khomba* (female) rites of passage. The male circumcision rite, also called *ngoma* or *hoko* was conducted on boys who had reached puberty. The initiation programme took place in isolated and thickly forested riverine areas in the Gonarezhou bush.³⁷⁷ The initiates were quarantined for between four and eight weeks and, during that time, went through a rigorous curriculum that covered lessons on endurance, moral behaviour, discipline, obedience and many responsibilities such as imparting of hunting skills.³⁷⁸ On completion, graduates assumed new names signifying their changed statuses. Graduation ceremonies were accompanied by days of celebration during which time many beasts were slaughtered and night dances conducted.

³⁷³ NAZ: TH10/1/1/182, Thompson to Summers, 'Re-Nyanomotongwi Ruins', December, 1955.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ NAZ: TH10/1/1/156, Thompson to Summers, 'Re-Nyanomotongwi Ruins', 25 August, 1955.

³⁷⁶ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, pp. 60-61.

³⁷⁷ MRC: OH/2/CHR/90, An Interview Between the Late Lisenga Tsvovani (Chief Tsvovani) (TS) Born C. 1919 and Patrick Ngulube (NG) of the Department of National Archives. Also see, Sparrow, 'A Lowveld Rite', p. 394.

³⁷⁸ NAZ: S1194/1645/3/1, Secretary, Law Department to The Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Lands.

Owing to lack of accurate information, the age-old practice was wrongly judged by some colonial administrators as some barbaric form of torture conducted by crude surgeons of the clan, under unhygienic conditions and for monetary gains. The accidental deaths that often occurred in the initiation schools were used to confirm the barbarity of the practice.³⁷⁹ The accusation was without basis as the process was conducted by experienced specialists called *vaxeki* who were paid only a token of appreciation for the services they provided. The deaths that often occurred were a result of pure surgery accidents. These were, again, isolated cases.³⁸⁰ The circumcision practice has continued among the Shangane of Zimbabwe and neighbouring countries.

The female *kukomba* rite of passage, also called *yisa matini* was conducted on girls who had reached puberty. Aunts (*hahani*) played critical roles in the training of initiates. The trainee girls would choose adopted mothers to *rhilela ka yena* (share their problems with). In the absence of adequate information on what exactly took place in such schools, the same colonial administrators, again, jumped to wrong conclusions when they labelled the rite as some primitive practice designed to take the pleasure out of sexual activities.³⁸¹ On the contrary, the girls were taught how to bring more pleasure to the sexual act. They were also given lessons on how to run families.³⁸²

Colonial perceptions about the land and the people

As background to the eviction of the Shangane from the Gonarezhou land, it is imperative to understand colonial perceptions of the land and people of south-eastern Zimbabwe. Much of early white representation of the area, which belonged to the Dark Continent genre, emphasised its perceived murky side. For example, early hunters and explorers labelled the landscape a place of

³⁷⁹ NAZ: TH10/1/1/387, Thompson to Chaplin, 20th December, 1958 & Wright, *Grey Ghosts at Buffalo Bend*, p. 119.

³⁸⁰ Interview with Gezani Chauke, Muteyo, 23 December 2014.

³⁸¹ NAZ: S2929/8/4, Delineation of Communities, Nuanetsi, p. 29 & Wright, *Valley of the Ironwood*, p. 201.

³⁸² Interview with Gezani Chauke, Muteyo, 23 December 2014.

mystique, savagery, intrigue and danger while colonial administrators regarded it as a drought ravaged barren place riddled with disease that had to be tamed by white colonisers.³⁸³ In addition, these chroniclers branded the land as a place of adventurers and outlaws who made a living out of illegal activities. Furthermore, they condemned it as bushy and, so, unfit for human settlement.³⁸⁴

The position was lucidly expressed by an English transport provider, Hyatt as follows:

The low bush veld is simply deadly in its monotony. Practically the only tree you find in it is the Mopani, and, though the soil is red sand and the leaves are rather bright green, the general impression you get is that everything is a horrible, dull grey.³⁸⁵

Another early traveller, Erskine considered it inhospitable because it was largely barren; “I had heard of the Hlenga [Hlengwe] country as a term synonymous with thirst and hunger, and every privation pertaining to a desert: but until now I had not realised their proximity.”³⁸⁶

Bulpin, another avowed champion of colonialism labelled the land and its inhabitants barbaric without substantiating. He wrote:

The Wilderness in which Bvekenya [Vhekenya] hunted, between the Great Save and Limpopo, from the Rhodesian border down to within fifty miles of the sea, was known to the Shangaans as Hlengwe (the place where you need help). It was a place where terror dwelt: a haunt of the wild animals, of sudden death, of an ancient savagery, and the nameless ghosts of strange gods whose lore and rites were half-forgotten. The tribes people who lived in this desert of bush and sand and swamp were a wild, poverty-stricken and unruly lot. They were sparsely scattered in the bush. The animals, fever, drought, hunger and their own passions kept their numbers down. Foul murders and dreadful barbarities marked the passing of their days, while the spectre of witchcraft haunted their thoughts like a continuous and horrible nightmare.³⁸⁷

³⁸³ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, pp. 2 & 26.

³⁸⁴ NAZ: S914/12/1B, Report on area in Crown Lands Between Matibi No. 2 Native Reserve and Portuguese East Africa Border Line: Re-Game Reserve. B. V. Brewer.

³⁸⁵ S. P. Hyatt, *The Old Transport Road*, (London: Andrew Melrose, 1917), p. 132.

³⁸⁶ St. V. Erskine, ‘Five Journeys of Exploration in South-Eastern Africa’. *Manuscript, Royal Geographical Society Archives*, 2nd Journey, (1890), p. 12.

³⁸⁷ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 121.

The CNC's comment on the possible declaration of the Gonarezhou land as a game reserve was equally gloomy:

Away from the big rivers there is little scenery of interest. There are palm trees in some of the shallow valleys, and broken hilly country to the South East of Chipinda Pools. But the vast bulk of the area is very flat, dry and uninteresting country.³⁸⁸

Similarly, Stockil, a renowned Chiredzi farmer and politician described south-eastern Zimbabwe as a harsh and tough place to live in, “a white man's grave.”³⁸⁹

The inhabitants of the area were not spared either as they suffered all sorts of stereotypes, most of which were born out of a limited understanding of these people. Zimbabwean colonial historiography was replete with such typecasting some of which persisted into independence wherein the Shangane continued to be referred to as primitive. A typical unsubstantiated characterisation of the Shangane inhabitants of the southern Zimbabwe was presented by Hyatt when he judged them to be of low class because of what he termed their dull environment, stating: “The kraals are in keeping with the scenery, and the natives, who are mainly the M'Hlengwi [Hlengwe], a very low race, suit their surroundings admirably.”³⁹⁰ Again, in typical colonial unfounded branding style, he went on to allege that the local “heathen” were a dangerous lot who were always on the verge of a revolt.³⁹¹

The occupants of south-eastern Zimbabwe were, thus, harshly judged as backward, warlike, obstinate and arrogant³⁹² and their chiefs as a drunken lot with their brains always pickled in spirits.³⁹³ Such blanket accusations were weirdly buttressed by the citation of a few isolated cases.

³⁸⁸ NAZ: S1542/G1/1, CNC to the Minister of Commerce and Transport, 13 November 1933.

³⁸⁹ *The Sunday Mail*, 12 January 1964, ‘Stockil-A Man of Vision and Drive’.

³⁹⁰ Hyatt, *The Old Transport Road*, 1917, p. 132.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*

³⁹² Bannerman, ‘Towards a History of the Hlengwe People’, p. 493.

³⁹³ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 122.

For example, the 1901 Annual NC's Report (Ndanga) alleged that the Shangane tended to drink to excess in seasons of good harvests as was the case with Tsvovani's people in 1900.³⁹⁴ Jackson also claimed that following a good harvest, the Shangane of Nuanetsi District would organise one beer party after another and the adult population would live "in an almost continuous stupor for months on end."³⁹⁵ In another case, a colonial official who visited Marhumbini on 24 June 1967 reported to have found the people, including the headman, dead drunk as early as 0900 and his conclusion was that such behaviour seemed typical of the sort of life they were content to lead.³⁹⁶ The bottom line was to show why the so-called poor landscape was not good for these 'miserable' people who were to be relocated to better areas for their good and allow the Gonarezhou land to blossom into a game area.

Such thinking was tailored to fit into the worthlessness viewpoint that labelled the Gonarezhou land as a vast uninhabited and uninhabitable bush that was not good for anything except game.³⁹⁷ It was a point of view that claimed that most of the land which later became the GNP had been unoccupied except for small groups of Shangane people living along the major rivers of Save, Runde and Mwenezi.³⁹⁸ Earlier, in his 1900 Annual Report, the NC of Chibi, Peter Forestall had referred to the country between the Tuli-Victoria road and the Portuguese border as waterless and uninhabitable, a place where no meaningful cultivation could be done except along river banks.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁴ NAZ: N9/1/7-8, Annual Report, Ndanga District, For Year Ending 31 March, 1901.

³⁹⁵ Jackson, 'Ample Food Without Ploughing', p. 62.

³⁹⁶ MRC: MS 22 Delineation Report on the Ngwenyenye or Marumbini Headmanship and Community: Chief Chitanga: Gona re Zhou National Land, p. 89.

³⁹⁷ Report of the Director of National Parks and Wildlife Management, 1979-80 to Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism, the Hon. Victoria Chitepo, (by Dr G. F. T. Child), p. 21.

³⁹⁸ De Laessoe, 'Ordinary Meeting, August 28th', p. 123 & Zimbabwe National Parks and Wild Life Conservation Fund, p. 9.

³⁹⁹ NAZ: N3/24/2-4, NC Chibi to CNC, 'Re: Native Reserves', 4 August, 1900. Peter Forestall, nicknamed *Ndambakuwa* by the local Karanga was appointed as the first NC of Chibi, which area included the Lowveld on 1 September 1896. He worked in the vast district and during his tour of duty, earned himself the reputation of having a ravenous appetite for African women.

He noted what he called dotted villages as those belonging to Tshitanga (Chitanga) with three hundred and forty one huts, Tshironga (Chilonga) with thirty three huts, Masuvamele with thirty six huts, Maranda with five hundred and seven huts and Sengwe with one hundred and six huts.⁴⁰⁰

In an earlier 1898 report the NC had, again, noted sparsely populated Tshikwarakwara (Chikwalakwala) “kraals” near the Portuguese border.⁴⁰¹ Reserve No. 2, an area extending from Lundi down to Nuanetsi River was also described as large but again, uninhabitable due to the hostile climate and tsetse-fly infestation.⁴⁰² Forestall reported that the uninhabitable part of the area adjoining the Nuanetsi and Lundi Rivers was well stocked with game of all varieties and because it was not fit for any cultivation, it could as well “be utilized as a Game Reserve”.⁴⁰³ NC Forestall then suggested that all the people in the area be moved to more habitable places.

Later reports continued to emphasise the need to remove the so-called small groups of Shangane from the area. As late as 1958, Wright still referred to the existence of a few groups of the Shangane still living along river beds of the veld and yet he labelled the same terrain as baboon country that European settlers were not interested in.⁴⁰⁴ The 1961 Rhodesian Agro-economic Survey, cited in Bannerman, noted that the southern Lowveld area of the country was certainly unsuitable for cropping of any nature.⁴⁰⁵ Chavhunduka weighed in when he suggested that tsetse-flies and other diseases of the area made the Gonarezhou land unsuitable for human habitation.⁴⁰⁶ Again,

⁴⁰⁰ NAZ: N3/24/2-4, NC Chibi to CNC, ‘Re: Native Reserves’, 4 August, 1900.

⁴⁰¹ NAZ: N3/24/2-4, NC to CNC, ‘Boundaries of Native Reserves’, March 5, 1898.

⁴⁰² NAZ: N3/24/2-4, NC Chibi to CNC, June 27, 1900.

⁴⁰³ NAZ: N3/24/2-4, NC Chibi to CNC, ‘Re: Native Reserves’, 4 August, 1900. This pointed to the Rhodesian government’s interest in turning the area into a game reserve which came not long after occupation.

⁴⁰⁴ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp. 26 & 249.

⁴⁰⁵ Bannerman, ‘Hlengweni’, p. 483.

⁴⁰⁶ NAZ: S4061, D. Chavhunduka, ‘Is There a Future for National Parks in Zimbabwe’, p. 14.

Saunders declared that all Rhodesian park-designated areas were intrinsically unsuitable for conventional agriculture and unvaryingly characterised them as an:

...unagricultural mosaic of Kalahari sands, inhospitable escarpment, stony ground, shallow erodible soils, poor water supplies-yet prime wild life habitat which deserves protection from cow and plough in order that it might survive and flourish and yield in perpetuity for our people.⁴⁰⁷

The underlying point was that because there were a few people resident in the climatically hostile area of the Gonarezhou, the government would have done them a favour if it relocated them to less hostile areas and, conveniently converted the ‘inhospitable’ area into a game reserve. This was in spite of the fact that the indigenous people of the area were content to remain in their ancestral lands which they had occupied since *kale kale* (a long time ago).

Conclusion

Chapter 2 traced and located the various indigenous communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe in their landscape in the period before colonial occupation and during the early colonial period. It revealed that at the inception of colonial rule, the country had largely become the home of the Shangane who were themselves a product of fusion with various earlier ethnic groups of the area. The chapter has shown that in spite of the various physical and natural barriers of the area, the Shangane had over the many years of occupying the veld managed to successfully adapt to the climate of the area and made the Gonarezhou forest a permanent habitable place.

The chapter has also shown how the Shangane inhabitants of the area skilfully used their indigenous knowledge to relate to and reap the best from their veld. It has also shown how the same knowledge was used to manage a mixed economy. Furthermore, it has illustrated how the

⁴⁰⁷ NAZ: S4061, C. Saunders, ‘Wildlife and the N. R. B’, pp. 24-25.

local people managed to benefit from the fauna and flora of the Gonarezhou milieu through applying responsible environmental practices, thus, refuting the colonial claim that pre-colonial management systems were unfriendly to the environment. The chapter has also revealed the special spiritual relationship that existed between the people and their forest by showing how the departed ancestors are supposed to have kept a watchful eye on the living who revered the forest. Furthermore, the chapter has uncovered a range of differing perspectives on the meaning of the south-eastern Lowveld landscape and its inhabitants particularly that it was unsuitable for human settlement but for game. Such exposition has provided some useful background to the eviction debate, which is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: FIGHTING EVICTION FROM THE PROTECTED AREA

Introduction

The occupation of Zimbabwe by the British South African Company (BSAC) at the turn of the 20th century had far-reaching consequences on how it governed areas such as south-eastern Zimbabwe. The hallmark of the colonial state was undoubtedly the dispossession of land from indigenous communities of the country. In the Lowveld area of southern Zimbabwe, it meant the displacement of the mainly Shangane communities from their Gonarezhou homeland and their resettlement into peripheral areas adjoining the newly created park. Various pieces of legislation were enacted and applied from 1934 onwards to facilitate the removal and give way to the establishment of a game reserve. The process was a long and odious one that took the efforts of many players and up to 1968 to accomplish. The reason was mostly because the communities that were targeted for eviction were least cooperative as they contested the displacement.

This chapter addresses three broad and interrelated issues: the establishment of the GNP, resistance to eviction from the park and the effects of exclusion from the park. It begins by exploring how the administration of south-eastern Zimbabwe during the period leading to its declaration as a game reserve in 1934 set the stage for contestation by the indigenous people of the area. It then examines how the once-predominantly African landscape changed its identity through the changed land use. It, furthermore, looks at the implications of various land designations in relation to the livelihoods of the residents of southern Zimbabwe. This chapter connects well with the previous one that discussed how the local people's lives were dependent on a veld that was now the subject of contest. The chapter scrutinises the repercussions of the LAA on land alignments in the Lowveld. By doing so, it traces the colonial land dynamics that led to the proclamation of south-

eastern Zimbabwe as a game reserve in 1934. The discussion is then placed in the broader context of land alienation and African reaction to colonial land dispossession. The chapter, furthermore, probes the various forms of indigenous responses to expulsion from the GNP. In the discussion, Shangane clans such as the Chisa, Ngwenyeni and Xilotlela are singled out as case studies to illustrate the different forms of indigenous responses.

The chapter also immerses itself into debates surrounding the putting up of exclusive fences and related discriminatory game legislation. Particular attention is devoted to how such policies generated extreme bitterness to the game scheme, which anger contributed in transforming the local people into insubordinate subjects of the colonial state and strong opponents of the game reserve project. The chapter concludes by examining the impact of eviction on the various communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe during the period of their displacement. Chapter 3, thus, places the area under study within the broader context of the economic history of colonial Zimbabwe. It draws heavily from archival sources especially on reports of colonial administrators.

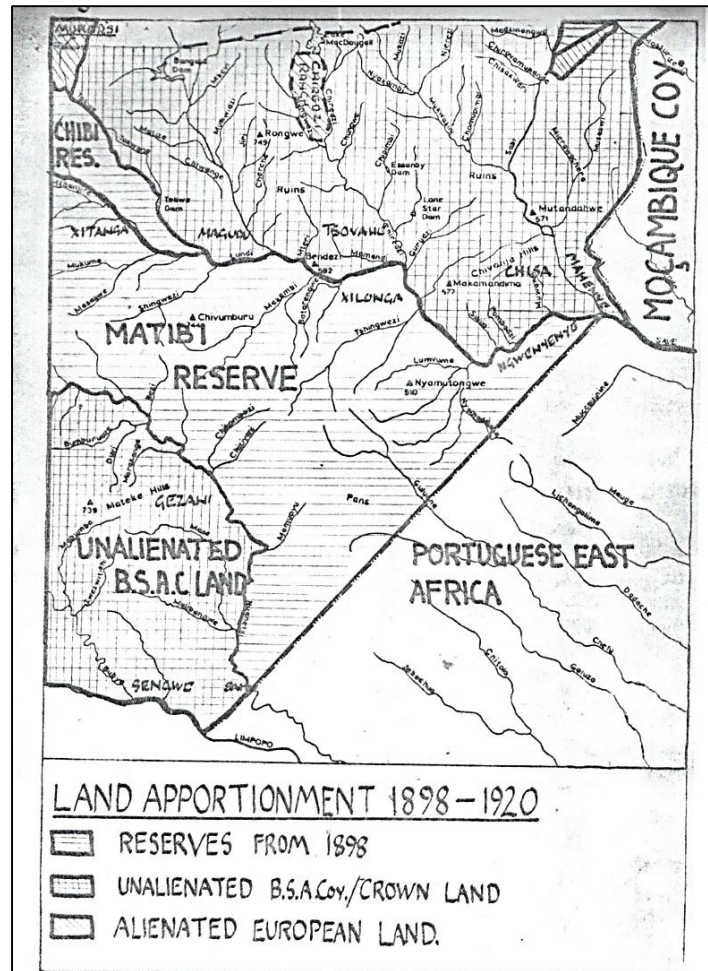
British colonial administration of south-eastern Zimbabwe before 1934

The colonial history of south-eastern Zimbabwe, like that of the rest of the country is intricately intertwined with the narrative of land delineation for various purposes. As Wright and Wolmer correctly observed, during the period leading to 1934, the Lowveld became a mixture of various colonial land types: Unalienated Land, State Land, Forest Land, Controlled Hunting Areas, Special Native Areas, African Purchase Areas, Tsetse Controlled Corridors and Game Reserve.⁴⁰⁸ The land use was altered as and when convenient to suit colonial administrative needs as documented in Map 3.1. Each of the adjustments affected the indigenous people in various ways but mostly

⁴⁰⁸ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 314 & Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, pp. 79 & 144.

adversely as they were denied the use of their resources and threatened with possible eviction or resulted in their ejection from their lands altogether.

Map 3.1: Land Apportionment in south-eastern Zimbabwe, 1898-1920



Source: Bannerman, ‘A Short Political and Economic History’-Appendix.

The land squeeze in the Lowveld region of the country began when some Shangane communities were displaced from their original lands to accommodate the international boundary with PEA soon after the establishment of colonial rule in 1890. Following that, the colonial state imposed a tax of ten shillings per head per year on all local residents who now found themselves occupying spaces that were labelled as Unalienated BSAC Land, also shown in Map 3.1. The government’s

levying of rentals on the Shangane living on Unalienated Land risked a mass exodus of the disgruntled into PEA to avoid rental payments. The CNC's 1908 Report recorded its concern:

A large number of natives living on Unalienated Land on the borders of Portuguese territory have signified their intention to cross the border rather than pay rent...The progressive policy to my mind, has always been to make every effort to get natives to live on farms.⁴⁰⁹

From 1891, the BSAC administration introduced strict game laws that criminalised unauthorised hunting. Those found breaking the laws had their guns confiscated. In protest, some border Shangane communities migrated to PEA where hunting laws were less restrictive while others opted to move to the newly created Ndanga Reserve in the Rhodesian interior.⁴¹⁰

Colonial land delineation, however, only began in earnest after the BSAC's successful suppression of the 1896-7 Uprisings. African reserves were assigned to indigenous people throughout the country on mainly marginal lands. Colonial administrators claimed that such reserves would promote the economic and social advancement of the African in his or her "native homeland" and provide Africans with some outlet for political expression in areas they considered exclusively theirs.⁴¹¹ In reality, such measures were targeted at preventing Africans from competing with various colonial initiatives.

The newly created reserves were recognised by the Imperial Order-In-Council of 1898 which ironically stated that such reserves afforded the black population "some degree of protection against European acquisitiveness".⁴¹² However, the Shangane of Tsvovani, Chisa and Mahenye

⁴⁰⁹ NAZ: N9/1/11, Chief Native Commissioner, Annual Report, 31 December 1908. Protest migrations were quite common in other border communities. See, McGregor, 'Rethinking the Boundaries of the Nation', McGregor, *Crossing the Zambezi* & G. T. Ncube, *A History of Northwest Zimbabwe, 1850-1960*, (Kadoma: Mond Books, 2004).

⁴¹⁰ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 78.

⁴¹¹ N. H. Wilson, 'The Development of Native Reserves. One Phase of Native Policy for Southern Rhodesia', *NADA*, 1, 1923, pp. 88-89.

⁴¹² Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, p. 57.

were not placed into any reserves as their territories were designated as Unalienated BSAC Land and labelled unfit for permanent human settlement. This was in spite of the government's commitment to resettling twenty thousand Shanganes from Biyeni in similar lands in the Garahwa area of Melsetter, following the defeat of Gungunyana.⁴¹³ Their southern relatives and neighbours in Matibi Sub-District of Chibi remained on their enormous original land which became Matibi Native Reserve, stretching from the PEA border to Matibi No. 1 TTL. Most of the land, shown in Map 3.2 later became the GNP and Nuanetsi Ranch.

It is important to note that colonial land delineation, game legislation and the imposition of taxation put the state and indigenous communities on a collision course. Colonial land policies were specifically resented for turning local people into squatters on the land of their birthright. The people unhappy with the demarcation of land (shown in Map 3.2) and the creation of an international boundary which isolated the local Shangane from their kinfolk in Portuguese territory.⁴¹⁴ Communities also hated restrictive hunting laws that denied them access to game and related resources. They detested taxation for forcing them to seek employment on settler ventures in order to raise money to pay the taxes. This drew battle-lines between them and the BSAC.

In response to Shangane discontent, Howman, the NC of Ndanga under whose jurisdiction the northern part of south-eastern Zimbabwe fell proposed to the Superintendent of Natives for Fort Victoria Province that a reserve be created specifically for the people of Tsvovani:

The Natives of this part, i.e. between the Mkwadini, Sabi and Chiredzi Rivers, have never had any reserve apportioned to them and they are the most advanced Natives in the District training their cattle and using ploughs. Their numbers are few, about 4000, whilst [the proposed reserve] appears exceedingly large, it must be remembered that this is low lying

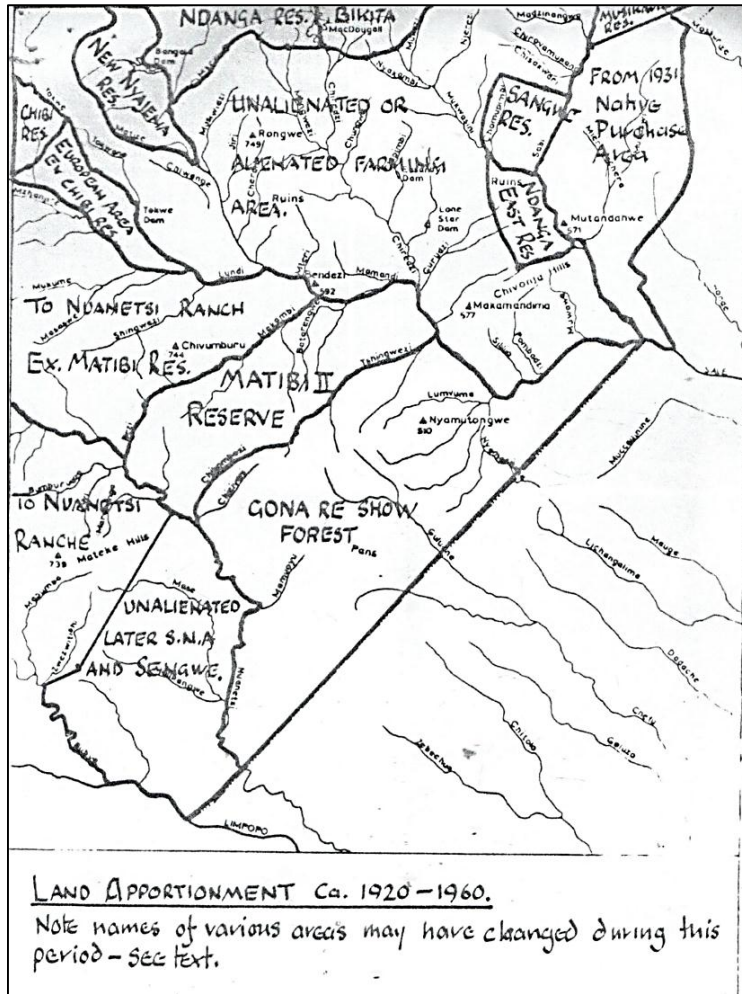
⁴¹³ NAZ: N3/16/2, 'Reserve of the Shangaans', From Chief Native Commissioner to Chief Secretary's Office, January 24th 1900.

⁴¹⁴ Bannerman, 'A Short Political and Economic History of the Tsvovani, Chisa and Mahenye Dynasties', pp. 18, 19 & 21. Gonarezhou was often wrongly spelt as Gona re Show in colonial literature as is the case on map 3.2.

country, there is no water in the rivers, therefore land lying away from the rivers is quite useless to them except for stock raising...⁴¹⁵

The allocation took time as the Tsvovani people were only placed into a small reserve later.⁴¹⁶

Map 3.2: Land Apportionment in south-eastern Zimbabwe, 1920-1960



Source: Bannerman, ‘A Short Political and Economic History’-Appendix.

The national land squeeze that came after 1908, witnessed large pieces of land being taken away from indigenous communities.⁴¹⁷ Robin Palmer notes that 1908 was, indeed, a turning point for

⁴¹⁵ NAZ: N9/1/11, NC Ndanga to SON Victoria, 21/1/09.

⁴¹⁶ NAZ: NC 3/4/1-2, NC Ndanga to CNC, 7/2/12.

⁴¹⁷ Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, Chapter 4.

the agricultural sector of Southern Rhodesia as the BSAC buried the ‘Second Rand’ myth and focused on systematically promoting settler agrarian production.⁴¹⁸ Several policy changes were introduced to support white agricultural production: the re-organisation of the Department of Agriculture under Dr. Eric Nobbs, the engagement of specialists in the fields of botany, entomology, chemistry, irrigation and tobacco farming, the opening of an agricultural experimental station in Salisbury and the setting up of a Land Bank to avail credit to “persons of European descent only.”⁴¹⁹ These measures without doubt boosted and entrenched white settler agriculture while crowding out black producers from the land asset. They, thus, laid the foundation for the crafting of the radical land discrimination legislation in 1930, the LAA.

The period after 1908 witnessed similar land seizures in Zimbabwe’s Lowveld. During the period, a company called Chambers and Plant acquired Chiredzi Ranch, located south of Manjerenje Dam. What followed was the subsequent eviction and relocation of eight villages to Ndanga Reserve.⁴²⁰ At the same time, NC Forestall got a ranch in Ndanga which he named Nyazugwi. The BSAC took over some of Tsvovani’s land between Mtirikwe and Tokwe Rivers. The company also incorporated part of Matibi No. 1 Reserve land into Nuanetsi Ranch. The Chivumburu area of Chief Chitanga was also expropriated and added to the Nuanetsi Ranch in 1919. Chief Chitanga was pushed further west to the peripheral area of Matibi No. 1 Reserve while Headman Mpapa, his uncle was moved to Matibi No. 2 effectively separating these close relatives by a distance of one hundred kilometres of white commercial farms.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 81-82.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid. p. 82.

⁴²⁰ Bannerman, ‘A Short Political and Economic History of the Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye Dynasties’, p. 21.

⁴²¹ NAZ: N9/1/16, NC Ndanga to CNC, Annual Report, 1913 & NAZ: L2/2/12/2, Re: Activities of the Land Settlement in the Lowveld, July/September 1913 by a Mr. Cooper to NC Forestall.

The 1914 Southern Rhodesia Coryndon Native Reserves Commission set up by the Imperial Government was mandated to review all land allocated to and reserved for Africans. Most of its suggestions were accepted and subsequently embodied in the Imperial Native Reserves Order In-Council of 1920 that set up more African reserves throughout the country.⁴²² Ndanga East Native Reserve comprising thirty eight thousand five hundred and eighty seven hectares was established by the Order. Shortly after, its northern portion which constituted Chief Gudo's area was taken over by the new Bikita District and re-named Sangwe Reserve while the southern part remained as Ndanga East. Southern Chipinga remained Unalienated BSAC Land and only changed its status to Crown Land at the inception of the Responsible Government in 1923. It was then re-named the Sabi Native Purchase Area after the implementation of the Morris Carter Commission Report and, again, later changed to Ndowoyo TTL.⁴²³

As a result of the recommendation of the Order-In-Council of 1920, a portion of land near the PEA border was dismembered from Matibi Reserve to become the Gonarezhou Forest as, in the view of the Commission, it was considered unwise from a security point of view to create reserves in a remote border spot of the country (see Map 3.2 for the location of the Forest).⁴²⁴ Another large piece of land between Makambe and Magwie rivers was, yet again, excised from Matibi Reserve to become part of Nuanetsi Ranch.⁴²⁵ The area between the Lundi and Limpopo Rivers remained Unalienated BSAC Land as it was considered unsuitable for African settlement. In all these land adjustments, the Matibi Reserve was reduced by a massive 75% from one million four hundred and ten thousand seven hundred and ten hectares to three hundred and thirty three thousand seven

⁴²² Bannerman, 'The Land Apportionment Act. A Tiger Paper?' *Zimbabwe Agricultural Journal*, 79, 3 (1982), p. 103.

⁴²³ NAZ: 9/1/17, NC Melsester, Annual Report, 31/12/14.

⁴²⁴ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 79.

⁴²⁵ Bannerman, 'A Short Political and Economic History of the Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye Dynasties', p. 24.

hundred and two hectares. It was also officially split into Matibi No. 1 and Matibi No. 2 Reserves.⁴²⁶ Ironically, the reduction was supported by Forestall who twenty years earlier had advocated for the creation of a large African reserve for the people of the area. Forestall could have been persuaded to support the land alterations by the fact that he had, lately, been a recipient of a farm adjoining Ndanga District.

The adjustment of the Matibi Reserve was essentially meant to serve multiple purposes. Firstly, it was targeted at “preventing it from reverting to absolute desert, and being over-run by carnivores.”⁴²⁷ Secondly, it was directed at bringing closer to authority the scattered and isolated Shangane populations. Thirdly, it was intended to facilitate effective monitoring of tax payment and, finally, the reserves were conveniently created to serve as reservoirs of labour for white settlers.⁴²⁸ However, by leaving the southern portion of the territory unoccupied, the government opened opportunities for the possibilities of forming a future game reserve in the area, an unannounced intention at the time. Administratively, south-eastern Zimbabwe initially fell under Ndanga and Chibi Districts, with Nuanetsi only serving as a sub-station of Chibi. The sub-station operated only during the dry season due to impassable rivers and thick vegetation.⁴²⁹ W. A. Loades, the first Acting ANC for Nuanetsi was appointed on 4 September 1919.⁴³⁰ P. Palmer took over the station in September 1923 and moved its location to a new site in 1925.⁴³¹

⁴²⁶ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp. 325-326.

⁴²⁷ NAZ: S235/510, NC Annual Report Ndanga 1932.

⁴²⁸ W. Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, pp. 79-80.

⁴²⁹ NAZ: N3/8/8, Chief Native Commissioner to the Secretary, Department of Administrator, 21 February, 1923 & NAZ: N3/8/8, Secretary, Department of Administrator to the CNC, Salisbury, Nuanetsi Station, 2 December, 1922.

⁴³⁰ NAZ: N3/8/8, CNC to the Secretary, Department of Administrator, Native Department Station at Nuanetsi, 6 September, 1920.

⁴³¹ Mavhunga, ‘The Mobile Workshop’, pp. 233-236, 239 & 246.

The Responsible Government that took control of the country from the BSAC in 1923 introduced a number of Departments to superintend the Lowveld area. The Native Department was mandated to administer African reserves of the area while the British South Africa Police, a unit within the Department was charged with policing the entire area right up to the international boundary with PEA. The Agriculture and Lands Department determined land use in the Crown Land and was also responsible for the management of all wildlife in the area. Within the Department was the Veterinary Unit, charged with controlling the spread of diseases. The Entomology Section of the Unit was particularly mandated to monitor and contain tsetse-flies in the area. The interest of the Department of Commerce in issues to do with game became noticeable from the 1920s when it initiated a vigorous tourism campaign in the region.⁴³²

It was the same Responsible Government that appointed the Morris Carter Land Commission on 8 January 1925 to further look into the issue of land distribution in the country and make final and concrete recommendations on its future allotment.⁴³³ During a Morris Carter evidence gathering meeting with chiefs at Zaka Office chaired by Herbert Taylor, Chief Salani Tsvovani strongly opposed colonial land allocation in general and the proposed new APAs scheme in particular arguing it was a misplaced priority:

What is the good of talking of buying farms, no one has the money to do so, the country down by Chipinda Pools is the Shangaan country and I should like to go back there but I have been persuaded to come into the reserve; I could not buy land.⁴³⁴

The recommendations of the Morris Carter Commission were radical. It unsurprisingly proposed the division of Southern Rhodesia into thirty two administrative districts. In south-eastern

⁴³² Ibid. p. 247.

⁴³³ Southern Rhodesia, Report of the Land Commission, 1925, Salisbury, 1926, p. 2.

⁴³⁴ NAZ: ZAD 1/1/4, Evidence to Morris Carter Commission by Chief (Salani) Tsvovani to Sir Herbert Taylor at Ndanga.

Zimbabwe, Matibi No. 1 Reserve, with a total of one hundred and thirteen thousand seven hundred and seventeen hectares and Matibi No. 2, with one hundred and ninety three thousand four hundred and forty hectares were placed under Chibi District and re-assigned to Nuanetsi District twenty five years later when Nuanetsi became a stand-alone district.⁴³⁵ The government's dilemma was on how to effectively govern the remote Matibi No. 2 Reserve, given its manpower limitations.

The 1930 LAA was a creature of the Carter Commission which had made a bold statement on the land question of Southern Rhodesia, declaring that:

However desirable it may be that members of the two races [white and black] should live together side by side with equal rights as regards the holding of land, we are convinced that in practice, probably for generations to come, such a policy is not practicable or in the best interests of the two races and that until the Native has advanced very much further on the path of civilization it is better that points of contact in this respect between the two races should be reduced.⁴³⁶

Under Part 1, Section 5 of the LAA, land was divided into five categories, namely: European Area, Native Area, Undetermined Area, Forest Area and Unassigned Area. The Section clearly stipulated that the European Area was all the land not included in the Native Area category and that no African could hold land in the designated white area.⁴³⁷

Part 2 defined the Native Area as land solely reserved for "indigenous natives" the occupation of which was determined by the Land Board. The Native Area included APAs such as the Gonakudzingwa. The logic was that the creation of the special APAs contiguous to reserves was good for Africans who wanted to secure individual farms and "drift from kraal" life. It was further proffered that the development would allow the "progressive natives" to adopt what were

⁴³⁵ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 325.

⁴³⁶ Carter Commission Report, Salisbury, 1926, paragraph. 63.

⁴³⁷ Land Apportionment Act, No. 30, 1930.

considered to be advanced farming methods, outside the reserves.⁴³⁸ In reality, the creation of APAs was a strategy of shielding white producers from competition with black farmers through creating a class of elite black producers. In Fuller's view, which was some departure from that of most of his white contemporaries, the creation of APAs was a way of preventing future unrest by giving the Africans in advance the land they were in time going to demand.⁴³⁹

Undetermined Land was covered under Part 3 and included land that in future would be freely disposed of, unless occupied by Africans. The Forest Area, defined under Part 4, Section 17, was land reserved for afforestation which could be occupied either by Europeans or Africans on terms determined by the Governor-in-Council. Part 5 specified Unassigned Area as land that could, from time to time be assigned to Europeans or Africans as the situation demanded.⁴⁴⁰

Overall, the LAA used the race card to further dispossess Africans of their prime land and condemn them to marginal agricultural terrains. Again, the LAA initiated another wave of evictions of African populations from their traditional lands and south-eastern Zimbabwe was not spared. Large Shangane populations of the Lowveld were moved off lands that were officially designated Unassigned Area.⁴⁴¹ This was a block of land totalling seven hundred and twenty one thousand five hundred and fifty five hectares demarcated in the north-east by the Lundi River, in the south-east by PEA, in the south-west by the Limpopo and Buby Rivers and in the north-west by the Nuanetsi Ranch and Matibi No. 2 Reserve.⁴⁴² The land was reserved as future game land.

⁴³⁸ Wilson, 'The Development of Native Reserves', p. 89.

⁴³⁹ C. C. Fuller, 'Notes on (a) Education and (b) Land', *NADA*, 1 (1923), p. 28. For an elaborate discussion on APAs, see, A. K. Shutt, 'Purchase Area Farmers and the Middle Class of Southern Rhodesia, c. 1931-1952', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 30, 3 (1997), pp. 555-581, A. Cheater, *Idioms of Accumulation: Rural Development and Class Formation among Freeholders in Zimbabwe*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984) & A. Cheater, 'The Ideology of Communal Land Tenure in Zimbabwe: Mythogenesis Enacted', *Africa*, 60, 2 (1990), pp. 188-206.

⁴⁴⁰ Land Apportionment Act, No. 30, 1930.

⁴⁴¹ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 135.

⁴⁴² Land Apportionment Act No. 30, 1930.

The Shangane of southern Zimbabwe were, therefore, seriously affected by the LAA as it interfered with their economic activities and entrenched racial land segregation in the area.⁴⁴³ It was no coincidence that soon after the enactment of the LAA, the GGR was created. The creation of the game reserve triggered new levels of confrontation with the indigenous people of the region that were soon moved out of the game-designated area in phases.

The evolution of the Gonarezhou game scheme

The history of the Gonarezhou land as a PA began in 1934 when the land was proclaimed a game reserve. Despite being gazetted in 1934, it took up to 1968 to bring the game scheme to full fruition. In the meantime, the area was de-proclaimed and, again, re-proclaimed due to the battles between anti-park and pro-park antagonists. The earliest proposal for the establishment of a game reserve in Southern Rhodesia was made in 1894 soon after the occupation of the country.⁴⁴⁴ The interest of setting up a game reserve was, again, implied in the 1900 Annual Report of the NC of Chibi which noted abundant game on the lower and “uninhabitable” part of the area adjoining the Nuanetsi and Lundi Rivers. The observation was understood to mean that the area could, in future, be suitable for a game park.⁴⁴⁵

The next proposition for the creation of a game sanctuary around the Chipinda Pools area (what later became the administrative centre of the park) strangely came from *Vhekenya*, a known elephant poacher. In 1914, he suggested to NC Forestall that the scenic area extending from the Matshindu right up to the PEA border be transformed into an animal reservoir. Forestall was understandably sceptical about the poacher’s conservation proposal, given his history of the

⁴⁴³ Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, p. 178.

⁴⁴⁴ Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p. 32.

⁴⁴⁵ NAZ: N3/24/2-4, NC Chibi to CNC, ‘Re: Native Reserves’, 4 August, 1900.

plunder of game in the area.⁴⁴⁶ So, while he concurred with *Vhekenya* on that the area could certainly make an excellent game reserve, he felt that the authorities were not yet prepared to meet the expenses involved in building infrastructure for tourists and providing guards to protect visitors to the area. He derisively advised the poacher that in effect, all game in Southern Rhodesia was already protected, “although I gather that you don’t realise this.” He, however, promised to forward *Vhekenya*’s letter to the appropriate authorities, which he never did.⁴⁴⁷

The idea of a Gonarezhou game sanctuary was rekindled in the 1920s by some Rhodesian colonial administrators. Such intensified conservation interest must be viewed in the broader context of the burgeoning conservation movement in the entire British Empire at the turn of the twentieth century. There was, consequently a change from the image of Africa as a hunting ground to an image of ‘wild’ Africa at risk.⁴⁴⁸

There was, however, intense competition then between lobbyists for the scheme from the Department of Commerce, supported by hoteliers, tourists and conservationists and those in the Veterinary Department, backed by the powerful cattle industry who opposed it for fear it would work as a conduit in spreading cattle diseases.⁴⁴⁹ In 1924, the Department of Commerce proceeded to make a formal proposal for the establishment of a game reserve in south-eastern Zimbabwe. In response, the Veterinary Department instead proceeded to create a buffer between vermin-infested Crown Land and European Ranches to the west in 1925.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁶ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 24.

⁴⁴⁷ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 97.

⁴⁴⁸ See, W. Beinart, ‘Empire, Hunting and Ecological Change in Southern and Central Africa’, *Past and Present* (Review Article), 128 (1990).

⁴⁴⁹ NAZ: S1194/1645/3/1, Proposed Game Reserves-Chipinda Pools and Gwanda 1932-5: Ashley-Belbin to Minister of Agriculture, 7 May 1935.

⁴⁵⁰ Mavhunga, ‘The Mobile Workshop’, pp. 247-248.

The impetus to see the game reserve project through was further provided by the 1926 declaration of the KNP across the Limpopo. The Wild Life Society of Southern Rhodesia weighed in when it supported the establishment of a similar park in the picturesque Chipinda Pools area along the Lundi River.⁴⁵¹ In the same year, the Rhodesian Legislative Assembly accepted Major W. J. Boggie's November 1926 motion that pushed the government to expedite the proclamation of a game reserve in the southern region of the country. Soon after, J. W. Downie, the Minister of Agriculture instructed R. W. Jack, the Chief Entomologist to identify suitable areas in the country for game parks.⁴⁵² At its launch in 1927, the Wild Life Protection Society of Southern Rhodesia's inaugural Secretary lamented what he called the decimation of game in the country. He, at the same time, proposed immediate remedial action:

Even the layman cannot help being struck with the way in which wild animals perish before the march of civilisation. Old transport riders say regretfully of such and such a road that it used to be 'teeming with game' and now the passer-by will see nothing but a few baboons or small buck leaping madly for safety. It would be a sad day for Rhodesia when the last of the wild four-footed inhabitants had gone elsewhere.⁴⁵³

The society then proposed the establishment of three more game reserves in the northern, western and southern parts of the country. Wankie was the first to be declared in May 1927 and Matopos followed in 1930.⁴⁵⁴ The proposed southern one, soon to develop into GGR, was to be bound by the Anglo-Portuguese international boundary in the south-east, the Lundi River in the north-east, Matibi No. 2 Reserve in the north-west and the Nuanetsi River in the south-east.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵¹ NAZ: S914/12/1B, Supt. Southern Rhodesia Publicity Bureau, Bulawayo to Secretary Agriculture, 9 May 1934 & NAZ: S914/12/1B, Secretary, Commerce to Minister, Agriculture, 29 March 1934.

⁴⁵² Report of the National Parks Advisory Board, Year Ended 31 December, 1949, p. 38.

⁴⁵³ *Rhodesia Herald*, 7 October 1927, 'Wildlife Society Advert'.

⁴⁵⁴ On 24 February 1928, Statutory Instrument No. 124 formally established Wankie Game Reserve. For further details, see, NAZ: S4061, T. Davidson, 'Report on Wankie Game Reserve, October 1929-March 1930', *Wild Rhodesia*, No. 17, October 1978, p. 4.

⁴⁵⁵ NAZ: S1193/P2/1, Circular Letter by the Hon. Secretary of the Wild Life Protection Society of Southern Rhodesia, 25 May, 1928.

In June 1928, the Chief Entomologist was further instructed by the Minister of Agriculture to find out if the said part of the Lowveld could be converted into a game area. He confirmed the appropriateness of the area around Chipinda Pools for such purposes and even suggested that the proposed game reserve be extended beyond Chipinda Pools to cover the dense-*Brachystegia-Androstachys* forest between the Lundi and Sabi Rivers which he judged to be of no obvious value for other purposes. He, furthermore, reported that the continued occupation of the tsetse-fly area by African populations posed a real danger to the Nuanetsi Ranch stock.⁴⁵⁶ What he did not say, however, was that the same fly was equally dangerous to wild animals.

By 1930, there were two developments working in favour of the game scheme in the Lowveld. The first was the Great Depression of 1929 that greatly reduced demand for Rhodesia's agricultural products like tobacco, forcing the government to seriously consider promoting tourism to mitigate revenue losses. The second was the 1930 LAA that re-designated the Gonarezhou land from Unalienated Land to an Unassigned Area, thus, opening it up for other land uses such as turning it into game land.⁴⁵⁷ The proposed one million and eleven thousand seven hundred and fourteen hectare game sanctuary was to be located south of the Lundi River on land categorised as Unassigned Area in terms of Part 5 of the LAA of 1930.⁴⁵⁸ The game reserve was to be administered by the Department of Agriculture. It was to be brought to the standard of the Sabi Game Reserve (KNP) of South Africa whose zoological and financial value was then evident.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁶ NAZ: S1194/1645/3/1, Chief Entomologist to SFO, 28 October, 1932.

⁴⁵⁷ NAZ: S1194/1645/3/1, Kelly Edwards to Acting Secretary Agriculture, 8 April, 1933: 'Game Reserves'.

⁴⁵⁸ NAZ: S1194/1645/3/1, Chief Forest Officer to the Acting Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Lands, 8 April, 1933, NAZ: S914/12/1B, 'Game Res, Gona-re-Zhou', 8 January, 1934 & NAZ: S914/12/1B, SRG, Game Res.

⁴⁵⁹ NAZ: S1194/1645/3/1, Secretary, Land Department to Secretary, Department of Agriculture, 10/10/32.

The Department of Agriculture was quick to assure white settlers in the area that the proposed game scheme would not interfere with their agricultural activities.⁴⁶⁰

The decision to establish a game reserve in south-eastern Rhodesia was, again, strongly opposed by the Chief Entomologist and the Nuanetsi cattle ranchers for fear it would lead to the spread of cattle diseases. The Native Department also opposed it on the grounds that it would threaten “native interests”, a position clearly articulated by the CNC in 1932:

I beg to state for the information of the Honourable, the Minister of Native Affairs that in view of the opinions expressed by the Chief Entomologist, I cannot support the suggestion to proclaim a Game Reserve in the neighbourhood of Chipinda Pools. It would necessarily be adjacent to Matibi No. 2 Native Reserve, and Native interests there would be endangered in the same way as those of neighbouring European ranchers. There are over 3000 head of cattle in Matibi No. 2 Reserve.⁴⁶¹

The Premier’s Office, the Senior Forest Officer and Commissioner of Police were compelled to support the position of the CNC and Chief Entomologist. The move to declare the game reserve was, thus, temporarily shelved while lobbying for the scheme went ahead behind closed doors.

The campaign for the realisation of the scheme, however, intensified at the beginning of 1933 with the appointment of C. S. Jobling, an avowed advocate of game conservation as the new Minister of Agriculture. His efforts were complemented by those of G. Huggins’ newly elected Reform Party that supported extended tourism in the area.⁴⁶² The scheme was also backed by a Legislative Assembly motion that was tabled in Parliament in April 1933 and the London Convention of 8 November 1933 which supported the establishment of NPs throughout the world.⁴⁶³

⁴⁶⁰ NAZ: S1194/1645/3/1, S. D. A. L. to the Minister, Department of Agriculture, 13 October, 1932.

⁴⁶¹ NAZ: S138/34, 1924-1934 Game: CNC to Secretary to the Premier (Native Affairs), 7 November, 1932.

⁴⁶² Mavhunga & M. Spierenburg, ‘Transfrontier Talk, Cordon Politics’, p. 720.

⁴⁶³ NAZ: S1194/1608/1/1, Minutes of Meeting of the National Public Relations Advisory Board, Milton Building, Salisbury, 14 January, 1947.

More pressure for the creation of the game reserve came from R. D. Gilchrist the Minister of Commerce, Transport and Public Works who suggested that such a scheme would certainly promote tourism in the region.⁴⁶⁴ The Minister followed up the proposals by commissioning a Committee headed by D. Townley to look into the feasibility of establishing a game reserve in Zimbabwe's Lowveld. After a cursory survey, the Committee made recommendations that basically buttressed the Minister's position:

We were most impressed with the potentialities of this district as a game sanctuary. It is one of the rapidly diminishing areas in the colony within reach of the capital which still contains game in large quantity, and it will be a thousand pities if something is not done about it before it is too late.⁴⁶⁵

Townley's Report emphasised the great potential of the area in attracting tourists from as far as Europe. It, however, expressed concern over water shortage and the remoteness of the area.⁴⁶⁶ It then suggested, as a solution to the water shortage challenge the sinking of boreholes at various points along the main river beds. It also recommended the construction of stores at Chipinda Pools and along the Nuanetsi River to take care of European needs. It, furthermore, proposed the building of a chain of rest camps throughout the planned game area to facilitate tourism.⁴⁶⁷ The report, however, lamented that as long as the "native kraals" remained along the road on the Tahingwezi and Tshikambedzi (Chikombedzi) Rivers, "game will never be seen on the actual road"⁴⁶⁸ due to extensive poaching by the villagers.

Informed by Townley's Report, the Acting Minister of Commerce, Transport and Public Works proceeded to request Cabinet to proclaim the area a game reserve. His recommendation was

⁴⁶⁴ *The Sunday Mail*, 26 November, 1933.

⁴⁶⁵ NAZ: S1532/91/2, Game: 1922-1939, Vol. 2, D. Townley to Mr Gilchrist (Minister of Commerce and Transport), 5/10/1934-Report on the Proposed Game Reserve (Gona-re-Zhou).

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁷ NAZ: S914/12/1B-3B, Proposed Game, 14 November, 1934.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

adopted by Cabinet on 12 January 1934 as Resolution No. 3470, ‘Proposed Establishment of Game Reserve, Gono-re-Show, in Victoria Circle’.⁴⁶⁹ The motion was supported by Proclamation No. 3 of 1934 that declared Gonarezhou a game reserve on 20 April 1934.⁴⁷⁰ The area that was to constitute the new game reserve was defined as:

The Crown Land in the Chibi District bounded on the north-east by the Lundi River, on the south-east by the Anglo-Portuguese boundary, on the south-west by the Lundi and Buby Rivers and on the north-west by the Nuanetsi Ranch and Matibi No. 2 Native Reserve... The Crown land in the Ndanga District bounded on the north by a straight line drawn from the junction of the Chiredzi and Lundi Rivers to the south-west of Ndanga East Native Reserve and by the southern boundary of that reserve, on the north-east by the Sabi River and on the south and west by the Lundi River.⁴⁷¹

The declared game reserve area was, a year later in 1935, extended into the extreme southern portion of Ndanga District to include additional land from the Chilojo Hills to the Sabi-Lundi junction.⁴⁷² The proclamation of the game reserve while celebrated as a victory by those who had vigorously campaigned for it was only but the beginning of another fight that was to last until 1968 when the final boundaries of the GGR were determined and all resident communities cleared from the game area. It was a contest that was to witness fierce resistance from the Shangane people who were targeted for relocation against their will.

The squeeze from the Gonarezhou land

As earlier indicated, wherever game reserves were established, they were almost always followed by the massive eviction of indigenous resident populations. The argument was that animals and humans could not live together, an incorrect assumption given that many African communities had

⁴⁶⁹ NAZ: S914/12/1B, SRG, Game Reserve. Again, Gonarezhou is spelt wrongly in the cabinet resolution.

⁴⁷⁰ NAZ: S1532/91/2, Game 1922-1939 Vol. 2: Acting Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Lands to the Secretary to the Hon. The Prime Minister, 12 October 1934.

⁴⁷¹ NAZ: S914/12/1B, Sec, Department of Commerce and Transport to the Hon, the Minister, ‘Controlled Shooting’, 29/3/34.

⁴⁷² Zimbabwe National Parks and Wild Life Conservation, August, 1992, p. 9.

co-existed with their fauna and flora in pre-colonial times. When Hamilton was appointed the first warden of the Sabi Game Reserve (KNP) his first move was to force three thousand “black squatters” off the newly declared game land and re-settle them in the adjacent “native areas.” Similarly, the establishment of the Singwitsi, Pongola and Ndumo Game Reserves in South Africa was followed by the ruthless eviction of masses of African resident communities. Those resisting had their huts set on fire while those who opted to remain were labelled squatters and forced to pay rent or provide compulsory labour. The same happened in other places of South Africa where similar situations obtained.⁴⁷³

In Zimbabwe, the establishment of the Matopos Game Reserve in 1930 was immediately followed by efforts to evict the Ndebele resident community from the area.⁴⁷⁴ In the same way, the declaration of the Gonarezhou land as a game reserve in 1934 triggered a move to remove indigenous Shangane communities from the game-designated area. The official position was expressly stated by the Acting Secretary of Commerce who suggested in 1934 that the residents of the park- designated area be transferred elsewhere as they were of the “most undesirable type”. He argued that most of them gave no allegiance to the Rhodesian government as they at times crossed the border to live in neighbouring PEA and also preferred working in South Africa. He, furthermore, alleged that these borderland Shangane were not “properly looked after” and were in a “perpetual state of semi-starvation” due to limited rainfall. As a result, he considered it practically impossible for game to co-exist with the African population, hence, the need to relocate them.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷³ Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, pp. 43 & 92.

⁴⁷⁴ NAZ: S1651/46/1, Evidence of E. J. Kelly Edwards, 21 March 1949.

⁴⁷⁵ NAZ: S914/12/1B, Acting Secretary, Commerce and Transport to Col. the Hon. Deneys Reitz, M. P. Minister of Lands, Pretoria.

The Divisional Road Engineer supported the removal of all people from the attractive Sabi-Lundi junction area accusing the Ngwenyeni people in particular of irresponsibly killing large numbers of game animals.⁴⁷⁶ The extended argument was that the relocation of the Shangane to Matibi No. 2 would serve to “provide an additional barrier between Nuanetsi Ranch and any possible influx of lions from the game reserve in a southerly direction”.⁴⁷⁷ The ANC of Nuanetsi concurred with the Acting Secretary on the issue of semi-starvation but his worry was that their relocation would pose a challenge to his office in terms of the provision of food relief. He argued:

Unfortunately, this state of affairs is not only peculiar to these Natives but also exists in No. 2 Reserve [Matibi] and a portion of Nuanetsi Ranch, due mainly to low rainfall. The state of affairs will still exist if they are all moved to No. 2 Reserve, and with the possibility of relief by hunting gone on account of the establishment of the Game Reserve, they will be bound to seek relief through this office.⁴⁷⁸

The Acting Secretary’s suggestion that these “natives” were entirely “undesirable” angered the ANC who considered it an insult and unwarranted interference into his area of jurisdiction. The insinuation that he was not in control of the area irked him. He was, furthermore, incensed by the intimation that his Department never visited the borderland area, which could be interpreted as dereliction of duty. What also annoyed him was that such a damaging statement was made without even consulting him.⁴⁷⁹

The number of indigenous people to be moved out of the game-designated area was not exactly known. Colonial estimates put the figure at seven thousand Africans, a debatable figure given the general inaccuracy of colonial statistics especially on African populations.⁴⁸⁰ Palmer had noted that Rhodesian demographic statistics had remained largely inaccurate for most of the colonial

⁴⁷⁶ NAZ: S914/12/1B, Divisional Road Engineer to CRE, 12/6/32.

⁴⁷⁷ NAZ: S914/12/1B-3B, Proposed Game, 14 November, 1934.

⁴⁷⁸ NAZ: S1532/91/2, Game 1922-1939, Vol. 2: Acting ANC Nuanetsi to NC Chibi, 11 November, 1934.

⁴⁷⁹ NAZ: S1532/91/2, Game 1922-1939 Vol. 2: ANC Nuanetsi to NC Chibi, 21 January 1935.

⁴⁸⁰ NAZ: S914/12/1B-3B, Proposed Game, 14 November, 1934.

period as administrators tended to either over-estimate or under-estimate the figures as and when it suited them.⁴⁸¹ This was especially because the first comprehensive Rhodesian census was only conducted in 1969. The implication, therefore, was that statistics of the preceding periods were, in the main, mere estimates and, so, had to be taken with great caution.⁴⁸²

The estimates, if taken for what they were indicated that most of the people in the park were concentrated along the Chipinda-Nuanetsi road with the area from Nuanetsi River to the border with PEA reported to be sparsely populated. A sizeable number was said to be found along the main watering points. The only other area with a fairly dense population was the Sabi-Lundi junction, still occupied by Chief Chisa's people who were reported to be poachers of repute who had cleared the entire area of game.⁴⁸³ South of Lundi was the Ngwenyeni of Marhumbini whose hunting was also alleged to be completely out of control. They were also accused of showing no respect for the white man, an expected decorum from all Africans at the time.⁴⁸⁴

The initial population figure targeted for removal to Matibi No. 2 Reserve was about on thousand five hundred.⁴⁸⁵ However, the CNC was opposed to the move on grounds that Matibi No. 2 did not have adequate water to accommodate such large numbers. He also feared that the Shangane near the border with PEA would most likely move into Portuguese territory in protest.⁴⁸⁶ Such

⁴⁸¹ Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, p. 2.

⁴⁸² Rhodesia, *Census of Population, 1969*, (Salisbury: Central Statistical Office, 1969). The position was confirmed by the Annual Reports of the CNC of Mashonaland for the years 1908 & 1909 and the CNC's 1936 Annual Report. In the above reports, the Native Department conceded that the figures they were using were purely estimates and the formula used to calculate them, not consistent.

⁴⁸³ NAZ: S914/12/1B-3B, Proposed Game, 14 November, 1934 & NAZ: S914/12/1B, Ministry of Commerce, Transport & Public Works to the Right Honble, the Earl of Onslow, 1/12/33.

⁴⁸⁴ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 151.

⁴⁸⁵ NAZ: S1542/G1/1, Acting Superintendent of Natives to CNC, 9/11/1933.

⁴⁸⁶ NAZ: S1542/G1/1, CNC to Minister of Commerce and Transport, 13 November, 1933.

action was certainly undesirable from an administrative point of view as it meant loss of revenue due to loss of tax payers and loss of potential labourers for Rhodesian farms and mines.

Evictions did not, however, commence immediately due to policy discord within various Government Departments. While the Department of Commerce pushed for the immediate removal of resident communities, the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and in particular the Chief Forest Officer argued that the population was too large to be moved *en masse*.⁴⁸⁷ In support but for different reasons, the CNC also opposed Shangane mass evictions:

We have not yet contemplated moving the Natives who are now in the Game Reserve. Matibi No. 2 will not carry a large population. Apart from its frontages on rivers, it contains no surface water, and its soil is of poor quality. The tributaries of the Lundi and Nuanetsi, which define its boundaries, have small permanent supplies of water, only in their lower reaches: but water is obtainable in some of them in wells at shallow depths. To develop sufficient water supplies to carry an appreciable number of Natives and their stock, would take time and the expenditure of a considerable sum of money.⁴⁸⁸

The CNC's pronouncement exposed the government's lack of preparedness in dealing with the problem at hand. It was, again, a clear admission of the government's dilemma on the fate of the affected residents. What incidentally saved the indigenous people from early eviction were tsetse-flies. For the next two decades, the government expended its energy on fighting the scourge while the eviction of the Shangane was temporarily put on hold.⁴⁸⁹ However, the threat of eviction continued to haunt the people throughout the moratorium period.

At about the same time, scores of people still resident in the Matopos National Park were similarly being driven off the park. The so-called squatters were given orders to leave the park by August

⁴⁸⁷ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, pp. 147-148.

⁴⁸⁸ NAZ: S1532/91/2, Game 1922-1939 Vol. 2: CNC to Acting Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Lands, 8 January 1935.

⁴⁸⁹ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 252.

of 1947.⁴⁹⁰ Those who would prove original residence to the area were granted some reprieve but on condition they entered into some labour tenancy with the park whereby they would work for a number of months per year on conservation projects in the park.⁴⁹¹ The Prime Minister, Godfrey Huggins supported the eviction position through a statement issued by his Secretary:

The Prime Minister considers that there are certain objections to giving the natives living in the Matopo National Park any definite assurances that they will at no time in the future be evicted. That would have the effect of tying the hands of future Governments.⁴⁹²

Savory, of the Irrigation Department took an even tougher stance:

This area is a National Park and not a Native Area. There is no precedence that I know of for populating and stocking a National Park to its full capacity and then trying to develop it as a facility for the whole population of the country... This would be impossible.⁴⁹³

The suggestion was that only five hundred families (oldest residents) be allowed to remain in the park. The evicted people were to be replaced by scenic roads, dams, rest camps and hotels.⁴⁹⁴ The resident Ndebele community understandably resisted arguing that the land had been ceded to them by Cecil John Rhodes himself at the post-1896 Uprising *indaba*. They vowed to even take up the issue with the English king for arbitration.⁴⁹⁵ Nqabe Tshuma, the leader of a newly formed local resistance movement, Sofasonke, presented a militant position that was consistent with the nationalist agitation of the 1950s:

We are under the Government and the Government can do whatever it likes with us. But we wish to let the Native Commissioner know that we don't want to see Africans amongst those who will come to evict us. If Africans join that group and come we shall fight them

⁴⁹⁰ NAZ: S1561/46/1, Sgd Arthur Bogshawe to the Hon, the Prime Minister, 26 October 1933, 'Matopo National Park' & NAZ: S1561/46/1, Chief Native Commissioner to Secretary, Department of PM (Native Affairs), 23 October 1933, 'Matopo National Park'.

⁴⁹¹ NAZ: S1561/46/1, Secretary for Native Affairs to Webb, Low and Barry, 28 November 1947.

⁴⁹² NAZ: S482/539/39, Private Secretary Prime Minister to Secretary, Agriculture and Lands, 4 December 1934.

⁴⁹³ NAZ: S1561/46/1, J. Savory to Chairman, Matopos Commission of Enquiry, 15 March 1949.

⁴⁹⁴ Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks*, pp. 153 & 166.

⁴⁹⁵ NAZ: S482/517, Native Affairs Memorandum, 21 October 1949.

and kill them. It will be another rebellion as it was in 1896. But if Europeans alone will come to evict us we shall die like dumb sheep.⁴⁹⁶

As for the GNP, it had become apparent by 1944 that Africans would be easier to control in reserves than in their scattered form in the game-designated area. The water shortage argument was by then outweighed. Again, signifying policy inconsistency, the ANC of Nuanetsi retracted his earlier position when he now stated that he had little sympathy with the Shangane living in the GGR and that for administrative purposes, it was best they be moved to Matibi No. 2 Reserve.⁴⁹⁷ The position was buttressed by the McIlwaine Commission's recommendations that Africans still resident in parks be removed forthwith.⁴⁹⁸ Yet a year later, in 1945, the same ANC of Nuanetsi adopted a more sympathetic stance when he appealed to the Provincial Native Commissioner of Fort Victoria to do something about the damage caused by elephants on the gardens of the Shanganes still resident in the game park:

I am continually having visits from the Shangaans begging that something be done to check this menace, and my messenger patrols amply substantiate the great damage done in Matibi No. 2 Reserve and on adjoining Crown Lands (Gonarezhou Forest)...the Shangaans rarely have successful crops because of the low rainfall, but when the elephants flatten down the kaffir corn crops the position becomes calamitous. If natives are to progress in animal husbandry and agriculture, then this should be made possible by the elimination of all destructive wildlife from the Native Areas [ironically, inside the Game Reserve].⁴⁹⁹

While evictions were on hold due to policy vacillation, the fight between supporters of the park scheme and anti-park lobbyists continued. Indications were that by 1937 the game project had been completely shelved, if not abandoned due to strong opposition from the Veterinary Department.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁶ NAZ: S1561/46/1, Native Commissioner's Memo on Meeting of 11 September 1950.

⁴⁹⁷ NAZ: S2391/3625, Tsetse Fly, Nuanetsi. NC Nuanetsi to Provincial Native Commissioner, Fort Victoria, 25 April, 1944.

⁴⁹⁸ NAZ: S1194/1608/1/1, National Parks and Other Places of Scenic or Other Attractions, 14 January 1947. The Commission had been appointed in 1939 to investigate and report on issues of conservation in the country.

⁴⁹⁹ NAZ: S2391/3625, Tsetse Fly, Nuanetsi: NC Nuanetsi to Provincial Native Commissioner, Fort Victoria, 25/4/1944 [9/F/44].

⁵⁰⁰ NAZ: S1194/1645/3/1, Proposed Game Reserves-Chipinda Pools and Gwanda 1932-5: C. Ashley-Belbin to Minister of Agriculture, 7 May 1935.

Nuanetsi Ranch owners were equally concerned with the spread of the foot and mouth and tick-borne diseases carried by wild animal. They had apparently lost six hundred cattle to such diseases since 1929 while in 1932 alone, eight hundred thousand head of cattle had been infected with foot and mouth disease.⁵⁰¹

Between 1937 and the mid-1950s, the game reserve went through a chequered historical phase as it was de-proclaimed and, again, re-proclaimed to contain the westward spread of the tsetse-fly bug.⁵⁰² Meanwhile, the land became a free-for-all space as both local and white poaching escalated. Local people continued with their subsistence hunting and playing a cat and mouse game with the authorities. White hunters also took advantage of weak government controls and wreaked havoc in the area. A good example of white wanton hunting was illustrated by the activities of a team of researchers known as the Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society that visited the game reserve in 1954. While in the Gonarezhou Park, they are reported to have feasted on meat from different animals they killed without official permission.⁵⁰³ The team also recorded that the NC of Nuanetsi, a supposed custodian of the law was known to have regularly conducted unauthorised hunting in the game reserve. The exhibit came out when one of his accomplices who passed by their camp was seen carrying large quantities of elephant biltong from elephants which the NC had shot a few days back.⁵⁰⁴ When members of the expedition returned on another visit in 1958, they

⁵⁰¹ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 252.

⁵⁰² NAZ: S1194/1614/6, Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Lands to Secretary Department of Internal Affairs, 31 January 1949, 'National Parks'.

⁵⁰³ Report, 'Extracts from Boys Diaries: Stephen Driver-Thursday 2nd September', Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society Report: Lundi Expedition, September 1954, p. 15.

⁵⁰⁴ Report, 'Extracts from Boys Diaries: Neil Humphreys-Monday 6th September 1954', Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society Report: Lundi Expedition, September 1954, p. 17.

had an express arrangement with the NC Haglethorn to shoot game for laboratory specimen and for the “pot if absolutely necessary.”⁵⁰⁵

The residence conditions of indigenous communities still living in parks were clarified by the National Parks Act of 1949. Firstly, their numbers were to be limited by the Department of Native Affairs. Secondly, the numbers kept in parks were to be determined by the need to preserve the natural economic conditions of the area. Thirdly, they had to observe conservation regulations of the park and fourthly, agricultural staff was to control land use in the occupied areas and lastly, once numbers had been determined, there was to be guaranteed tenure with removal only coming where there was breach of conditions of occupancy.⁵⁰⁶

Around 1950, all the land from Nuanetsi through Bubyane to Limpopo Rivers and extending to the PEA border was re-designated the Sengwe Special Native Area, a halfway step to full Native Reserve status.⁵⁰⁷ In 1954, a huge special piece of land left from the Unassigned Area became the Gonakudzingwa APA with originally seventeen farms of about six thousand eight hundred and seventy nine hectares each. It was earmarked for further sub-division into smaller plots to be sold to wealthier African farmers and ranchers. The number of farms was, in time, increased to 43 with their sizes reduced and now ranging from five hundred and thirty eight to one thousand hectares.⁵⁰⁸ After taking over Nuanetsi District in 1958, Wright did not hide his plans for the Gonakudzingwa area that he considered more ideal for game than human settlement. He fantasised:

⁵⁰⁵ Report, H. A. B Simons, Esq., ‘Senior Leader’s Report’, Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society Report: Mateke Expedition, May 1958, p. 2.

⁵⁰⁶ Report of the National Parks Advisory Board, Year Ended 31/12/49, p. 40, Report of the National Parks Advisory Board, Year Ended 31/12/50, p. 42, *Bantu Mirror*, 3 September 1949, ‘Matopos to Become Tourist Resort’ & NAZ: S156/46, Report of Commission of Enquiry, 16 May 1949.

⁵⁰⁷ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 321.

⁵⁰⁸ Interview with Ward 10 Councillor, Gonakudzingwa, 6 September 2014.

Before me, as far as the eye could see, was the vast, *empty* (my emphasis) Gonakudzingwa Purchase Area-‘empty’ only in human context for it teemed with animal life...the great wilderness looked mysterious, haze-blue, inviting. What a heritage! What a wonderful national park this south-east corner of Rhodesia would make...What a wonderful game reserve the vast *unoccupied* (my emphasis) portions of Gonakudzingwa African Purchase Area would make! A great new national park from the Lundi to Nuanetsi-must think of some way of getting Salisbury to see that this area is *no good for Africans but damned good for game* (my emphasis).⁵⁰⁹

He contended that up to four hundred and four thousand six hundred and eighty seven hectares of Gonakudzingwa land was unsuitable for African farming owing to poor soils, low rainfall and tsetse-fly infestation and offered that the “great empty block” be turned into a game park.⁵¹⁰

Again, in his maiden flight over his new area of jurisdiction, Wright noted how magnificent the flat-topped Nyamatongwe Mountain was and unofficially proclaimed it a national park of the future. The Marhumbini area of the Ngwenyeni clan was also captured in his fantasy as a “remote” but “wild spot” that had to be part of the great national park scheme. The bringing to fruition of the GNP became a dream he committed himself to achieving during his tenure, a battle that he was to fight from many trenches and that was to prove difficult to accomplish amidst bitter and unrelenting infightings.⁵¹¹ On 19 November 1962, T. Lees-May, the Director of Veterinary Services, whose Department had all along opposed the scheme was now persuaded to support it when he concurred with Wright that the area was no good for human settlement as it was virtually waterless and its borehole water undrinkable due to its high salt content.⁵¹²

Wright, therefore, proposed that the Buffalo Bend Area, Manjinji Pan and Malipati Sanctuaries be excised from the Gonakudzingwa APA and be made part of the GGR. He suggested that Shangane inhabitants of the area, whose number was still considerable at the beginning of the 1960s be

⁵⁰⁹ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp. 34 & 64.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 33, 64-65, 132, 134 & 136.

⁵¹¹ Ibid. pp., 16, 32, 64 & 130.

⁵¹² Ibid. p. 318.

resettled in the basalt soils of Chikombedzi, instead. He, thus, proceeded to unilaterally declare the country bordered by the Gonakudzingwa farms, the Nuanetsi River, the Portuguese border and the railway line running south-east as an unofficial game reserve where shooting, hunting and camping were prohibited.⁵¹³ He was supported by Jack Quinton, the first chairman of Rhodesia's Sabi-Limpopo Authority who, like Wright, was an animal lover. The efforts of the two were soon rewarded when most of the Gonakudzingwa APA, including Buffalo Bend, was finally incorporated into the GGR through the Land Apportionment Act No. 37 of 1961.⁵¹⁴

In early 1961, the Department of Wild Life took over the task of protecting Wright's unofficial game area by appointing a warden at Chipinda Pools. The warden proceeded to put up notices throughout the Buffalo Bend Area confirming its new status as a PA. In another show of discord in government, the status of the PA was quickly reversed by some official from Salisbury, claiming the declaration had been done un-procedurally and rather pre-maturely and that the area remained Forest Land.⁵¹⁵ The changed position was later spelt out in the 1963 Wild Life Act No. 47 that re-designated the GNP as National Land, essentially creating some confusion.⁵¹⁶

Again, in 1961 the government appointed the Quinton Select Committee on Land to look into the issue of resettling African communities outside the GGR. The Committee took a more humane stance when it cautioned against the insensitive removal of Shangane inhabitants from the Gonarezhou terrain. It nevertheless recommended that all of the Gonakudzingwa APA east of the railway line and west of Lundi be incorporated into the Forest Area, thus, effectively making it game land. Its recommendations were put into effect by the Land Apportionment Act Amendment

⁵¹³ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 149.

⁵¹⁴ Land Apportionment Act Amendment No. 37 of 1961.

⁵¹⁵ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp. 311-312.

⁵¹⁶ Wildlife Act No. 47 of 1963.

of 1961 that sanctioned more boundary adjustments in favour of the game scheme. Such alignments led to the incorporation of Mabalauta Communal area into the GNP.⁵¹⁷

Wright's game plans were further scampereed in 1963 when the government pushed for the slicing of about one hundred and five thousand two hundred and eighteen hectares from the proposed Forest Area to accommodate several hundred African families being displaced from Nuanetsi Ranch. The land had, again, been damned as unsuitable for African settlement due to its poor soils. In an attempt to dissuade the government from taking the piece of land, Wright argued that the same land had, in the past, been spurned by the local people for its infertility and that in any event, the Shangane had plenty of land to expand into in the Sengwe TTL.⁵¹⁸ Notwithstanding the protest, the government proceeded to resettle people on the condemned land. It agreed to give the Special African Area to the Department of Wildlife as a *quid pro quo* for the land lost to the African resettlement. The land that was donated to Parks was said to be inhabited by a handful of Shanganes who lived by snaring and, so, the government had no regrets in taking it from them.⁵¹⁹

The future of the game reserve became even more uncertain in 1964 when the Director of Veterinary Services ordered the wholesale elimination of elephant, kudu, buffalo, bushbuck, warthog and bush pig species thought to be carriers of the tsetse-fly bug. The whole area from Lundi right down to Buffalo Bend suffered huge annihilations of these species; something that riled Wright who went into full gear in lobbying animal lovers to stop the campaign.⁵²⁰ The

⁵¹⁷ Land Apportionment Act Amendment No. 37 of 1961.

⁵¹⁸ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 338.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 332.

⁵²⁰ Wright even wrote to the *Rhodesian Sunday Mail* complaining about the massacres, using pseudonyms to disguise his identity for fear of victimisation as a government officer. See, *The Sunday Mail*, 1 March 1964, 'Slaughter of Game Again' & *The Sunday Mail*, 22 March 1964, 'Gona Re Zhou Must Not Die'.

Chairperson of the Southern Rhodesian Wildlife Society, Aitken-Cade also condemned the mass elimination of the targeted animals:

It is going to undo all the good work the Wild Life Conservation Department and the National Parks have done in the last 12 years, and it is going to raise a stink in the nostrils of the civilized world...we would end up with a biological desert in this part of Africa.⁵²¹

He lamented the elimination of special species of elephants. He specifically cited one huge elephant called *Dhlulamiti* (Taller than Trees) that had tusks weighing over 36 kilogrammes as one of those regrettably targeted for riddance.⁵²²

By 1968, the position had, again, changed in favour of the game scheme and the Gonarezhou scheme was taking shape once more. The scheme finally got traction through the gazetting of Government Notice No. 776 and 777 of 1968 that declared the entire area from Lundi to Nuanetsi, including Wright's private Malipati and Manjinji Pan, part of the GGR.⁵²³ The 1969 Report of the Wild Life Commission recommended that the area, with its potential of becoming one of Africa's greatest parks be elevated to the status of a National Park.⁵²⁴

The finalisation of the Gonarezhou boundaries in 1968 meant that the so-called squatters, still resident in the park, were to be removed forthwith and resettled in adjacent Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs). In the same spirit, D. Newmarch, the new Regional Game Warden also pushed for the removal of all the Shangane who were still in the game reserve accusing them of increased poaching. He, furthermore, blamed them for strategically growing crops in the game area to attract

⁵²¹ *The Sunday Mail*, 1 March 1964, 'Game Slaughter Fear'.

⁵²² *Ibid.*

⁵²³ Report of the National Park Advisory Board, 1968, p. 5.

⁵²⁴ This was effected through the Parks and Wild Life Act No. 14 of 1975.

animals so that they kill them.⁵²⁵ For similar reasons, Wright banned the watering of cattle at pools in the game reserve arguing the Shangane were using such opportunities to snare:

I learnt that those who watered their cattle at the bridge pool did so only because they were too lazy to pump water from the boreholes in the Sengwe TTL... and the driving of cattle to the river pool was a wonderful blind for snaring activities. It meant that they always had a lawful excuse for being in the big game areas... Where there are Shangaan males and wild life, there is always snaring going on so I had to remove the Shangaans as I naturally had no desire to get rid of the wild life.⁵²⁶

Concerted moves were soon taken to remove all of them from the game reserve, an action that was strongly opposed by the affected indigenous peoples.

Resisting eviction from the Gonarezhou homeland

It is noted that up until 1950, there were still large numbers of Shangane people in the Gonarezhou game-designated area with most concentrated around the Sabi-Lundi junction near Kundani Hill.⁵²⁷ They were constantly reminded of their squatter status and that they were to vacate the area, sooner or later. In the early 1950s, rumour was spreading that they were going to be moved to the Matibi No. 2 and Sengwe Reserves and their areas converted into a Special Shooting Area.⁵²⁸ The rumour, that was not entirely untrue, was that they would be joined by the Ndebele and Shona-speaking people from other parts of the country. It was further stated that those with the ability to buy land would be given the opportunity to do so in the Gonakudzingwa APA.⁵²⁹ What then followed were several waves of evictions that affected all the people still in the GNP. The targeted groups were the Mahenye, Fitchani, Chisa, Ngwenyeni and Xilotlela communities.⁵³⁰ Some of

⁵²⁵ Ibid, p. 150.

⁵²⁶ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 162.

⁵²⁷ NAZ: TH10/1/1/161, 'Nyamutongwe Ruins-Postscript'.

⁵²⁸ Report of the National Parks Advisory Board for the Year Ended 31/12/50.

⁵²⁹ Interview with Ward 10 Councillor, on the Transfrontier Tour Bus Trip to Mabalauta (GNP), 5 September 2014.

⁵³⁰ Bannerman, 'Hlengweni', p. 492.

Mahenye's people were moved to Ndanga while Fitchani's people were resettled on the upper part of Matibi No. 2, under headman Masivamele. Chisa, Ngwenyeni and Xilotlela were to put stiff resistance against eviction and, so, are treated as case studies below.

Chisa evictees

The Chisa people had a long history of confrontation with the colonial government that dated back to the early years of colonial rule. Their actions had earned them the reputation for being a recalcitrant community. Their land had been declared a Controlled Hunting Area at the inception of colonial rule and subsequently a zone of selective animal elimination to control the spread of tsetse-flies.⁵³¹ Between 1890 and 1933 the Chisa people had running battles with the settler government over hunting restrictions imposed on them.⁵³² The proclamation of the area as a game reserve in 1934 brought in a new dimension to the conflict as Chisa's people suddenly became squatters and, so, threatened with eviction. In the 1940s, the area was de-proclaimed as a game area to allow for the effective elimination of tsetse-flies along the Sabi and Lundi Rivers, only to be incorporated back into the game reserve by 1956. The re-proclamation involved the re-drawing of boundaries, which expediently coincided with the downgrading of the Chisa chieftainship to headmanship. The move was meant to serve as punishment for the chief's opposition to the game scheme and his perceived insubordination.⁵³³

Chief Chisa was, therefore, demoted to the position of a headman by DC Leatt in 1957 and placed under Chief Tsvovani, of a lower house. Magumbe became the first headman of the clan taking

⁵³¹ Mombeshora & Le Bel, 'People-Park Conflicts', p. 2609. Again, Chief Chisa is wrongly captured as Chitsa in most colonial literature.

⁵³² Interview with Paulus Chikomba, Village Head, Chisa, 28 June 2014.

⁵³³ Interview with Headman Mpapa, Mpapa Village, 21 July 2014.

over from his father Mavenge who had been appointed chief in 1937.⁵³⁴ The demotion created further bitterness on the part of the community and, so, turned them into uncooperative subjects for most of the colonial period. As part of the punishment, it had earlier been suggested that Magumbe be moved to Buhera District. He was only saved by some representation from Chief Tsvovani who was generally in good books with the colonial government and, so, had requested that the Chisa people be placed under him.⁵³⁵ To the government, the move also saved the dual purpose of keeping the rebellious clan under surveillance, by their own kinsfolk.

Chisa's people were in the end moved from the Gotosa area of the Sabi-Lundi junction in 1957 to Chingoji before being further moved and settled in the Seven Jack area, also called Guluji.⁵³⁶ They were given a fifteen day notice to leave following which they were forcibly bundled into trucks and left many of their belongings such as *guyo* (grinding stones), *tshurwi na mutswi* (pestles), *timbita* (clay pots), *tihlelo* (winnowing baskets) and some of their livestock.⁵³⁷ Most painfully, they left behind their fertile Gotosa land, ancestral graves and “our identity that had been crafted over the years and engraved in our land back there.”⁵³⁸ Those who resisted had their huts burnt to force them to comply. Some outrightly refused to move to the newly designated area and crossed the border to PEA. Some went to Zaka and others joined Chief Tsvovani across the Sabi River.⁵³⁹

The evacuated land became a Controlled Hunting Area, exclusively reserved for white recreational hunting. A tsetse and cattle control fence was erected along the Chivonja Hills, separating the game reserve area and Chisa's new area of settlement. The fence effectively barred the people

⁵³⁴ Mombeshora & Le Bel, 'People-Park Conflicts', p. 2608-2609.

⁵³⁵ Interview with Nduna Maponde (ex-resident of Marhumbini), Sangwe Communal Area, 23 December 2013.

⁵³⁶ Interview with Enias Masiya, Guluji Ward 22, 28 June 2014.

⁵³⁷ Interview with Samuel Khumbani, Mahenye, 4 August 2014.

⁵³⁸ Interview with Paulus Chikomba, Village Head, Chisa, 28 June 2014.

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

from grazing their cattle in their old homelands. In 1962, Chisa was further forcibly moved from the Seven Jack area, this time, to accommodate the new *ndhedzi* (tsetse) control fence erected to contain the latest outbreaks.⁵⁴⁰ He was resettled in the Ndali area of Sangwe TTL and given an assurance a return to the Seven Jack area after the elimination of *ndhedzi* in the quarantined zone. The agreement was never honoured and to Chisa's utmost concern, the area was instead leased as a cattle grazing area to Ray Sparrow (*Recky*) who named it Lone Star Ranch.⁵⁴¹

Table 3.1: Village heads resisting eviction from the Seven Jack area of the GNP

Name of Village Head	Resident Families
Mahjechekuwona	?
Judo	17
Tiwani	16
Mavuwe	?
Muzamani	37
Masiya	30
Ndali	40

Source: MRC: ZAKA, MS18: Report on the Chitsa Headmanship and Community, p. 2.

Headman Ndali, one of Chisa's village heads refused to move from the Seven Jack area. He defiantly remained in the area with six other 'rebel' village heads that are captured in Table 3.1. The unwelcome occupants were accused of extensive poaching and force was soon used to drive them out. A veterinary fence was put up in the disputed area, thus, putting finality to the possible return of the people to the Seven Jack area. When, in 1975, the status of the game reserve was changed to that of a national park, the Seven Jack area was incorporated into the larger park with the 'temporary' 1962 Veterinary fence becoming the 'permanent' official boundary, thus, creating

⁵⁴⁰ Interview with Enias Masiya, Guluji Ward 22, 28 June 2014.

⁵⁴¹ Interview with Joshua Dzviriri (former employee of *Recky*), Mupinga, 17 April 2014.

further tension with the Chisa people. As a result, the clan never forgot the loss and never forgave the colonial government for the deceit. As will be discussed in chapter 6, they were to take up the fight for the recovery of the Seven Jack area and the larger GNP during the country's land reform programme launched in 2000.

The Ngwenyeni 'rebels'

Headman Ngwenyeni's Marhumbini area was located south of the Sabi-Lundi junction. His headmanship had been recognised by Forestall in 1898 when he was appointed the overseer of the entire BSAC controlled border territory. He was in charge of the five villages that made up the entire permanent population of the isolated and seemingly neglected border spot.⁵⁴² To the disappointment of the Rhodesian government, the headman continued to pay allegiance to and seek guidance from his paramount Chief Mavube across the Portuguese border. It appears that he was either oblivious of the border line that had been drawn right across the Shangane land by Rhodesian and Portuguese colonialists or was simply being defiant.⁵⁴³ When Marhumbini was declared part of a game reserve in 1934, the people suffered the same anxiety of living with the threat of eviction as their Chisa kinfolk.

Worried about possible eviction, the headman took a proactive move of seeking an assurance from DC Wright of his people's continued tenure on the land that his people had occupied before colonial control. The Marhumbini correctly argued that this was the land of their ancestors that they had a right to live on.⁵⁴⁴ Furthermore, they contended that during their long occupation of the area, they had made concerted efforts to harvest the forest resources of Gonarezhou

⁵⁴² NAZ: S914/12/1B, Report on area in Crown Lands Between Matibi No. 2 Native Reserve and Portuguese East Africa Border Line: Re-Game Reserve. B.V. Brewer.

⁵⁴³ MRC: MS 22, Report on the Ngwenyeni or Marumbini Headmanship, p. 84.

⁵⁴⁴ MRC: MS 22 Delineation Report on the Ngwenyeni or Marumbini Headmanship and Community, p. 84.

responsibly, a position supported by the fact that animals such as hippopotamus were found in abundance in the area and were alleged to have done little damage to the crops of the Shangane in response to the community's good will.⁵⁴⁵

In a similar study on the Nunu forest dwellers of middle Zaire, Robert Harms shoots the romanticised idea of pre-colonial African communities having lived in harmony with their environment.⁵⁴⁶ He argues, instead, that the Nunu community was guided by a belief that “conservation was not an issue as long as resources remained plentiful.”⁵⁴⁷ Such kind of attitude led to the over-exploitation of the forest resources. The argument that the Nunu were by no means egalitarian and first-class conservationists could apply to other pre-colonial African communities, including the Shangane. That there were certain ‘big men’ who controlled strategic production areas such as ponds, fields, rivers and mountains in such communities cannot be disputed. It can, therefore, be concluded that many pre-colonial societies were characterised by “permanent competition for [the] control of natural resources.”⁵⁴⁸

Again, studies elsewhere in Africa have shown that community differences were manifest through access to modes of production such as cattle control, land tenure systems and through inequalities that came in form of hierarchical class distinctions, generational differences, gender and even religious distinctions.⁵⁴⁹ Similarly, the Gonarezhou forest must also have been an arena of such competing interests before its conversion to a game reserve.

⁵⁴⁵ This was revealed in interviews conducted in January and February 2015 with Sangwe villagers who live along the Save River.

⁵⁴⁶ R. Harms, *Games Against Nature. An Eco-Cultural History of the Nunu of Equatorial Africa*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. ix.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid. p. xvi.

⁵⁴⁹ An elaborate discussion of these is presented in: J. Iliffe, *The African Poor*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1992), J. Guy, ‘Analysing Pre-Capitalist Societies in Southern Africa’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 14, 1

The order for the eviction of the Ngwenyeni not surprisingly came sooner, in 1963. They were officially advised that they were to be moved to the Bengi Springs area of Malipati, an area that was to be part of the Matibi No. 2 TTL.⁵⁵⁰ The proposal was strongly opposed by Wright who for selfish reasons felt that Marhumbini, together with Nyamatongwe should remain part of GGR.⁵⁵¹ He offered instead that the Ngwenyeni be allowed to remain at Marhumbini as a tourist attraction, a position clearly captured in the quotation below:

I saw the Ngwenyenyeye [Ngwenyeni] group, primitive, ultra-conservative, unspoiled Shangaans as they had done a hundred years ago, as part and parcel of any national park scheme of the future. Tourists from overseas do not want to see dams, towns, buildings or mountains in Africa-they have a surfeit of these things at home-they want to study wild animals and ‘wild’ Africans...I intend it to convey a picture of all that is best in our indigenes, unspoilt by the deviousness and tarnish of our so-called civilisation. Here in Gona re Zhou we had a wonderful opportunity to combine the two great attractions in a unique and beautiful setting...If the presence of a group of unsophisticated Africans, who would be a wonderful tourist attraction, is considered alien to the national park concept [as distinct from a mere game reserve], then of course there can be no place for the visitors themselves and their ugly rest camps, bars and restaurants. In Gona re Zhou, the object must surely be to create a wilderness area, not as it was a thousand or even five hundred years ago but as we found it when we occupied this country nearly a hundred years ago. If there is a place for indigenous trees and plants, animals and birds, there is no reason why indigenous humans should not fit into the ecosystem, too. The presence of the Ngwenyenyeye [Ngwenyeni] people, properly controlled in the same way as all other residents of a national park must be controlled, would turn Gona re Zhou into a world-wide attraction, unique and self-contained-and a great revenue earner.⁵⁵²

Similar fantasies were offered in relation to the occupation of the Matopos Game Reserve when suggestions were made that some indigenous people be allowed to remain in the park and provide a “picturesque...charm to a primal landscape.”⁵⁵³ It was, furthermore, proffered that their grass-

(1997) & C. Colquhoun-Vidrovitch, ‘The Political Economy of the African Peasantry and Modes of Production’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 7, 2 (1981).

⁵⁵⁰ Interview with Hlasela Maphini Ngwenyeni, Ngwenyeni, 24 July 2014.

⁵⁵¹ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 268.

⁵⁵² Ibid. pp. 339-340. Again colonial literature wrongly spelt Ngwenyeni as Ngwenyenyeye and Marhumbini as Marumbini.

⁵⁵³ Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks*, p. 136.

thatched huts, stock and crops would be interesting features to tourists.⁵⁵⁴ In addition, it was argued that allowing “a few of the better type of families”⁵⁵⁵ to settle along tourist routes would certainly be acceptable from a tourist point of view. In support, the Chairperson of the local Parks Committee suggested that the continued stay of some Africans in the Matopos would attract tourists interested in observing the indigenous people in their pristine conditions.⁵⁵⁶

The inherent contradiction in Wright’s game park perception was, here, evident. An anti-poaching advocate was now forced to compromise his principles by trading in the Nyamatongwe-Bengi area with the continued residence of the Ngwenyeni people in the Marhumbini area of the Gonarezhou, even if it meant “putting up with a bit of poaching at the Sabi-Lundi junction”. He now conveniently argued that the small scale additional poaching would, after all, obviate the need to cull game when the time arose in future.⁵⁵⁷ This was, to the credit of the local people a tacit acknowledgement of the local people’s conservation acumen. It was also a confirmation that local people had in the past managed nature sustainably through the application of indigenous knowledge. Again, as rightly noted by Wolmer, Wright’s suggestion that the Ngwenyeni people remain in the game-designated area revealed another innate tension on the choices to be made about which wilderness to preserve. In this case, he deliberately decided that one wilderness would be spoiled by the presence of humans while another would thrive with human beings in it, an irreconcilable contradiction.⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁴ *Bantu Mirror*, 3 September 1949, ‘Matopos to Become Tourist Resort’.

⁵⁵⁵ NAZ: F128 HAF 54/15/1, Meeting of the National Parks Advisory Board, 4 December 1953. Also see, NAZ: S1561/46/1, Chief Native Commissioner to Secretary, Department of the PM (Native Affairs), 23 October 1933, ‘Matopo National Park’.

⁵⁵⁶ NAZ: S1561/46/1, Evidence of R. H. N. Smithers, 22 and 23 March 1949.

⁵⁵⁷ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 329.

⁵⁵⁸ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 151.

The Ngwenyeni strongly opposed eviction from an environment that had sustained them all along.⁵⁵⁹ In the face of such opposition DC Wright and A. Fraser, the Director of Wild Life Conservation struck a compromise deal with the Ngwenyeni to allow them to stay and, so, save the Nyamatongwe-Bengi area from being excised from the GNP. Their unwritten 1963 accord became known as the Fraser-Wright Agreement. The Ngwenyeni headman and his five villages were granted a reprieve from eviction but forced to operate under new tenancy conditions. These were that they give up poaching and that anyone found hunting illegally would be summarily evicted. They were also to provide remunerated labour in the Gonarezhou projects such as fencing and road clearance.⁵⁶⁰ They were, in addition, barred from accommodating any additional people, including their grown up children who were to be moved elsewhere. In protest, some offered to cross to PEA *en masse*⁵⁶¹, a move that was administratively embarrassing.

DC Wright had, however, contended that the Ngwenyeni would be grateful for receiving the special eviction moratorium and additionally getting jobs on their doorsteps. Such kind of reasoning, coming from someone who purported to understand the African psyche better was rather surprising. For Wright did not seem to realise or deliberately ignored the fact that years of physical and psychological harassment had hardened them and no amount of benevolence, short of concrete guarantees of permanent occupancy of their homeland, could satisfy them. The bitterness of living under the fear of eviction was real and could not be simply wished away. The Ngwenyeni just wanted to be allowed to stay on their lands undisturbed.

⁵⁵⁹ Interview with Hlasela Maphini Ngwenyeni, Ngwenyeni, 24 July 2014.

⁵⁶⁰ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 329.

⁵⁶¹ Interview with Overseer Hobwani, Chikombedzi, 21 July 2014.

The Fraser-Wright Agreement was broken, just four years down the line in 1967. The abrogation came soon after the promotion of Fraser to Under-Secretary of Lands in 1966. The new Directorate of the Department of Wild Life revived the argument that the continued presence of the Ngwenyeni people in the Gonarezhou land was a menace to the ecosystem of the PA. The clan was accused of intensifying their poaching activities. Again, officers in the Wild Life Department, less Fraser, could not reconcile a situation where Africans could be permanent residents in the park.⁵⁶²

One of the first assignments of the new DC who replaced Wright was, therefore, to order the Ngwenyeni out of Marhumbini. He even had the temerity of ‘encouraging’ them to leave voluntarily. The order was followed by increased terrorising of the community by game rangers to push them out. Headman Ngwenyeni Maguwu protested:

We cannot leave the area where we have lived all our lives. Our fathers and grandfathers were born here. They lived and died here without harming anybody. The spirits of our ancestors are here. The area is said to be a game reserve-but how can this be? We have lived here since before the Europeans came to this country. It should be a native reserve [people reserve]. When we were told we would have to leave we asked the District Commissioner [Wright] if we could remain in our ancestral area. The District Commissioner consulted with the Department of National Parks and Wild Life Management, and later informed us we could remain...now we were again being told we cannot remain here forever, and that we should move.⁵⁶³

The objection was also put in writing and (mis)directed to Wright, who had since been re-assigned to Umtali. In the communication, they complained about their impending eviction and requested him to “tell the Government” what he had said to them in 1963.⁵⁶⁴ Wright regretted the government’s rejection of his proposed tourist set up that would have resulted from keeping the Ngwenyeni at Marhumbini but was then powerless to influence events in his old work place. He, however, forwarded the letter to the correct office, which appeared uninterested in it. To him, the

⁵⁶² Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 339.

⁵⁶³ MRC: MS 22 Delineation Report on the Ngwenyeni or Marumbini Headmanship, p. 87.

⁵⁶⁴ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 341.

abrogation of the Wright-Fraser Agreement was an unethical act that justifiably created bitterness on the part of the Ngwenyeni. He contended that in future, the Ngwenyeni people would understandably never trust a government official.

Ngwenyeni protests were followed by concerted requests to the government to allow them to stay. They pointed out how their lives were heavily depended on the Sabi and Lundi Rivers and the surrounding terrain. They indicated that they were prepared to work for the Department of Parks and that they could remain here without cattle if allowed to stay. They then passionately appealed to the government to allow them to stay in order continue with the life they were accustomed to.⁵⁶⁵

In an attempt to save face, or perhaps, a demonstration of his ignorance about the whole issue, the new DC responded through a minute dated 5 January 1968, stating:

There is one important correction I must make-Ngwenyenyene and his few kraals have certainly not been told to quit the area, and for reasons known to all concerned and confirmed very recently by Messrs PARKER and FRASER, Secretary and Under-Secretary for Lands, there is no intention of ordering them to quit.⁵⁶⁶

Yet, in spite of the generation of the communication, the Ngwenyeni people were still given new stringent residence conditions: that no more new adults were to be registered in the five villages, that those placed on National Parks labour agreements were to comply with all the new labour conditions and that a voluntary move, “without bitterness” to the Sengwe TTL was encouraged.⁵⁶⁷

It turned out that the proposal was just another indirect way of driving them out as it was on record that they did not want to move anywhere and, so, could not volunteer to leave their land.

⁵⁶⁵ MRC: MS 22 Delineation Report on the Ngwenyenyene or Marumbini Headmanship, pp. 87- 88.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 88.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

Notwithstanding their protests and appeal for a reprieve, the eviction still came in August 1968.⁵⁶⁸ The Ngwenyeni people were moved *en masse* to the Malipati area of Mudirakose on the east bank of the lower Mwenezi River.⁵⁶⁹ The site was on the boundary of the Buffalo Bend which area Wright acknowledged was not suitable for agricultural production at all.⁵⁷⁰ Those who resisted, such as headman Meke Mufungwa had their homes burnt and forcibly moved to Mahenye.⁵⁷¹

The forced eviction of the Ngwenyeni from Marhumbini was celebrated by conservationists for creating unlimited mobility space for animals in the park. It was reported, for example, that soon after their removal, game had quickly returned to the area in large numbers and, “where elephant herds were previously unknown, large herds were occupying [the area] only eight days after the squatters had moved out.” It was also reported that the area north of Lundi suddenly recorded an influx of giraffe and *nyala* for the first time in living memory.⁵⁷²

In his new place of settlement, Ngwenyeni became a headman without land as the area was already overcrowded as a result of earlier settlers. The land was rocky and, so, unproductive.⁵⁷³ Since meaningful cropping was practically impossible here, the people continued to *kuhlota* (hunt) in order to survive. Douglas Newmarch, the new regional warden complained on 3 November 1970 about increased poaching in the area. He conceded that the escalated snaring appeared to be “coming from the group moved out of the Marhumbini area and placed along the lower Nuanetsi-an embittered lot; why, I don’t know.”⁵⁷⁴ That he did not know was just being disingenuous. He

⁵⁶⁸ Lyson Chisaka Masango who was a government interpreter during the eviction period explained in an interview on 6 August 2014 how the government went on to use the combined force of soldiers, the police and park officials to drive out those who were resisting. Also see interview with Mhlava Chirhindze, Mahenye, 7 August 2014.

⁵⁶⁹ Interview with Hlasela Maphini Ngwenyeni, Ngwenyeni, 24 July 2014.

⁵⁷⁰ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 341.

⁵⁷¹ Interview with Mhlava Chirhindze, Mahenye, 7 August 2014.

⁵⁷² Report of the National Parks Advisory Board for Year Ending 1968, p. 23.

⁵⁷³ Interview with Hlasela Maphini, Ngwenyeni, 24 July 2014. The Ndebele had been settled in the area in the 1950s from Matebeleland. They were also victims of eviction from their original homelands.

⁵⁷⁴ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 341.

obviously knew the Ngwenyeni were bitter because of being up-rooted from their homeland and being relocated in barren land. They were, in every sense, disgruntled settlers who seized any opportunity to fix a government that had reneged on its promise and used its might to force them out of their land. Harassing wild animals in their new area of settlement was most certainly the hallmark of their new politics of protest. Given the new battle lines, it was certain the Department was poised for a long fight with an embittered community right on their doorstep.⁵⁷⁵

Xilotlela hardliners

The Xilotlela people, located along the PEA border approximately forty kilometres south of Vila Salazar were also targeted for eviction in 1963. The people enjoyed good relations with the Portuguese stationed at Malvernia, thus, they freely crossed the border with their Rhodesian identity certificates to conduct daily chores such as shopping, fetching water and accessing health services.⁵⁷⁶ DC Wright decided to move these seemingly independent Shanganes from their terrain in order to make it part of the greater Gonarezhou game scheme.

He proceeded to identify and service land for the resettlement of the community about forty kilometres from their abode without their express approval. The area, called Bejamseve, was located half-way between the Nuanetsi and Limpopo Rivers. Wright believed that the Bejamseve block of land would be welcomed by the Xilotlela's people as he had gone out of his way to prepare it in advance, a mistake he was to learn the hard way. The DC had sunk eight boreholes, cleared and demarcated land in the reddish soil of the area and identified what he considered to be first class pastures. He even promised to provide free transport to the evictees.⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 332.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 334.

Headman Xilotlela requested audience with the DC before the relocation of his people where he wanted Wright to provide details to his subjects on the new development. At the convened meeting, the headman was the first to take to the stage to explain why DC *Chibgwe*, was “here”. He addressed the gathering with some sarcasm:

He stressed the new boreholes with good water supplies, the grazing lands, the excellent soils he and the elders had seen. He told his followers they would be allowed to keep cattle there and that a new school would definitely be erected immediately they moved into their new home site. No missionary would build a school at their present kraal area because of the lack of security of tenure, but the Education Department had authorised a new school at Bejamseve and the missionaries had confirmed that they would build and run it.⁵⁷⁸

After his long address, he asked the DC to confirm what he had said. With the usual pomp of Rhodesian colonial officials, DC *Chibgwe* went to great lengths in explaining the perceived advantages of the relocation. He hammered on the main points that headman Ngwenyeni had presented, stressing that people would keep plenty of cattle there, as he had ensured the place was shielded from tsetse-flies.⁵⁷⁹

The people did not want to move as they, once again, stressed that they had lived along the border area well and were happy to stay put. They claimed they were prosperous and content with their environment which provided them with many foodstuffs, including wild fruits and roots. One old man had brought to the meeting a variety of such fruit and root species to demonstrate the point:

He had a selection of at least twelve different types laid out in front of him but his oratory was slightly deflated by a whisper to me [DC] from Sgt Mpandhle [the DC’s African Assistant] who indicated that at least two of his specimen were inedible and another slightly poisonous. I was tempted to ask him to demonstrate the wholesome-ness of his wares by eating those singled out by the Sergeant, but I restrained myself-he had gone to a lot of trouble to collect his exhibits and it seemed a pity to destroy his case!⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

Buoyed by his people's support, the headman summed up the clan's sentiments:

We were born here. Our fathers were born here and our grandfathers were born here-in the days when there was no border fence and no border line. We have many troubles-sometimes the Portuguese worry us, we have no cattle, water is short and arable land is limited. But this is our home! Our ancestral spirits are here. We do not want to move and we want the DC to go to Salisbury with our elders and tell the Government this.⁵⁸¹

It turned out that his people had in the past avoided settling in the proposed area because of its dryness. They were, therefore, not prepared to move to it now or ever. After the initial shock from the community's response was over, Wright claimed the reaction did not surprise him as the African aversion to any compulsory move was well known to him. But, in typical colonial arrogance, he confessed that he thought the Xilotlela people might have been fed up with living on the border wilderness and would have been happy to move. The DC was left with three choices; to abandon the resettlement project altogether, use the police to enforce movement or arrange a trip to Salisbury as advised by the headman. He opted for the latter but claimed the elders assigned to accompany him to Salisbury had chickened out at the last moment and, in his words; "the thought of a big city frightened them and a deputation came to see me to ask me to make the journey alone on their behalf."⁵⁸² The elders' action was most likely an act of protest if not a result of some underground intimidation, given *Chibgwe's* feared spy network system.⁵⁸³

A compromise position was finally reached where Xilotlela and his subjects were allowed to stay in their area but without cattle. While the move was explained as a tsetse-control measure, it was without doubt some punishment for the clan's opposition to a state project. As some further

⁵⁸¹ Ibid. p. 335.

⁵⁸² Ibid. pp. 333 & 335.

⁵⁸³ One of the first things that DC Wright did soon after taking over the District in 1958 was to establish a web of African spies throughout the district. His alleged toughness and hard-heartedness had earned him the nickname *Chibgwe* (hard stone). It is most probable that the spy system could have been activated to intimidate the people on the ground and, hence, the abandonment of the Salisbury trip.

chastisement, his area was re-designated a Special African Area and a buffer fence erected as a sanitary corridor to protect game from the people and the spread of tsetse-flies.⁵⁸⁴ The Xilotlela community had in the main won the battle as they were allowed to stay. When the final game boundaries were drawn, the Xilotlela's area was left out of the greater game scheme. They, in the eyes of their neighbours became a symbol of resistance to hated colonial projects.

Other evictees

Similarly, in the 1960s, the Mapokole people who were located south of Xilotlela's place were targeted for removal from Gonakudzingwa to give way to the full realisation of the Gonarezhou park scheme. The immediate justification for their eviction was that these "few" Shanganes who lived on snaring could be easily accommodated in vast lands in the adjacent reserves. The move meant to allow the evacuated area to become game land as it was said to be already teeming with wild animals.⁵⁸⁵ Evictions of the various communities generated ill-feelings even where land appeared to be plentiful. This was because such removals targeted areas that the indigenous people had sentimental attachments to by virtue of their long settlements on them.

Around 1962, another wave of evictions took place in the Nuanetsi Ranch. The BSAC owners of the ranch decided to throw out four hundred African families who had been living there for longer than anyone could remember. They were being punished for their unwillingness to sell their labour to the ranch.⁵⁸⁶ About one hundred and five thousand two hundred and eighteen hectares of land was identified for their resettlement south of the GNP. When officers from Salisbury came to inspect the proposed land, they condemned it for being in the tsetse-fly belt and instead proposed

⁵⁸⁴ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp. 335-336.

⁵⁸⁵ The position was enunciated by the Minister of Native Affairs, Jack Quinton, after a visit to the area in 1964.

⁵⁸⁶ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp. 265 & 267-268.

that they be settled west of the cattle fence in an area that was to be known as Matibi No. 2 Extension. Again, it turned out that the proposed land was equally unsuitable for human settlement due to low rainfall⁵⁸⁷ yet the state proceeded to move them on to that land.

The final removal of all resident communities from the GGR was accomplished at the end of 1968. It was followed by the quick establishment of game park infrastructure geared at promoting tourism in the area. These were facilities such as roads, houses and ablutions at attractive sites such as Chipinda Pools, Chilojo Cliffs, Chinguli, Mabalauta and Svimuwini.⁵⁸⁸ The GGR became an animal wilderness protected by state laws and high fences to ensure the guaranteed tenure and security of its animal inhabitants. Armed guards were deployed to apprehend those attempting to illegally gain entry into the park. The indigenous people, now settled in areas contiguous to the game sanctuary were denied access to their old dwelling and hunting places. A new confrontation stage ensued with indigenous communities now fighting from the fringes of the park.

The politics of exclusion from the Gonarezhou

The Gonarezhou evictions were immersed in the loathed fortress mantra of erecting exclusive fences. While Rhodesian colonial officials such as Wright claimed fences were erected to restrain dangerous wild animals from entering the surrounding TTLs and killing domestic animals and harming the villagers⁵⁸⁹, Mavhunga disagreed and instead averred that they were put up to “keep the people out of the park” and act as the “first line of defence against them [people].”⁵⁹⁰ Preventive fences had, prior to 1934, riled the Mahenye people when they were used to bar them from accessing grazing lands in neighbouring PEA. Apparently, the Mahenye people had

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 268.

⁵⁸⁸ See, Gonarezhou National Park, General Management Plan 2011-2021, for such facilities.

⁵⁸⁹ Wright, *Grey Ghosts at Buffalo Bend*, p. 17.

⁵⁹⁰ Mavhunga, ‘The Mobile Workshop’, p. 2.

continued to defy the arbitrary international boundary by crossing the border willy-nilly to graze their stock across the border.⁵⁹¹ When the government criminalised such kind of border crossing, the Shangane cried foul. Similarly, the fencing of the BSAC-owned Nuanetsi Ranch in 1919 had produced the same sentiments on the part of the Chitanga communities of Matibi No. 1 TTL.⁵⁹²

The first Gonarezhou fence which was put up in 1934 was an anti-tsetse one directed at creating a barrier between infected and uninfected animals.⁵⁹³ It was specifically erected to prevent the Chisa, Mahenye and Ngwenyeni people from driving their cattle to Massengena in PEA where the government feared they would catch the dreaded cattle diseases and contaminate others on the Rhodesian side. The borderland communities resented the fence which they believed was erected to prevent them from accessing pastures and interacting with their kinsfolk across the Portuguese border.⁵⁹⁴ The erection of fences did not only work against indigenous communities but also animals. It was noted that the fencing of the GNP cut off animals in the Mkwesine area from their traditional watering points leading to massive deaths during drought years.⁵⁹⁵

In 1963, another fence was put up along the border with PEA, this time, to protect the Gonarezhou game from being infected by the foot and mouth disease that was rampant in that country. At about the same time, another one was also erected between Matibi No. 2 TTL and Lone Star Ranch. These fences threatened the livelihoods of communities within and in the neighbouring villages as they locked them in (for monitoring purposes) or closed them out (for exclusion purposes).⁵⁹⁶ One

⁵⁹¹ Wright, *Grey Ghosts at Buffalo Bend*, p. 118.

⁵⁹² Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 353.

⁵⁹³ MRC: ZAKA, MS 18, Report of the Chitsa Headmanship, p. 3.

⁵⁹⁴ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 354. The borderland Shangane had in the past driven their cattle across also to avoid compulsory dipping. The argument proffered by the Rhodesian government that dipping prevented cattle diseases was not bought by these border communities who argued that their relative's cattle in PEA were healthy yet there was no cattle dipping in PEA. Taking cattle to Massangena was also an act of protest.

⁵⁹⁵ NAZ: S4061, 'Address by Mr L. B. Smith, Deputy Minister of Agriculture on Tsetse-fly Operations', Wild Life Society of Rhodesia, No. 27, August 1967.

⁵⁹⁶ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 257.

such fence was erected right across the eastern Gonarezhou area in what was known as the Guluene-Chefu corridor.⁵⁹⁷ The fence encroached into African villages that were scattered throughout the fence's periphery. New hostile settlers, in the name of elephants were as a result brought closer to the people. The elephants of Buffalo Bend in particular became aggressive due provocation by their Ngwenyeni resettled neighbours.⁵⁹⁸ In the Chishinya area, people were also often attacked by stropo buffaloes.⁵⁹⁹ For much of 1969, for instance, staff at Mabalauta spent considerable time responding to distress calls from recently resettled villagers who were complaining about elephants and buffaloes that were harassing them and destroying their crops.⁶⁰⁰

It was, therefore, apparent that the fences increased human-wildlife conflict and as Chavhunduka correctly argued, their erection generated ill-feelings among African peoples living next to parks who strongly felt parks such as the GNP had been created for the exclusive enjoyment of white people. To such people, game reserves were viewed as grossly underutilised land. They saw no moral justification in their establishment given that many of them were short of farming land and were reeling under poverty in peripheral lands abutting the parks.⁶⁰¹

Africans who were accidentally killed by aggressive elephants of the park rarely got government sympathy or compensation. They were, instead, chastised for their recklessness.⁶⁰² Colonial park administrators generally trivialised attacks by rogue elephants, arguing the bush Shangane would

⁵⁹⁷ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 72.

⁵⁹⁸ Wright, *Grey Ghosts at Buffalo Bend*, p. 5.

⁵⁹⁹ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 259.

⁶⁰⁰ NAZ: SRG/3, Report 1969, Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Appendix D-Ministry of Mines and Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1969, p. 11.

⁶⁰¹ NAZ: S4061, D. Chavhunduka, 'Is there a Future for National Parks in Zimbabwe', p. 13.

⁶⁰² Interview with Ward 9 Councillor, Swimuwini Camp, Mabalauta (GNP), 5 September 2014.

have provoked them. A few cases will suffice in illustrating the point. One was of a woman who lived near Manjinji Pan:

She was walking down the road to her hut when she encountered a young elephant bull about to cross the road ahead of her on his way to Manjinji-it was just after sunset. She would have normally stopped and allowed the bull to proceed but the beer she had consumed that afternoon had deadened her senses and made her less heedful of danger than would normally have been the case. She walked on and when she arrived at the spot where the waiting bull stood, she shouted-‘Voetsak! Voetsak!’ just as if a stray dog had offended her.⁶⁰³

The “innocuous” bull was said to have charged and killed her for “stupidly” provoking it.⁶⁰⁴ Shortly after, a man by the name Tshabani was also killed by an elephant in the Xilotlela village after, again, allegedly drinking too much and not taking due care.⁶⁰⁵ On the other hand, when a government research officer was attacked by an errant elephant in November 1968, he was quickly air-lifted by helicopter to Chiredzi Hospital and was lucky to survive.⁶⁰⁶

Again, when crops of the Shangane were destroyed by animals from the park, colonial administrators simply trivialised the community’s reports claiming they were mostly exaggerated to force Parks to kill such animals so that people get free meat. Where such reports were made, the state usually declined liability for the damages on people’s crops. At best, they sent a few police officers or rangers to disperse the marauding animals. It, indeed, took considerable justification for the Parks Department to take the drastic action of killing the problem animals, ironically arguing that the people should learn to co-exist with their wildlife. Wright alleged that African villagers, especially women, had a tendency of exaggerating the damage to their crops. He claimed that they would walk up to sixty kilometres to report a “trivial incident” of crop damage, and

⁶⁰³ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 74.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 75.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid. pp. 74-75.

⁶⁰⁶ Report of the National Parks Advisory Board for Year Ending 1968, p. 23.

request the destruction of an entire herd of animals for putting “one foot into someone’s cultivated plot” and eating “a few cents worth of *rapoko*.”⁶⁰⁷ Such belittling of African complaints was typical of the colonial state operatives.

Meanwhile, the killing of game by white hunters in what later became the GNP began well before the 1934 declaration when prowling white hunting parties were given or gave themselves free hunting licences. *Vhekenya*’s wanton hunting episodes were a case in point. Another example of careless game killing was recorded by the ANC of Nuanetsi in 1927. In the report, he bemoaned the destruction of elephants by a party of Dutchman who had passed through the park on their way to PEA. They had killed game without remorse and got away with it.⁶⁰⁸

After the proclamation of the game reserve, exclusive hunting laws were enacted. Such legislation discriminated against black hunters by denying them licences using the race card. Rhodesian wildlife, like land, was taken to be a state asset that was to be jealously protected from irresponsible snarers and ironically for white sportsmen hunters. Special hunting enclaves called shooting boxes were created north of the Lundi River in the 1950s and conveniently allocated to white hunters only. White hunters were also granted generous permits to shoot game within and outside the game reserve.⁶⁰⁹ While licensing was supposed to be monitored by the Chief Forest Officer, illegal white hunting parties, some coming from as far as Johannesburg in South Africa often found their way into the Lowveld wilderness and plundered its game without proper paperwork.⁶¹⁰ Government officials at Nuanetsi station were also often issued with closed season shooting permits while some white missionaries were known to lure converts and parishioners to their churches using illegally

⁶⁰⁷ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp. 178 & 181-182.

⁶⁰⁸ NAZ: S235/505, Report of the Assistant Native Commissioner Nuanetsi for the Year Ended 31 December, 1927.

⁶⁰⁹ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 31.

⁶¹⁰ NAZ: S1194/1645/3/1, Sec, Land Dept to the Sec, Dept of Agriculture, 10/ 10/ 32.

acquired game meat.⁶¹¹ The open discrimination sowed seeds of confrontation with the excluded indigenous communities. Preventing Africans from hunting in their old grounds, like the creation of African reserves was perceived by blacks as a ploy to impoverish them and indirectly force them to become cheap labourers on white enterprises. To the Shangane, it was all part of a bigger colonial scheme of denying them access to the country's resources using the race card. What was evident here was that race was used to deny blacks access to the game park resources and white control of game was being deployed as one of the imperial ways of affirming control of Africa.⁶¹²

The regulations governing box hunting were extremely liberal to white hunters. Licences were sold at ridiculously low fees of \$4. Again, there were no restrictions on the number of permits one could acquire, thus, allowing for multiple licensing. While each hunter was limited to shooting fifteen head of special game per year, the licences were open-ended on the shooting of other game.⁶¹³ In practice, authorised game hunters were largely left alone as long as they respected the general hunting laws. While white hunters were barred from straying into reserves, the rule was often flouted as there were many reported cases of shooting in these areas.⁶¹⁴

All in all, white hunters were allowed some unlimited freedom to do what they wanted once they were out in the game wilderness. Cases were reported of animals shot and left to die painful deaths while there were also reports of widespread shooting of game straying into private white farms.⁶¹⁵

⁶¹¹ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 148.

⁶¹² J. M. MacKenzie, 'Hunting and the Natural World in Juvenile Literature', in J. Richards (ed.), *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), p. 145.

⁶¹³ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 144 & NAZ: S1194/1645/3/1, Sec, Land Dept to the Sec, Dept of Agriculture, 10/ 10/ 32.

⁶¹⁴ NAZ: S1194/1645/3/1, Chief NC to the Sec to the PM, 26 November, 1932. The Game and Fish Preservation Amendment Act of 1931 prohibited game hunting and fishing in Native Reserves without the express permission of the NC of the District.

⁶¹⁵ NAZ: S4061, 'African Membership', The Wild Life Protection Society of Southern Rhodesia, Newsletter No. 5, 1951 & NAZ: S4061, 'Shooting of Game on Irrigated Land', Wild Life Society of Rhodesia, Newsletter No. 50, July 1971.

Indeed, while hunting of all royal game was prohibited during the closed season (1 October-30th April) and at night, many white hunters broke these rules and mostly got away with it.⁶¹⁶ Again, white sportsmen hunters often drove along private roads at night and shot into settled areas or paddocks often killing stock. Their actions, again, went largely unpunished.⁶¹⁷

Rhodesian whites celebrated hunting as a sign of Victorian manliness in the face of Africa's hunting savagery.⁶¹⁸ The Victorian hunter was hero-worshipped for his "stoicism, application, command of self and followers, and the capacity to encounter high risk and triumph."⁶¹⁹ African forests were portrayed as vast natural resources awaiting subjugation by the Victorian hunter.⁶²⁰ Animals were killed for fun and for trophies as hunting became an enjoyable sporting activity for senior government officials and people of high class in the community.

Meanwhile, African hunting methods were disparaged as barbaric and cruel. Killing for subsistence by indigenous communities was condemned as poaching, itself, a new term that found expression in the new jargon of the Lowveld and the country. It was a terminology that was incomprehensible to local people. Other related colonial game terms such as private area, trespassing, hunting enclave and shooting boxes that were introduced into the vocabulary of the area were equally confusing.

As was the case in the KNP, wildlife was transformed from an economic resource meant to benefit everyone to a commodity that was set aside for the enjoyment of white people.⁶²¹ Through

⁶¹⁶ NAZ: S4061, 'Report', Wild Life Protection Society of Southern Rhodesia, Newsletter No. 7, 30 November 1962.

⁶¹⁷ *Rhodesia Herald*, 8 October 1927, 'Letter by Sufferer'.

⁶¹⁸ Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, pp. 13-14. For a different perspective on game hunting in Southern Rhodesia see, R. Mutwira, 'Southern Rhodesian Wildlife Policy (1890-1953): A Question of Condoning Game Slaughter', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 15, 2 (1989), pp. 250-262.

⁶¹⁹ MacKenzie, 'Hunting and the Natural World in Juvenile Literature', p. 146.

⁶²⁰ Beinart, 'Empire, Hunting and Ecological Change in Southern and Central Africa', p. 162.

⁶²¹ Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p. 13.

legislation, the ‘reaping’ of wildlife was withheld from the predominantly poor indigenous communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe. In this, Rhodesian whites were simply emulating their kinsfolk in South Africa and England where pleasure killing by members of the upper class was glorified and considered more ethical and less cruel than subsistence hunting which was scorned and vilified.⁶²² For the white hunter, killing of game could only be noble if done using civilised shooting methods and not the beastly trapping and spearing methods used by Africans.⁶²³ In practice, however, some of the methods used by some white hunters were equally cruel. The elimination of large numbers of game during the anti-tsetse-fly campaign of the 1950s and 1960s was one such insensitive method. During culling periods, white ranchers were also known to have destroyed large numbers of game using unsavoury methods. Animals were also killed with silenced rifles and darts, methods conveniently considered civilised.⁶²⁴ White snares were euphemistically called humane and condoned while African snaring was roundly condemned.

The establishment of the Gonarezhou game sanctuary also introduced new fishing rules. Fishing, like hunting was in the main closed to indigenous fish-mongers as whites gave themselves exclusive rights to conduct pleasure fishing especially in the Chipinda Pools.⁶²⁵ Local people’s favourite fishing pools such as Tswele, Tembohata and Chisuku were put out of bounds, thus, literally turning the Shangane into fish poachers.⁶²⁶ However, some limited regulated rod and line fishing was allowed as it was considered less harmful to fish stock compared to intensive trapping or netting.⁶²⁷ During Wright’s time, the women of Malipati were allowed to fish in the Mankonde and Rossi Pools each winter as long as they were not accompanied by men. To ensure that they

⁶²² Ibid. p. 14.

⁶²³ NAZ: S4061, ‘Sabi Stars of the Lowveld’, Wild Life Society of Rhodesia, Newsletter No. 33, 14 December 1968.

⁶²⁴ NAZ: S4061, ‘Report’, Wild Life Society of Southern Rhodesia, No. 31, 6 June 1968.

⁶²⁵ Bannerman, ‘A Short Political and Economic History of the Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye Dynasties’, p. 10.

⁶²⁶ Interview with Lyson Chisaka Masango, Mahenye, 6 August 2014.

⁶²⁷ Report of the National Parks Advisory Board for the Year Ending 1979-80, p. 6.

did not break the rule, the procedure was that they report first at the Malipati Sub-Office on their way to the pools and back and in all were allowed only three fishing trips each winter.⁶²⁸

Particularly annoying to the local people was that white hunting and fishing were not meant to satisfy basic food needs but to provide entertainment. Animals were killed for amusement and products such as biltong and hides thrown away, acts considered reckless and wasteful. The white practice of killing game just to subdue the animals was foreign to meat-starved communities who found such practice illogical.⁶²⁹ The biltong-starved Shangane, just like their counterparts across the Limpopo were, thus, baffled by a practice where animals were hunted solely for entertainment and the economic by-products of the hunt thrown away.⁶³⁰

Box shooting went uncontrolled up to 1957 when the regulations governing it were amended by the Game and Fish Act of 1957 to make them more stringent.⁶³¹ The amendment put some residential qualification restriction on all licensing. But even with the 1957 Act in force, hunting remained extraordinarily generous and excessively liberal. One could still kill any animal which came into sight using the \$4 licence, including special and royal game.⁶³² Such hunters were certainly taking advantage of the infrequent patrols of this remote borderland. For those caught breaking the law, the punishment was not for endangering wild animals but for failing to acquire an appropriate hunting licence.⁶³³ The 1960 Wild Life Conservation Act which limited the number of animals a licensed hunter could shoot still lacked full controls over game hunting. The Wildlife Report of 1969 recommended that the box shooting practice be stopped altogether as it was

⁶²⁸ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, 163.

⁶²⁹ Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p. 106.

⁶³⁰ Ibid. p. 107. The position was echoed in a number of interviews conducted in the Mahenye area.

⁶³¹ Game and Fish Act of 1957.

⁶³² Wright, *Grey Ghosts at Buffalo Bend*, pp. 109-110.

⁶³³ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 144.

inconsistent with modern wildlife conservation practices. The government conceded and the practice was stopped.⁶³⁴

The irony of it all, however, was that while licensed white hunters using destructive guns were allowed a free reign on the game of the Gonarezhou forest, the meat-starved “tribesmen” were no longer allowed to snare or trap. Local Shangane hunters could then only watch the wholesale extermination of game animals by trigger-happy white hunters from the side lines, a painful experience indeed.⁶³⁵ They were, furthermore, aware through local intelligence that many of those issued with shooting licences were outsiders who came just to plunder the game of the GNP. They, therefore, resented being denied access to their old hunting grounds when others, even from outside the country’s borders were given a free reign. For them, the new game reserve became an all-white paradise that they loathed for its exclusivity. It was precisely for this reason that Mavhunga maintained that national parks often failed to sustain their wildlife populations because they engendered conflict with displaced indigenous communities through their exclusivity.⁶³⁶

The pain of eviction and exclusion

Evictions, the erection of fences and forced resettlements into reserves generated resentment from the indigenous communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe. The people responded through increased snaring and poaching, fence cutting and outright refusal to move from their old homes.⁶³⁷ The Mapokole people of the Gonakudzingwa, just like many others were barred from accessing their old ancestral lands, places that were full of past memories.⁶³⁸ They contested being barred from

⁶³⁴ Wildlife Conservation Act, 1960 & Wild Life Report, 1969.

⁶³⁵ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 144.

⁶³⁶ Mavhunga, ‘The Mobile Workshop’, Chapter 1.

⁶³⁷ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 73.

⁶³⁸ Interview with Phillip Mbiza, Chikombedzi, 22 July 2014.

accessing their old homelands to revere the departed. That sentiment was clearly expressed in a citation by Wolmer:

Long back, we enjoyed drinking beer and beating drums and dancing [for the ancestors], we were happy there [GNP], our ancestral spirits were happy. Now they are not happy. They are saying that we are away from home. They are angry. Now we have difficulties respecting our ancestors. They are far and away and we have to ask permission from the game wardens [to visit the shrines].⁶³⁹

Living outside the GNP meant the local Shangane could no longer visit their sacred places in the park for functions such as rain-making. When allowed to, they were now accompanied by gun-carrying game scouts whose role was to ensure that they did not take advantage of such visits to temper with the game resources. The Shangane believed that their detachment from the lands of ancestors caused misfortunes such as recurrent droughts and persistent diseases.⁶⁴⁰ Again, the separation of lineages during displacement generated untold pain on the affected.

The people were crucially dumped on peripheral lands that failed to fully sustain their livelihoods. Furthermore, the squeeze off their lands created an untenable situation where the people of the Sengwe and Matibi No. 2 TTLs found themselves sandwiched between seemingly empty ranches and a park. The crowding of people in these reserves brought about an ecological and demographic inversion in the area.⁶⁴¹ The crammed communities were ex-communicated from the land that had sustained their livelihoods through hunting, fishing, cropping and gathering. These survival lifelines were illegalised under the new game conditions. Women subsistence producers were forced to struggle for survival in the peripheral lands. In bemoaning the loss of the old homeland, one woman reminisced:

⁶³⁹ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 59.

⁶⁴⁰ Interview with Lisengha Xitherani, Chisa, 28 June 2014.

⁶⁴¹ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, pp. 80 & 152.

We used to produce and gather lots of foodstuffs from the Marhumbini bush. We gathered and ate *mongwa*, *mondo*, *masala*, *madokomela*, *mavhili*, *kuhlurhu*, *kwankwa*, *nkanyi xikukutse*, *matangala* and *ntsengele*. We got lots of fish from the Lundze [Lundi], Save, Mlodozi and Nyarwamba Rivers and our children had plenty to eat from the various vegetables we collected from the bush. The land was rich with animals, natural dams and fertile soils. We miss all that. Outside the park, we could hardly survive. We became destitutes who had to depend on government hand-outs.⁶⁴²

Women of Mahenye evoked memories of the ‘golden days’ of yesteryear by singing the melodies they used to croon back then such as; *Kale kahina hahayi ndzovolo* (Long back while we were still on our black fertile land). They lamented the fading of such tunes and accompanying memories but admitted that they derived solace in that those of the older generations regularly hummed them to remind each other of the ‘glorious’ past and share the pain of their losses.⁶⁴³

From their new homelands on the periphery, the impoverished communities could only admire the resources of their old lands from across the high fence. If they were to gain entry into the sites to satisfy the new tastes of viewing and admiring game, they had to endure the pain of travelling many kilometres around the fence to get to the entrance gates and pay a handsome fee to see their old places. To these people living on the fringes of the park, the game establishment was nothing but a symbol of racial discrimination and white political and economic domination. Their basic needs of land, pastures and meat were clearly subordinated to the white elitist and exclusive tastes of game viewing and pleasure hunting.

In response to their changed situation, some Shangane communities, such as the Chisa, Xilotlela and Ngwenyeni took to resistance as earlier indicated. Another good example was that of Mashamba who together with his three wives and children lived on snaring in the Buffalo Bend area. His village was strategically used as a forward base by other snaring parties who collaborated

⁶⁴² Interview with Tsatsawani Matimise, Ingwani Village, Boli, 23 July 2014.

⁶⁴³ Group interview with Chisa villagers, 23 December 2014.

with him. He would sell meat to people living across the Nuanetsi River where game was no longer found in abundance, having been decimated according to Wright, by “profligate tribesman” of the area.⁶⁴⁴ The accusation was not entirely true, as European pleasure hunters had also destroyed large numbers of game through licensed box shooting and anti-tsetse-fly campaigns.

It was, again, reported by park officials that following the eviction of various communities from the park area, there were more incidents of poaching.⁶⁴⁵ This was without doubt a reflection of the rising tension between the park and local people now living on the fringes of the park. Men, women and children targeted the former homelands as game had largely been depleted in their new settlements due to incessant years of exploitation by earlier settlers. The new game areas were then surrounded by Shangane settlers who were, again, labelled by Wright as “the most skilful, fearless, determined and persistent poachers in all of Rhodesia.”⁶⁴⁶ They did not stop the old hunting practice mainly because they could not survive otherwise. In 1968, for example, sixty three Africans were arrested in the GNP and the surrounding areas for contravening park regulations.⁶⁴⁷ It was, furthermore, alleged by park officials that poachers had become more aggressive, certainly signifying heightened tension with the game establishment. An example was of a game scout who was severely assaulted while attempting to apprehend a Shangane poacher who had escaped from custody. The ranger was severely assaulted with an axe on the head and left for dead. He later recovered at the Chiredzi General Hospital.⁶⁴⁸

Another old Shangane poacher charged with snaring boldly challenged the double standards of the regime on poaching regulations, questioning the justice of their application. His argument was that

⁶⁴⁴ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp. 53-54.

⁶⁴⁵ NAZ: S4061, ‘Land Use’, Wild Life Society of Rhodesia, Newsletter No. 40, January 1970, p. 3.

⁶⁴⁶ Wright, *Grey Ghosts at Buffalo Bend*, p. 109.

⁶⁴⁷ Report of the National Parks Advisory Board for the Year Ending 1968, p. 23.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

he only used snares because he was not allowed to use a gun like his employer. He accused his employer of killing twenty seven zebras in just one afternoon and getting away with it.⁶⁴⁹ When confronted, the employer confirmed possessing a \$4 game licence which allowed him to shoot up to a hundred plus zebras a day if he so desired. He sarcastically bragged that on the day referred to by the Shangane old man, he had actually killed thirty one zebras instead. He then mockingly accused the old man of being unable to count properly.⁶⁵⁰ There were many more of his kind who killed game with impunity and yet went unpunished while Shangane snarers were heavily penalised for merely possessing snares. The snarers felt, justifiably so, that one could slaughter game without restrictions and fear of being reprimanded as long as one's skin was white. They were bitter for being discriminated and excluded from game hunting to allow Europeans to feast on the game of their ancestral lands. Such anger put them on a collision course with the Gonarezhou game entity throughout the colonial period.

Conclusion

The transformation of the Gonarezhou land into game space was a process that took many years to accomplish. The main hurdle was the local Shangane population that simply refused to leave an environment that had sustained their lives for a long time, without a fight. Government attempts to intimidate them only served to harden their resolve to resist eviction. It eventually took the use of force to totally drive the communities out of the contested lands and settle them in marginal areas around the park. The removal of the community from an environment they called home was understandably a painful experience.

⁶⁴⁹ Wright, *Grey Ghosts at Buffalo Bend*, p. 109.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 110.

This chapter has revealed how land alienation by the state to establish a game park drew lines of confrontation with the Shangane communities during the period leading to and following the proclamation of the Gonarezhou as a PA. The chapter examined the nature of the various struggles between proponents of the game scheme and its opponents. It showed how, in the process, the indigenous communities were marginalised and eventually became victims of the colonial land eviction policies. The chapter revealed how the state employed force in removing the people from the lands of their abode and how the move generated ill feelings against the state from the Shangane. The chapter also showed how the affected communities reacted to eviction by specifically focussing on the salient organised resistance of the Chisa, Ngwenyeni and Xilotlela. In particular, it revealed how in the case of the Xilotlela clan the traditional institution was mobilised to resist removal from the Gonarezhou land. Chapter 3 also documented how and why in spite of the strong opposition from the various communities of the area, the colonial state triumphed due to its might. Finally, the chapter highlighted how the indigenous people's loss of the eviction battle transformed the struggle to yet another level of subtle resistance reflected through clandestine poaching in the designated game reserve and general disobedience to the colonial state. The chapter, thus, laid the foundation for the next chapter which addresses issues of the people's survival outside the PA.

CHAPTER 4: SURVIVING OUTSIDE THE PROTECTED AREA, THE COLONIAL ERA

Introduction

The eviction of the mainly Shangane communities from the Gonarezhou lands and their relocation to peripheral areas outside the park during the colonial period essentially pitted the community and the state against each other. As argued in the preceding chapter, the ejection was not without contradictions. Force was used to remove the people and most of them were dumped in unproductive areas adjoining the park, the areas having been overpopulated due to earlier Shangane, Ndebele and Karanga settlements. The forced movement dislocated the Shangane's social lives, thus, effectively transforming them into a different people altogether.

Furthermore, the previous chapter showed how the Shangane community lost its hunting, fishing, grazing and farming lands. It also revealed how the people were cut off from a veld that had all along provided them with a variety of fruits, vegetables and roots that they depended on especially during drought years. The same forest had provided them with medicines which they used to treat all kinds of illnesses. It was also home to their ancestors, a terrain full of revered places of worship and deliverance. The Gonarezhou forest was undoubtedly a veld that had sustained the lives of the local people and given them an identity. The removal of people from such a terrain, therefore, had far-reaching consequences on their lifestyles.

Chapter 4 focuses on how the indigenous communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe survived outside the PA of the GNP. It recognises the existence of two categories of people affected by the park: those who had remained outside the park but on the borders at the time of the park declaration and those who were evicted and resettled in areas already occupied by their kinsfolk on the fringes

of the park. Both groups had prior to the proclamation of the GNP depended heavily on the Gonarezhou forest for their livelihoods. The chapter examines the various forms of responses by the different classes, genders and generations to exclusion from utilising the resources of the GNP.

It argues that some reacted through continued defiant poaching in the face of a repertoire of legal instruments while others accepted their fate and simply migrated to South Africa to seek employment in the white capitalist enterprise and yet some, largely influenced by Gonakudzingwa restrictees confronted the state through embracing radical nationalism. The chapter also examines how, when the opportunity to protest against their unilateral evictions availed itself, the aggrieved Shangane embraced it firstly by supporting Gonakudzingwa nationalists in the 1960s and, secondly by actively participating in the armed struggle of the 1970s. The chapter crucially maintains that the reactions of the communities to forced relocation and exclusion from the park resources were all expressions of protest.

The chapter picks at examples from the colonial period to illustrate the nature and impact of the varied responses. So, the chapter essentially reviews and evaluates the changed strategies adopted by the local communities in response to the loss of land to the game reserve. It assesses the effectiveness of such methods in enabling the indigenous communities to cope with their new circumstances. The chapter concludes by evaluating the overall impact of the people's responses.

Poaching in the PA

The use of the term poaching, in the context of the GNP and other parks in Zimbabwe as well has been contentious. This was so, given the fact that the appellation criminalised communal hunting that had always been the means of survival for the indigenous communities of the southern Lowveld region of the country. Thus, subsistence hunting was now vilified by the colonial state as

poaching. Contradictions in the interpretation of the term between the Shangane and the colonial and post-colonial state became a source of conflict throughout the period under study. The conflict was heightened when the old-age practice was illegalised, thus, generating bitterness on the part of indigenous communities which was expressed through the peoples' defiant hunting in the park.

It is crucial to point out that following the establishment of the park, the Shangane continued with the old age practices of hunting, fishing and gathering in their old grounds. Such extraction of game resources became an act of protest to their exclusion from an area that had sustained them prior to 1934. Those who remained in the park for a while, those removed soon after 1934 and those who had remained on the margins of the park at the time of its declaration continued to poach. Apparently, the state's lack of manpower incapacitated it in policing the entire game park. Added to the challenge were the poor roads and the rugged terrain.⁶⁵¹ So, for a long time after the establishment of the game sanctuary, the area remained exposed to large scale subsistence poaching. Big communal hunting parties, accompanied by packs of well trained dogs became regular uninvited visitors to the park. Such hunting teams often had open confrontations with law enforcement agents which, at times, turned bloody.⁶⁵²

Many of those who remained in the park after the 1934 declaration pretended to be oblivious of their changed status. Wright, cited in Wolmer charged that they refused to move out of the park in order to deliberately grow crops in the park area, attract animals like elephants and then kill them. The reasoning was that the gains from snared meat offset the losses incurred from the destroyed crops.⁶⁵³ As a result, the local people were constantly harassed by park officials and other law

⁶⁵¹ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 144.

⁶⁵² Ibid. p. 150.

⁶⁵³ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 150.

enforcement agents. Such persecutions effectively hardened their resolve to continue hunting, fishing and gathering in the PA.

Big-time poaching in the Gonarezhou terrain is traceable to the pre-1929 years when characters like Barnard (*Vhekenya*) ravaged the area in search of ivory. *Vhekenya* was himself, a beneficiary of the bush education he received from local hunting experts such as Njalabane, a Shangane headman who worked with him in the bush that was later to be known as the GNP. Njalabane was a knowledgeable old man who had lived in the forest of the Gonarezhou for all his life and, so, lived to share his life-long bush knowledge with his apprentices such as *Vhekenya*. The elephant poacher was schooled by his Shangane mentor on the behaviour of the various animal species of the area and was grateful for the education offered.⁶⁵⁴

Vhekenya's hunting escapades also benefited local people when he supplied them with free meat from his numerous kills. Again, where villagers were troubled by problem animals, they often solicited the assistance of commercial hunters like him to deal with such animals. A case in point was when he was invited by a Shangane community living in the Gonarezhou to shoot a troublesome elephant bull which had killed two men and a woman and terrorised many in the village. The elephant:

Would spike them [his victims] on one of his tusks, toss his head to send the body flying, and then trample the victim into a horrible lump of mangled flesh and bone. Like most elephants, he did not like trampling on anyone lying down and keeping still. He liked to catch his victims running. He always covered up the body of his victim afterwards by burying it under the branches he stripped from trees.⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵⁴ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, pp. 23 & 81. Over a period of one month they spent together, *Vhekenya* was to learn a lot on the behaviour of various animal species of the forest. This became invaluable knowledge he was to diligently use during his long adventurous years in the forests of Gonarezhou.

⁶⁵⁵ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 65.

While white poachers like *Vhekenya* were beneficiaries of indigenous knowledge, they also initiated the Shangane into profitable commercial hunting. Carruthers contended that such partnership became both profitable and equitable.⁶⁵⁶ Where it occurred, commercial hunting became dominant as it proved more rewarding. African commercial hunters became known as the *maphisa*.⁶⁵⁷ They, like their white counterparts used rifles and muzzle-loaders to kill big game in what later became the GNP. Later on, when game began to decline African partners were discarded, thus, further alienating them from the wildlife of the veld.⁶⁵⁸ When gun acquisition was controlled and their use by indigenous people prohibited during the colonial period, the *maphisa* devised ingenious techniques of manufacturing crude guns, bullets and gun powder from hard *marula* pips. Elsewhere in the country, gun-powder was also made from charcoal, solidified dung of rock rabbits and from a salty substance that was harvested from caves and mixed with the charcoal of a river plant known as *mungwakuku*.⁶⁵⁹ It was some innovation that served them well in a changed hunting environment. Bulpin conceded that the home-made guns were deadly if they got to their target, but “more lethal if they exploded in the hunter’s face.”⁶⁶⁰

Mine labourers, returning from South African mines were known to have smuggled dynamite from their work places which they used to produce gun-powder. From as early as 1910, the smuggling of dynamite had worried South African mine employers and, thus, prompted the Transvaal Chamber of Mines to order a search on all Africans at the end of each working day.⁶⁶¹ Still, the

⁶⁵⁶ Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p. 12.

⁶⁵⁷ In the introductory chapter of his PhD thesis, Mavhunga amply traces the development of an African commercial hunting class called the *maphisa*. The class worked closely with white commercial hunters in plundering the game of what was to be the GNP. For more information on commercial hunting, see NAZ: TH10/1/1/148, Thompson to Summers, 19 July 1955 & Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 32.

⁶⁵⁸ Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p. 90.

⁶⁵⁹ H. J. B. ‘Some Scraps of Native Live’, *NADA*, 4 (1940). pp. 100-101.

⁶⁶⁰ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, pp. 121 & 126-127.

⁶⁶¹ Mavhunga, ‘The Mobile Workshop’, p. 231.

dynamite found its way out as labourers even concealed it in their hair. For those who made it back home with the powder, it became a treasure that Bulpin claimed, in a rather exaggerated manner one could sell and use the money earned to pay *lobola* (bride price) for several wives.⁶⁶² The value of the bullets and powder was, again, explained by Bulpin:

Bullets and powder were always so scarce that a Shangaan hunter would nurse his supply to incredible limits. He would wait for days to shoot an antelope, lying in ambush until the animal eventually came so near that it was next to impossible to miss and the hunter could use the barest minimum of powder. If he did miss he would spend a day or more beating about the bush, raking the ground to recover the bullet, and then hammer it back into shape and use it all over again.⁶⁶³

It was no surprise, therefore, that the motivation to continue poaching remained real given the subsistence needs of the local people and the commercial demand for game products. In a situation where legal hunting was banned, indigenous villagers had no option except to break the law. DC Wright was absolutely right when he stated:

The Shangaans of Rhodesia (and I suspect this applies to the other sections of the tribe in Mozambique and the Transvaal) refused to accept the validity of this ban on hunting in their old preserves. It is significant that when the African nationalists in the Gonakudzingwa Restriction Camp managed to subvert the whole Rhodesia sector of the tribe in 1965, they made very intelligent and effective use of the attitude of the tribesmen to old hunting lands.⁶⁶⁴

For many Shanganes, the bush remained the only viable source of survival. The hunting, fishing, gathering and farming life skills they had acquired from childhood and the bush education imparted to them by community elders during initiation rites could not go to nought. They were, thus, forced to play cat and mouse with park authorities as they frequently sneaked back into the park, their old working place.

⁶⁶² Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 127.

⁶⁶³ Ibid. pp. 127-128.

⁶⁶⁴ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 143.

DC Wright, the self-proclaimed game conservation lobbyist conceded that snaring continued to be the biggest challenge in the GNP after 1934. He alleged that within the African species, snarers were recognised as people of standing in their communities because they were providers of the highly demanded meat. The meat supplier was, therefore, applauded instead of being denounced for decimating game. Wright, thus, labelled all Shangane men as the most persistent predators of game in all of Rhodesia.⁶⁶⁵ While the argument put forward by conservationists was that there would soon be no game in the game sanctuary to trap due to excessive poaching by local people, testimonies by Sangwe villagers countered the view by presenting, instead, that the indigenous people had always tried to maintain an ecological equilibrium in their ecosystem through responsible management of nature, a position supported by the large numbers of game found in the Gonarezhou forest before the advent of gun hunting.⁶⁶⁶ This does not however mean that it was all golden as the same testimonies also revealed that some in the community were often punished for randomly destroying game and at times even hunting protected species.⁶⁶⁷

Wright, for example, did not believe that African snaring was propelled by basic needs but by what he termed the absolute fatalism in all of them. This, he claimed was their belief in spiritual destiny and attitude of living only for this day and caring not for tomorrow.⁶⁶⁸ To him, the destruction of game through uncontrolled snaring was symptomatic of that African characteristic. To reinforce his argument, he alleged that an average African had no compassion for animals and stated:

As for the cruelty aspect, the average black African has no feeling whatever for animals- to him there is as little wrong with chopping down a tree as breaking an ox's leg or skinning a goat alive to obtain a pair of leather bellows-trees and animals are all 'things' which have no feelings at all and merit no consideration whatever. All of us, who have the

⁶⁶⁵ Wright, *Grey Ghosts at Buffalo Bend*, p. 108.

⁶⁶⁶ Group interview with Chisa villagers, 23 December 2014.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁸ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 142.

welfare of dump creatures at heart, must wonder when the African will develop some compassion towards animals. I personally believe that this may never come about...⁶⁶⁹

Guided by such thinking, he contended that the prevalence of poaching in the GNP was because of the very reason that African hunters cared less on the large numbers of animals they killed. Poaching was reported to have been so widespread in the Gonarezhou land that authorities who managed the game area before Wright's appointment in 1958 appear to have abdicated on their responsibility to curb it apparently conceding to the fact that they could not stop a Shangane from poaching. On their part, the Shangane appear to have adopted the attitude that tolerance by past administrators was now the norm. Wright took it upon himself to disillusion this African attitude by instituting what he considered to be hard measures against the practice.⁶⁷⁰

To understand the motive behind African poaching in the GNP and why the practice persisted in the face of the state's onslaught one has to examine the *modus operandi* of the poacher.⁶⁷¹ In pre-colonial and early colonial times, local hunting, labelled poaching by the colonial government had always been propelled by the hunger for meat as a result of the frequent decimation of livestock by tsetse-flies, the need to supplement their food as a result of incessant droughts.⁶⁷² What pushed the Africans to snare, therefore, was the need to satisfy basic subsistence requirements and not to deliberately destroy or cause undue pain to the game prey. Such demand was demonstrated by the sarcastic retort that one senior Shangane headman gave to Wright's question on why he allowed his people to poach; "Can I stop my followers from drinking water?"⁶⁷³ After the establishment of the game reserve, poaching was further motivated by bitterness against a government that had

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid. pp. 142-143.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 147.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid. p. 142.

⁶⁷² NAZ: S4061, D. Chavhunduka, 'Is there a Future for National Parks in Zimbabwe', p. 13.

⁶⁷³ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 143.

pushed the people out of the environment that had for a long time sustained their lives. Such anger was understandably translated into protest poaching.

Again, Wright and those of his like strongly believed that the meat-starved Africans should not be allowed to snare in the Gonarezhou veld as he arrogantly stated they had, after all, large flocks of goats that they could kill if they wanted a taste of meat. That they also wanted variety was out of the question for him. On their part, Africans suspected, probably rightly so that they were barred from hunting game in the park area in order to preserve it for the privileged whites.⁶⁷⁴ It turned out that it was also the attitude of many white settlers as demonstrated in the case of a European farmer in the area who was dragged to court for shooting royal game without a licence. At the court, he pleaded guilty but arrogantly sought reprieve of his sentence, arguing:

Your Worship...Only last month I spent several hours tracking down some poachers and they were subsequently convicted in this Court. Now today I find myself being charged with wild life offences-this seems to me to be very unfair and I hope you will take it into account when passing sentence.⁶⁷⁵

When clemency was denied on account that his case was more serious because he understood the law better, he protested:

Your Worship. I say in open court that in future I will not arrest poachers even if they kill wild animals right in front of my house. The Police have brought this charge against me-let them also bring these charges against poachers in future.⁶⁷⁶

It is, therefore, evident that African poaching continued to be a feature of the Gonarezhou space even after the protection of the area. This significantly pointed to the people's frustration and, hence, protests. To demonstrate the point, a Committee led by Townley that was tasked to investigate the possibility of establishing a game reserve in the Lowveld in 1934 reported of large-

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid. pp. 142 & 147.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 150.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid. pp. 150-151.

scale destruction of game by the Matombo villagers inside the game-designated area. On the day of the visit, they alleged that the villagers had heartlessly killed a sable antelope by breaking its hind leg. The following day, while the team was still in the area, the villagers were also reported to have killed a water buck at one of the river pools. Again, in an eight kilometre stretch of Matombo's village, the team had recorded not less than ten kills on that very day. As a result of such wanton destruction of game, Townley's Committee had proposed that the "squatters" be relocated to adjacent reserves for easy monitoring. Matombo's people resisted being pushed out of their hunting ground and at the same time protested being called squatters.⁶⁷⁷

Poaching in the Gonarezhou sanctuary continued unabated, partly due to limited game park patrols but mainly as a form of protest by the local people. During the 1950s, the Chief Entomologist suspected that some Africans whom he had armed with weapons to kill tsetse-carrier animals were turning such arms into poaching instruments. In 1952 and again in 1953, the successive Rangers-in-Charge of tsetse elimination in the area, W. R. Vaughanscott and J. H. Mackeown expressed concern on suspected illegal hunting of elephants and other animals by African tsetse-fly hunters.⁶⁷⁸ On 6 September 1954, the Provincial Native Commissioner of Victoria, D. G. Lewis, also complained of increased poaching in the Nyakasikana-Lundi Junction area due to permits issued to African tsetse hunters by the Secretary of Mines and Lands.⁶⁷⁹ It was because of the concern that those issued with such guns, thereafter, were monitored through a strict register

⁶⁷⁷ NAZ: S914/12/1B, Acting Secretary, Commerce and Transport to the Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Lands, 'Gona-re-Zhou Game Reserve', 14th November, 1934.

⁶⁷⁸ NAZ: S3106/11/1/7, Sabi Valley 1952-3; Ranger-in-Charge, Sabi Valley Camp C/O Hippo Mines Umtali, Chief Entomologist, Causeway, 5th February 1952 & NAZ: S3106/11/1/8, Sabi Valley 1953-5, J. H. Mackeown, Sabi Valley Camp, Tsetse Fly Operations, to Director Tsetse Fly Operations, 1/5/1953, 'Poaching'.

⁶⁷⁹ NAZ: S3106/11/1/8, Sabi Valley 1953-5, D. G. Lewis, Provincial Native Commissioner, Fort Victoria to the Chief Native Commissioner, Causeway, 6th September 1954, 'Tsetse Fly Operations: Lowveld Mashonaland South'.

system. In Mavhunga's view, these African tsetse-fly hunters were consciously using the golden opportunity to reclaim access to their wildlife and former hunting grounds.⁶⁸⁰

Citing Mabalauta Field Station poaching records Mavhunga revealed that in 1964, a man named Jasi was arrested in the GNP with a home-made gun and detonators. Another infamous poacher, Toyola Pahlala of Sengwe, was found in possession of a muzzle-loader, cable snares, four hammers and two chisels for obvious use in his trade. In 1966, yet another snarer was caught with eighteen sets of snares ready for setting. It turned out that he had been responsible for the recent death of an eland, a buffalo, a *nyala*, a kudu, a zebra, a warthog, two waterbucks, one elephant and one crested guinea fowl.⁶⁸¹ The poachers had developed high intelligence network systems whereby they were able to monitor the movement of rangers through using their kinsman links in the area. Frank Musisinyani, for example, is reported to have conducted most of his hunting during month ends when he knew most of the rangers had gone to town for pay. Chitayi, the owner of farm No. 17 in the Gonakudzingwa APA was reported to have used his place as a hidden butchery for meat poached from the park. He is alleged to have worked in cohorts with Elias Suzwani who possessed a large muzzle-loader that he kept at Chitayi's homestead and used in the illegal hunts.⁶⁸²

As noted in the previous chapter, poaching in the Buffalo Bend area escalated after 1968 due to the resettlement of disgruntled Ngwenyeni communities in the area. Maggie, *Vhekenya*'s daughter with a Sengwe woman called Kami also took to her father's profession and was on several occasions charged with illegal hunting in the southern part of the GNP. Her half-brother, John Piet, born from another Shangane wife of *Vhekenya* called Chinengise was also reported to have been

⁶⁸⁰ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', pp. 322 & 327.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid. pp. 264-266.

⁶⁸² Ibid. pp. 266-267.

a hunter of repute who in his hunting career had killed up to twenty elephants in the GNP.⁶⁸³ It was also reported that poaching alliances were struck with Mozambican Shanganes. Mavhunga, again, recorded the case of a notorious Mozambican *mupocha* (poacher) by the name Mambawu who operated from a base near Malvernia. Another Mozambican poacher called Casimitu confessed to working with Shangane informants in Rhodesia who additionally provided the market for his snared meat. Yet another Rhodesian *mupocha*, Dumazi of Hayisa village admitted to poaching in the GNP with Thomas, a Mozambican from the Gavumente village across the border.⁶⁸⁴ Overall, patrols by park officers and the police remained ineffective as a large percentage of law-breakers were not even apprehended for game crimes.

Another concern of colonial game administrators was what they considered to be lenient court penalties on *mapocha*. Poachers considered that rewards gained from illegal hunting far outweighed fines imposed on offenders, the few times they were caught.⁶⁸⁵ A case in point was of one, Friend Duza a skilful *mupocha* whom Wright branded as some latter-day black *Vhekenya*.⁶⁸⁶ He was reported to have caused massive game destruction through his poaching exploits in the Buffalo Bend area. Wright charged that most of his animal victims met painful deaths. An example given was of a young elephant that met its fate under such circumstances:

A cable snare set for a buffalo near the east bank of the Nuanetsi River trapped a baby elephant, which was ambling down to the river to drink in the southern portion of the Buffalo Bend sanctuary. The frantic mother, assisted by others, tried for hours to free the screaming calf and tragically only succeeded in gradually throttling the little fellow, hardly bigger than a large black boar, as they tugged and strained, quite unable to understand why he would not follow them. The spoor around the small corpse, on which a fine male lion was feeding when it was discovered, clearly showed the long drawn-out struggle and,

⁶⁸³ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp. 24 & 61.

⁶⁸⁴ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', pp. 64, 267-268.

⁶⁸⁵ NAZ: S4061, 'Report', Wild Life Society of Rhodesia, Newsletter No. 21, 9th September, 1966.

⁶⁸⁶ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 154.

remarkably, such an effect did this tragedy have on the elephant herds that they shunned the whole area for a mile or two around for many weeks.⁶⁸⁷

Duza was only caught after the combined efforts of several park rangers. Upon being arrested, he confessed to killing the young elephant, setting thirty other snares and killing one elephant, four *nyala* (royal game), one buffalo, one waterbuck, one kudu and two impala. Evidence of the kills was found at his home in the form of horns and skins of slaughtered game. Duza was tried and convicted at Nuanetsi. He was sentenced to nine months imprisonment with hard labour and a fine of Z\$200 (approximately US\$200) or ten months in default of payment imposed on him.⁶⁸⁸

DC Wright lamented what he considered to have been too light a sentence for the grave crime. On the contrary, the reviewing judge thought the sentence was too severe and reduced the fine to Z\$90 (approximately US\$90) and the alternative jail term to six months.⁶⁸⁹ Such application of justice confirmed the varying interpretations of game crimes by park officials and judicial officers. The supposed light sentences meted out by the judicial system were understandingly frustrating to park officers who felt their efforts in apprehending poachers were not adequately complemented by the courts of the country.⁶⁹⁰ Several other cases that also included the killing of royal game went through what conservationists claimed to be the same lenient process. To them, such sentences had the effect of subtly encouraging the practice. Wright in particular considered them to have been a setback to his efforts of stamping out poaching in the park, arguing that they, instead, encouraged people like Duza to continue hunting illegally. The fact was confirmed when, after serving his short sentence, Duza went back to his old ways of snaring. In the end, the DC devised a plan of dissuading Duza from poaching by enlisting him as a labourer on one of his road projects.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 155.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 156.

⁶⁹⁰ NAZ: S4061, 'Report', Wild Life Society of Rhodesia, Newsletter No. 21, 9th September, 1966.

He additionally made sure that the jail bird would sleep in camp every night under the watchful eye of the foreman.⁶⁹¹ The same treatment was given to Mac Matshabani who was enlisted as a game scout to neutralise his poaching activities.⁶⁹²

Wright cited another case of the cruel killing of a bull giraffe by a Nuanetsi Ranch employee:

This fine old bull had uprooted the sapling to which the cable snare had been attached and dragged it for nearly a mile with the cruel noose ever tightening around its long neck. The blood vessels below the noose had actually burst under the strain of its frantic exertions before death finally came as a relief.⁶⁹³

When confronted by the DC, the employee admitted to killing three other giraffes earlier on and in a five week period to also killing a wildebeest, three impala and one zebra. He confessed to selling biltong to colleagues at the Nuanetsi Camp and took the occasion to launch a complaint of non-payment for the meat by several of his clients, including a gaol guard at the Nuanetsi prison. He even had the temerity to ask the DC to assist him recover his money from the prison employee. He was convicted and fined a pittance Z\$50 (about US\$50), which he promptly paid⁶⁹⁴, probably from hunting proceeds. His case and many similar ones were good examples of the supposed lightness that the poaching offence was given by the country's legal system.

Poaching in the PA of the Gonarezhou, therefore, continued throughout the 1960s. All species of animals were targeted but of the larger species, elephants were the most sought after. It was recorded that between 1960 and 1980, up to nine thousand and fifty eight elephants were killed in the GNP alone out of an estimated national herd of forty four thousand five hundred and six.⁶⁹⁵

Poaching particularly soared during the height of the war of liberation between 1975 and 1980 as

⁶⁹¹ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 156.

⁶⁹² Wright, *Grey Ghosts of Buffalo Bend*, p. 15.

⁶⁹³ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 157.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 157-158.

⁶⁹⁵ Elephant Census in Zimbabwe, 1980 to 1995, An Analysis and Review, 1996, p. 7.

local people took advantage of lax park patrols to re-enter the old hunting grounds and plunder the game of the Gonarezhou veld.⁶⁹⁶

During the 1970s, *Shadi* (Shadreck), a Portuguese African was recorded in the Gonarezhou narratives as a legendary poacher of the first order. Like *Vhekenya*, he became a mythical figure of the Gonarezhou bush. He was alleged to have pillaged animals of the area mainly killing elephants for ivory from his Mavube base near the Sabi-Lundi confluence.⁶⁹⁷ It was believed that he supplied his booty to Italian architects working on the Cabora Bassa power line in Mozambique.⁶⁹⁸ The Italians in turn gave him rifles that he used on his hunting assignments. *Shadi* was also suspected to have been supplying the Special Branch of the Rhodesian forces with intelligence information on the movement of ZANLA forces in a bid to buy the state's silence on his illicit activities. It was also claimed that he operated as a double agent also supplying intelligence data to the ZANLA fighters and the Front for the liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) of Mozambique. In appreciation, the FRELIMO government is believed to have favoured him with uncontrolled border crossings. He continued with his careless hunting in the GNP right into independence thinking that his amnesty was elastic. He was subsequently arrested just after independence and died soon afterwards.⁶⁹⁹ While the state labelled him a first-class poacher, Shangane chronicles worshipped him as a local hero, if only because he regularly supplied them with free meat. To them, he was also a symbol of resistance to the imposition of the

⁶⁹⁶ Interview with Ward 9 Councillor, GNP, 5 September 2014.

⁶⁹⁷ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', pp. 268-270.

⁶⁹⁸ Detailed information on Italian architects working on the Cabora Bassa dam projects can be obtained from; A. F. Isaacman, *Dams, Displacement, and the Delusion of Development: Kahora Bassa and its Legacies in Mozambique, 1965-2007*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013).

⁶⁹⁹ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, p. 165.

park. His poaching was, therefore, acclaimed as a challenge to a government that had wilfully removed the people from their abode and impoverished them through the displacement.⁷⁰⁰

Members of the Rhodesian Special Branch, who were supposed to be custodians of the law also got involved in the plunder of the fauna of the GNP during the war years of 1975-1980. In late 1976 a liaison officer from Chiredzi was apprehended by the police for hunting elephants with an unknown black hunter almost certainly *Shadi*.⁷⁰¹ Park officials also took advantage of the breakdown of law and order to engage in poaching in the park.⁷⁰² The Chief Warden at the time, Barrie Ball bemoaned the increased pillage of the game of the PA which he admitted to have gone beyond his Department's control.⁷⁰³

Anti-poaching measures

Anti-poaching actions were basically targeted at the African hunter and snarer. The first concerted anti-poaching campaign in the game park was initiated by Wright after taking control of the vast Nuanetsi District in 1958. His efforts and those of other conservationists working with him culminated in the upgrading of the GGR to the GNP in 1975.⁷⁰⁴ *Chibgwe* claimed to have brooked no sympathy for poachers. From 1961, he engaged the services of the police, district intelligence messengers, village-based informers and the courts to fight the scourge. He also solicited the support of his superiors in Salisbury and influenced the enactment of stiffer anti-poaching legislation. He, in addition, lobbied for more resources to support increased anti-poaching

⁷⁰⁰ In an interview with Samuel Khumbani on 4 August 2014, he revealed that in local circles *Shadi* was also known as Mutemko Khumbula. He also disclosed that *Shadi* worked with other local hunting 'heroes', John Makhumula Phuzi and Simbi Lovha Sithole together village heads who supplied them with valuable information on the movements of park officials.

⁷⁰¹ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, pp. 62 & 103.

⁷⁰² *Ibid.* p. 62.

⁷⁰³ NAZ: S4061, T. Ferrar, 'Lowvelders, You are the Custodians of Kabakwe [Big Elephant]', *Zimbabwe Wild Life*, No. 21, October, 1979, pp. 6-7.

⁷⁰⁴ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 149.

activities.⁷⁰⁵ These efforts were complemented by the improved radio and road communication that he instituted throughout the park area and the establishment of sub-stations for quick information dissemination. Over and above the intensive propaganda he mounted against poachers, he deployed more officers to apprehend offenders.⁷⁰⁶

Wright claimed to have made considerable progress in reducing African snaring in his first few years in control of the Nuanetsi District. He also boasted of winning the fight to stop the white practice of box shooting.⁷⁰⁷ He contended that the number of snares in the Game Reserve had, by the mid-1960s decreased by almost 70%, a position supported by the marked increase in the population of game in the park. By 1963, he was boasting that the park was, once again, regaining its popularity as a game and fish viewing destination.⁷⁰⁸ In an effort to stamp out the practice, anti-poaching foot patrols were intensified during his tenure. The results were, however, not always commensurate with the effort expended as the practice continued.

One restraint facing the anti-poaching units was the seemingly limited powers of arrest of the game rangers. Game staff, for example, was not allowed to shoot to kill but only scare poachers away. The rule was that they only fire back in retaliation. The irony of it was that *mapocha* could shoot while game rangers could only scare poachers away. Poachers knew all this and, hence, their daring challenges to law officers.⁷⁰⁹ Rangers were, furthermore, vulnerable to prosecution if they killed or injured park trespassers implying the law did not fully protect them while conducting their

⁷⁰⁵ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp. 88-90.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid. pp. 142 & 204-213.

⁷⁰⁷ Report, H. A. B. Simons, Senior Leader's Report, Gona re Zhou Expedition, 1962, p. 50.

⁷⁰⁸ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 257.

⁷⁰⁹ The Ministry's position was guided by the Attorney General's Opinion Paper No. 23 of 1976: AG's Ref. AG18/11 (m) and Departmental Ref. A/15 of 5th May 1976. Both were vague on how rangers could protect themselves as they simply stated that they should be 'most circumspect' and only use 'acceptable' force when dealing with poachers.

policing duties.⁷¹⁰ All this frustrated the efforts of those seeking to stop the practice and, thus, pulled back the fight to contain or stop poaching.

Labour migration as a survival tactic

Mavhunga argued that frustrated by the state's failure to deliver on war-time land restitution promises, communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe took the option of migrating out of the reach of the state crossing borders to find opportunities "outside which the state has [had] failed to provide."⁷¹¹ What must be noted was that the crossing of the border by the Shangane to seek better fortunes in South Africa dates back to the period of early African contact with Western capital.⁷¹² It was reported that by 1878, about eight thousand Shangane from Rhodesia made up 30% of the Kimberly workforce. The number had grown to eighty thousand by 1897 and almost doubled by 1936.⁷¹³ It is on record, therefore, that the Shangane became migrant labourers in large numbers much earlier than other ethnic groups of the region.

This study concedes that the number of people seeking employment opportunities beyond the country's borders from the Lowveld region of Zimbabwe escalated after the occupation of the country by the BSAC in 1890⁷¹⁴ but contends that it intensified after the local people were squeezed out of their land to accommodate state projects such as the GNP.⁷¹⁵ The residents of the area had to find alternative means of survival. Trekking south in large numbers was one such

⁷¹⁰ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 276.

⁷¹¹ Ibid. p. 25.

⁷¹² The contact began as early as the 1840s when local communities from southern Rhodesia began trekking south to work in the plantations of Natal and later mines of the Witwatersrand. For further insight, see, Mtetwa, 'The Political and Economic History of the Duma People', pp. 48 & 176, Liesegang, 'Aspects of Gaza Nguni History', p. 8, Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 27, Bannerman, 'Towards a History of the Hlengwe People', p. 493 & J. Van Coetzar, 'Black Workers from Zimbabwe in South Africa', *NADA*, 12, 2 (1980), p. 100.

⁷¹³ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 76.

⁷¹⁴ De Laessoe, 'Ordinary Meeting, August 28th', p. 125.

⁷¹⁵ Group interview with Chibwedziva villagers, June 2014.

option. While it appeared as though it was some act of surrender, it was in essence a pragmatic acceptance by residents of the region of the changed circumstances. They were forced to look for alternative means of survival given that their sacred Gonarezhou butchery and granary could no longer provide them with the basic needs after their ejection from the land.⁷¹⁶ The migration to South Africa was, therefore, pushed by the changed situation that the people had to adapt to.

While some moved into mines and farms in Zimbabwe, the majority opted for *Mzansi* (South Africa) where there were relatively better working conditions. Those who worked in the country were employed on various local projects such as the construction of a road from Marhumbini through the GNP to the Boli Sub-Office.⁷¹⁷ Others sought employment in various mining towns and plantations that were sprouting throughout the country. The closest were Shabani and Mashaba Mines and Triangle and Hippo Valley Sugar Estates.⁷¹⁸ Suggestions had been made towards the declaration of the game reserve in 1934 that some people from the area be employed as police officers and trackers at Chipinda Pools. The Shangane were preferred for their known dexterity in tracking wild animals and, so, the reasoning was that they could make good officers too.⁷¹⁹

Mines in both Southern Rhodesia and South Africa preferred Shangane labourers who they considered as self-starters and according to the Transvaal Chamber of Mines were more willing to work underground.⁷²⁰ They were said to be unlike their Karanga neighbours who were

⁷¹⁶ In the introductory chapter of his PhD thesis, Mavhunga dwells at length on the GNP having been both a sacred butchery and granary for the indigenous people of the area. The barring of local people from accessing the meat and bush products of the Gonarezhou forest meant they had to find alternative means of survival.

⁷¹⁷ *MRC*: MS 22, Report on the Ngwenyenye, p. 89.

⁷¹⁸ In the early 1950s, Shabani Mine even established a labour recruitment depot at Marhumbini. For many years up to about 1960, the station was manned by Blake Thompson who literally became the ‘uncrowned king’ of the area. For more insights on Thompson, see his various memos and reports (*NAZ*: TH10/1/1/143-419).

⁷¹⁹ *NAZ*: S914/12/1B, Divisional Road Engineer to CRE, 12/6/34.

⁷²⁰ Transvaal Chamber of Mines, Fifth Annual Report, 1894. Also see, P. Harris, *Work, Culture, and Identity: Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910*, (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1994), pp. 48 & 63.

stereotypically labelled as indolent.⁷²¹ A 1924 *NADA* journal article reinforced the indolent thinking when it charged; “If crops are good and their limited financial requirements can be met, they (Karanga) prefer to live in comparative idleness.”⁷²² What such reasoning failed to appreciate, however, was that people only willingly sell their labour where returns are high and early Rhodesian work places did not meet the condition. Testimonies from many residents of the areas contiguous to the GNP were that they preferred to go south where working conditions were more attractive. Such emigrations were clandestine as they were not sanctioned by Rhodesian and South African customs and immigration authorities.⁷²³ Most migrants used illegal routes; often taking great risks of crossing the crocodile-infested Limpopo River even when it was flooded.

The Shangane of south-eastern Zimbabwe, like other groups in the country joined the labour market as a natural response to the *monetisation* of the Rhodesian economy at the inception of colonial rule. The new state demanded tax in form of money. All exchange transactions were then conducted using the medium of money. One had to work to raise the money. Working in Rhodesian mines and farms was not rewarding enough and, so, crossing the border to South Africa became a tempting and real alternative.⁷²⁴ Local people also moved down south to raise money to buy attractive foreign items such as textiles, imported alcohol and hoes. They also needed the money to mitigate regular misfortunes such as droughts.⁷²⁵ In probably another overstatement of African priorities, Bulpin claimed the money was also required to pay bride-price.⁷²⁶

⁷²¹ NAZ: N3/33/8, History of the Ndanga District, undated.

⁷²² E. W. Bevan, ‘The Education of Natives in the Pastoral Pursuits’, *NADA*, 1 (1924), p. 13.

⁷²³ Van Coetzar, ‘Black Workers from Zimbabwe in South Africa’, p. 100. Also see, B. Paton, *Labour Export Policy in the Development of Southern Africa*, (Harare: UZ Publication, 1995). This position was given in various interviews conducted in the Sengwe area of South East Zimbabwe. Many still find working in South Africa more rewarding and, hence, the reason why they continue trekking south.

⁷²⁴ De Laessoe, ‘Ordinary Meeting, August 28th’, p. 125.

⁷²⁵ Liesegang, ‘Aspects of Gaza Nguni History’, pp. 8 & 14.

⁷²⁶ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, pp. 42 & 179.

The NC of Ndanga had, as early as 1906 noted what he considered to be the main benefits of trekking south. He stated:

The benefits to be acquired-both to the government and natives-by this exodus to the Rand were impossible to be overestimated. Firstly, they are able to pay their tax without any trouble and secondly the broadening process which their minds must undergo, by intercourse with the better class of natives in the South will greatly help to make them more amenable to discipline in the future...The natives who go to South have to enter a six-month contract; after that time expires, the contract is monthly. Large numbers of them work for a year before returning home. Discouraged from going North by poor pay and poor treatment.⁷²⁷

The recruitment of such labour was mainly conducted by white adventurers such as *Vhekenya*. Among the lot were recruiters such as Jack Ford an Australian and former Southern Rhodesian police officer, John Dart a Welshman, Wielder a Hungarian, Colesen who was a Swede and Jacob Martin Diegel (*Chari*). A good number were illegal operators working from Crook's Corner without licences. Many had discovered that it was easier and more profitable to 'hunt' African labourers than wild animals. Black-birding, as the new profession was called became lucrative business earning those involved quick and easy money.⁷²⁸ The illegal recruiters generally lived reckless lives in the wild. They would recruit, collect their capitation fees and get "blind drunk" as if there was no tomorrow.⁷²⁹ Others, like Blake-Thompson were formal recruitment agents employed by the African Consolidated Mines (Shabanie). During most of the 1950s, he recruited Shangane labourers from his base on the confluence of the Sabi-Lundi Rivers.⁷³⁰

The birders often used unscrupulous methods of recruitment such as abductions, propagandising employment conditions, using food to lure job-seekers and often bribing and coercing chiefs to supply them with recruits. Gangsters such as *Vhekenya* and *Chari* were accused of terrorising the

⁷²⁷ NAZ: 9/1/9, NC Annual Report, Ndanga, 1906.

⁷²⁸ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, pp. 20, 22, 24, 178 & 193.

⁷²⁹ Ibid. pp. 179-180.

⁷³⁰ 'Obituary', J. Blake-Thompson, B. Sc., F. R. A. I., *NADA*, 9 (1964), p. 70.

local Shangane, often flogging them and threatening to shoot those who refused to cooperate. Police patrols recorded deserted villages after its residents had fled into the bush to evade forced recruitment and harassment by unscrupulous labour recruiters. Some even threatened to shoot police officers who dared stop them from their lucrative business.⁷³¹ Employment agents, such as the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association were up to 1949 still sending recruitment agents called *magaratshani* (those who wait in the long grass at borders to capture those entering South Africa) into Rhodesia.⁷³² In the post-2000 period, these touts were to be colloquially known as *maguma-guma*.⁷³³ Blake Thompson conceded that migrations to South Africa of both men and women intensified after the local people were removed from the Gonarezhou land.⁷³⁴

The exodus of the Shangane to South Africa in droves became an issue that worried the Rhodesian government as it created labour shortage. The concern was expressed by the NC of Ndanga when he stated in his 1936 report that for the greater part of the year, up to 70% of the male population of the area was away working in South Africa.⁷³⁵ A Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society team visiting Marhumbini in 1962 also noted the absence of men in the villages as many had moved to South Africa to seek employment.⁷³⁶ The concern prompted the government to enforce stricter monitoring of migrants to South Africa. Many escaped the net by clandestinely acquiring South African identity documents with the assistance of relatives across the Limpopo. They, thus, unofficially acquired dual citizenship that gave them political and civic rights in both countries.

⁷³¹ NAZ: A3/18/20/30/22, Recruiting Illicit 1915-18, Herbert J. Taylor, Chief Native Commissioner, Rhodesia to the Under-Secretary for Native Affairs, Pretoria, 28 April 1915 'Illicit Recruiting of Southern Rhodesia Natives'.

⁷³² Van Coetzar, 'Black Workers from Zimbabwe in South Africa', p. 101.

⁷³³ B. Rutherford, 'Zimbabweans Living in the South African Border-Zone: Negotiating, Suffering, and Surviving', *Concerned Africa Scholars*, 80 (2008), pp. 36-42 & B. Rutherford, 'An Unsettled Belonging: Zimbabwean Farm Workers in Limpopo Province, South Africa', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 26, 4 (2008), pp. 401-415.

⁷³⁴ NAZ: TH10/1/1/361, Blake Thompson to Professor Mitchell & Father G. Fortune, 14th June, 1958.

⁷³⁵ NAZ: S235/514, Native Commissioner's Report, Ndanga, 1936.

⁷³⁶ Report, Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society, Gonarezhou Expedition, 1962, p. 68.

Many Sengwe residents along the border with South Africa had such ‘citizenship’.⁷³⁷ Such were the advantages of living along the country’s border areas.

Those recruited into the South African labour market after the Second World War were issued with a work document known as a Jan Smuts pass. The paper was a very basic permit with no photograph or finger prints and could be easily exchanged. It was changed in 1952 into a *doppass* which was a more formal reference book with photographs and finger prints.⁷³⁸ Most migrant workers did not bother to acquire proper working papers as they feared that such documents would be used to monitor them. Furthermore, registration had its own obligations as those in possession of the *doppass* were compelled to pay a repatriation fee on a monthly basis. Part of that money would then be sent home at the end of one’s contract as deferred payment.⁷³⁹ Such an arrangement was unpopular with many as it implied that workers were irresponsible individuals who could not make savings on their own.

The return home by the *magayisas* (now rich labourers) after a fruitful working stint was almost always accompanied by pomp and ceremony. Mavhunga equated the dividends they brought back to the village in the form of acquired paraphernalia to bringing back carcasses from a hunt. He contended that South African mines had, indeed, become the “new forests” and “new hunting” grounds for the Shangane residents living on the margins of the park.⁷⁴⁰ The home-coming was in most cases timed to coincide with the harvest period when food and beer were plentiful. Most came back loaded with tales of their working experiences, gifts for loved ones and money to pay tax. Goods brought home included fancy clothes, stylish hats, blankets, radios and clocks.

⁷³⁷ Interview with residents of Ward 14 & 15 in Sengwe, February 2015.

⁷³⁸ Van Coetzar, ‘Black Workers from Zimbabwe in South Africa’, p. 102.

⁷³⁹ Ibid. p. 106.

⁷⁴⁰ Mavhunga, ‘The Mobile Workshop’, p. 226.

Vhekenya met one *magayisa* carrying a large clock and when he asked him what he intended using it for, the answer was that it would tell his wife when to feed him.⁷⁴¹ The returnees also brought plenty of cash and they remained centres of attention in the villages while the money lasted. The stories of the labourers did not always end in joyous celebrations. Some left home and never returned due to death while others became *machonas* (decided to marry and settle in South Africa for good). Some were robbed of their goods on the way back home and others returned to find their beloved relatives gone or wives snatched away by other men.⁷⁴²

Shangane political protest

One other Shangane way of expressing resentment to the eviction and exclusion from the GNP was embracing radical anti-colonial nationalist politics. Like many other indigenous communities of the country, they had never really accepted their subjugation by the Rhodesian government. They, therefore, remained generally defiant to authority throughout the colonial period especially following their ejection from the Gonarezhou lands. During the early colonial period, such insubordination was expressed through taking advantage of their border location to switch allegiance to either PEA or South Africa. The action was often done to evade compulsory dipping and taxation but also as protest to eviction from their Gonarezhou lands by the state.

The state had always been suspicious of the Shangane and fearful that they could take up arms at any time and fight the regime, given their martial history. It was because of this suspicion that in 1917 an English transport provider, Hyatt, labelled them a dangerous lot that was “always on the verge of revolt.”⁷⁴³ For that reason, the government was always wary of a possible anti-state

⁷⁴¹ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, pp. 182 & 185.

⁷⁴² Mavhunga, ‘The Mobile Workshop’, p. 227.

⁷⁴³ Hyatt, *The Old Transport Road*, p. 132.

mutiny from them.⁷⁴⁴ In another statement of mistrust of the Shangane expressed in 1934, the state had suggested the establishment of a strong police presence at Chipinda Pools to monitor what it termed the lawlessness of the border area.⁷⁴⁵ Such a proposal was also an acknowledgement of the fragility of borderlands and a confirmation of the government's fear of revolt coming from the generally neglected border community of this part of the country.

Again, in the early 1920s, the government had noted growing political agitation among the African population in the country which it attributed to the growth of opposition African newspapers. In a 1923 *NADA* publication, the state had expressed its concern over the strong anti-state tone of publications generated by Africans. It was especially concerned that such literature, originating from black America had the effect of poisoning the local black readership and fostering rebellion amongst its African peoples. To counter the writings, the government engineered the production of an African monthly paper whose thrust was to “interest and not instruct” its clientele.⁷⁴⁶ In reality, it was a propaganda mouthpiece of the state.

While Shangane political protest became more pronounced after the people were uprooted from the GNP and resettlement on the fringes of the park, it can be best traced to the period of early colonial rule. The first scare came in September 1918 when the Shangane of Sengwe were reported to be in rebellion. The source of the scary information was an “intelligent looking” Portuguese national called Klass.⁷⁴⁷ In his sworn and signed statement to NC Forestall of Chibi, Klass reported

⁷⁴⁴ NAZ: S3099/15, Martini-Henry Rifles for Tsetse Fly Operations 1933-40, J. M. Coghile Gamer, Acting Assistant Native Commissioner, Shangani Reserve, to the Chief Entomologist of Agriculture, Salisbury (ND), ‘Tsetse fly Operations: MH Rifles’.

⁷⁴⁵ NAZ: S914/12/1D, Secretary Commerce to Hackney, 20 February 1934. Also see, NAZ: S914/12/1B, Secretary Agriculture to Secretary Commerce, ‘Controlled Shooting’, 13 April 1934.

⁷⁴⁶ Wilson, ‘The Development of Native Reserves’, pp. 91-92.

⁷⁴⁷ NAZ: N3/14/6, Captain, Staff Officer to the Chief Native Commissioner, ‘Alleged Shangaan Rising’, 6 September, 1918-Reports from Bulawayo, Gwanda & Victoria Police. While all who listened to his story were initially convinced of its authenticity, many later doubted its truth as the man was then suspected to be of unstable mental disposition given his rumblings throughout the presentation of his statement.

of the murder of nine European labour recruiters by some Shangane along the Sengwe-Portuguese border area that he testified to have seen with his own eyes.⁷⁴⁸ He also detailed the “massacre” of a number of African recruits during the same incident. He, furthermore, reported that the Shangane rebels had then crossed into PEA where they murdered three more white police officers at Masanta Station and disembowelled them “to get the fat from them.”⁷⁴⁹ He claimed they had then broken into two, with one group advancing towards Messina while the larger one, armed with rifles taken from the murdered whites, headed for Nuanetsi. The Messina bound army was reported to have cut the telegraph wire to Messina, an act reminiscent of the events that sparked off the 1893 war between the Ndebele and the BSAC.⁷⁵⁰

While under the ‘captivity’ of the rebels, Klass claimed to have heard them boasting that they were going to finish off the English who they said were already suffering heavy casualties at the hands of the Germans in Europe where they were engaged in a fight in the First World War. His captors had further indicated their desire to regain independence from the British. Klass also affirmed to have “heard” that the Basutu (Sotho) of the Transvaal were planning a similar revolt during the Christmas period. In his account, Klass further stated that while on his way to Chibi Office, after a dramatic escape, he heard that two more Europeans had been killed at the Makuleke Store and was further told that subjects of chiefs Chikundu, Chibasa, Maplani and Makoloko across the Limpopo River had also risen in revolt. He asserted that Africans in PEA had also taken up arms against their government.⁷⁵¹ Klass, furthermore, claimed that on his way to Chibi Office, he had noticed signs of preparation for war by villagers, evidenced by the hoarding of food in granaries:

⁷⁴⁸ NAZ: N3/14/6, Captain, Staff Officer to the Chief Native Commissioner, ‘Alleged Shangaan Rising’.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid.

Since the threshing this year all food has been taken and hidden in the hills, and also big grain pits have been dug in the bush, and the grain hidden there. At or near, or just below the junction of Nuanetsi and Limpopo Rivers there is an island, and a great quantity of food is being collected here.⁷⁵²

The apparently exaggerated report was, however, corroborated by a rumour circulating in the Gwanda area of an impending Shangane uprising. The influential Shangane Chief Furamela who resided along the Bubi River was reported to have called back all his subjects working in South Africa for military service in preparation for the revolt. There were also disturbing intelligence reports of some Shangane absconding from duty at farms such as Liebig Ranch allegedly to join others in the uprising. At the same time, and in acts symptomatic of war, a Nuanetsi Ranch employee was seriously injured by his African colleagues for selling out and at the same time a white man was reported to have been murdered in Messina.⁷⁵³ All these events were pointers to a volatile political climate and a possible rebellion by the Shangane.

After weighing Klass's report, Forestell decided to take action given what he labelled to be the warlike character of the Shangane. He, thus, ordered all Europeans in isolated areas to take immediate precaution and where possibly seek refuge at police stations. He then set off to Sengwe with two district messengers to ascertain the authenticity of the report. His preliminary findings prompted him to alert his bosses in Salisbury, who quickly dispatched a combined force of the police and army under Lt. Col Essex Capell. The foot soldiers, supported by a large wagon drawn by sixteen mules and guided by Forestell set off for the Sengwe on 7 September.⁷⁵⁴ On 9 September the CNC sent a precautionary warning note to the NC of neighbouring Chipinga on the

⁷⁵² Ibid.

⁷⁵³ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁴ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp. 202-203.

reported disturbances. On the way to Sengwe, Forestall telegraphed his superiors in Salisbury to allay their fears as events *en route* were not pointing to any noticeable revolt.⁷⁵⁵

On arrival in Sengwe, *Ndambakuwa* (Forestall) engaged the traditional leadership in a marathon three-day meeting to decipher information on the purported uprising. The leadership totally denied ever hatching a plan to revolt. The DC was initially convinced that the denial was only but characteristic of the Shangane; that they would admit having been at the scene of some crime but vehemently deny seeing anything happen.⁷⁵⁶ Probed further, Headman Gezani only confirmed a circulating rumour of a “native who stole a shotgun at the Makuleke store (and) was tied up and escaped.”⁷⁵⁷ The escapee was thought to be Klass who had dramatically concocted a false story to save his skin. He was later suspected to have been an attention seeker and a mentally unstable individual as during the presentation of his report, the actor appeared “upset” and at times made “rumbling” statements. The police recommended that he be sent to Fort Victoria for medical examination. After that, no one seemed to have shown any interest in him.⁷⁵⁸ Forestall was, however, convinced that his timely action had averted a potential rebellion.⁷⁵⁹

Political agitation after 1934

Shangane opposition to colonial rule after 1934 was centred on the loss of the Gonarezhou land to the game reserve project. Since the late 1930s, Chisa’s people had resented the erection of a veterinary fence meant to contain the spread of the foot and mouth disease and coast fever but

⁷⁵⁵ NAZ: N3/14/6, Internal Security: Intelligence: Telegraph from the Superintendent of Natives, Victoria to CNC, Received 9 September 1918.

⁷⁵⁶ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 360.

⁷⁵⁷ NAZ: N3/14/6, Internal Security: Intelligence: NC Forestall (Homestead, Nuanetsi River) to the Superintendent of Natives, Victoria, 14 September 1918.

⁷⁵⁸ NAZ: N3/14/6, Captain, Staff Officer to the Chief Native Commissioner, ‘Alleged Shangaan Rising’.

⁷⁵⁹ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 204.

viewed by the local people as directed at closing them out of the park. This was especially because the Veterinary Department had to quarantine all village stock to allow for the erection of the fence.⁷⁶⁰ Chief Chisa felt greatly restricted by the fence and, so, bitterly resented it.⁷⁶¹ The opening of the Mwama tsetse-control gate in 1956 with its rigid traffic controls further heightened tension between Chisa's people and the Veterinary Department. Similarly, Chief Mavube, whose territory straddled the border with PEA was equally opposed to the erection of the fence which cut him off his Rhodesian relatives.⁷⁶² The most detested part was that the fences were erected to bar indigenous communities from accessing their old hunting grounds and restricted the people's movements into lands they still considered theirs but which now formed a consortium of state and European controlled properties. They were, furthermore, angered when they were not allowed to keep large numbers of cattle through various veterinary restrictions imposed by the government.

The mid-1950s ushered in a changed political climate in Southern Rhodesian politics as the entire country became politically charged. Alois Mlambo traces the emergence of militant nationalism to this period when middle class political leaders abandoned an earlier stance of seeking fair rule from the colonial master to one of demanding self-governance.⁷⁶³ Such leaders now openly challenged the previously sacrosanct state authority for denying the black majority participation in the country's politics.⁷⁶⁴ Mlambo argues that the radicalised political leadership turned to the masses for support as they now realised the importance of this political constituency. Mass political parties were subsequently launched beginning with the City Youth League in 1955.⁷⁶⁵ It was

⁷⁶⁰ NAZ: S3106/11/1/9, Sabi Valley 1955-6 Mowbray, 'Lower Sabi Valley Report'.

⁷⁶¹ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 331.

⁷⁶² MRC: MS 22, Report on the Ngwenyenyene or Marumbini Headmanship, p. 84.

⁷⁶³ A. S. Mlambo, 'From the Second World War to UDI, 1940-1965', in B. Raftopoulos & A. Mlambo (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe, A History from the Pre-Colonial Period to 2008*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2009) p. 75.

⁷⁶⁴ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 146-148.

⁷⁶⁵ Mlambo, 'From the Second World War to UDI, 1940-1965', in Raftopoulos & Mlambo (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p. 85.

followed by the more broad-based Southern Rhodesia African National Congress, the National Democratic Party, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), the People's Caretaker Council and ZANU.⁷⁶⁶

The Rhodesian government responded by enacting a chain of repressive pieces of legislation, the effect of which was the further radicalisation of the political movements and the generation of increased tension.⁷⁶⁷ Again, Mlambo situates the hardening of the Rhodesian government to the 1958 cabinet coup that removed the liberal Garfield Todd of the United Federal Party from power and ushered in the Rhodesian Front party under Winston Field.⁷⁶⁸ The change was followed by the enactment of the State of Emergency Act in 1959 that made it easy to arrest, detain and in the government's words, curb rebellion.⁷⁶⁹ The Act was bolstered by the Preventive Detention Act. Section 3(2) of the Act authorised the Governor to detain anybody at his pleasure in order to promote peace and order. In effect, it empowered the police to detain suspects without trial.⁷⁷⁰

Another draconian piece of legislation introduced during the period, the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA) of 1960 restricted the people's rights to public assembly, banned the publication of literature considered subversive and sanctioned the arrest of suspects without warrants.⁷⁷¹ Under the Act, supposedly trivial crimes like intimidating law state officers could

⁷⁶⁶ Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, pp. 146-48.

⁷⁶⁷ During the period, the Southern Rhodesia's African National Congress, later African National Council was banned. The National Democratic Party was formed in its place. It was also banned leading to the formation of ZAPU, the PCC and ZANU. Repressive laws were enacted and many nationalist leaders arrested and incarcerated into prisons.

⁷⁶⁸ Mlambo, 'From the Second World War to UDI, 1940-1965', in Raftopoulos & Mlambo (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p. 78.

⁷⁶⁹ State of Emergency Act, 1959 & J. Barker, *Rhodesia: The Road to Rebellion*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 18.

⁷⁷⁰ Preventive Detention (Temporary Provisions) Act, No. 39, 1959, Southern Rhodesia.

⁷⁷¹ Law and Order (Maintenance) Act, 1960 & Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, p. 147. For another perspective of the highly charged political period see, B. Tavuyanago, 'The Crocodile Gang Operation: A Critical Reflection on the Genesis of the Second Chimurenga in Zimbabwe', *Global Journal of Social Science & Political Science*, 13, 4 (2013), pp. 27-29.

attract jail terms of up to ten years while throwing of stones at government buildings or law enforcement officers could attract imprisonment of up to twenty years.⁷⁷²

Park evictions in the country had created fertile ground for African opposition to colonial rule. Ranger conceded that such displacements had conveniently played into the hands of nationalists of the period who used them to mobilise opposition to the colonial government.⁷⁷³ Joshua Nkomo was known to have addressed meetings in the Matopos Game Reserve in the late 1950s and early 1960s where he strongly spoke against the eviction of people from these sanctuaries.⁷⁷⁴ Nationalist campaigns for the abolition of parks intensified with the end of the federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1963.⁷⁷⁵

The political drama playing out throughout the country also found expression in south-eastern Zimbabwe. The area which appeared to have remained peaceful and largely uncorrupted since the 1918 disturbances became, like the rest of the country, politically agitated as the people of the area openly challenged the government. Wright notes that while on the surface the Shangane appeared contented, their past made them first class “targets for agitators.”⁷⁷⁶ Earlier predictions by Mozambican authorities coming as early as 1958 had been that trouble in the southern region of the country would start in the Shangane areas of the Limpopo and Nuanetsi, a prediction that worried colonial administrators.⁷⁷⁷

The government’s attempt to use chiefs and headmen to counter the rising wave of opposition politics hit a brick wall when traditional leaders refused to comply. They, instead, clandestinely

⁷⁷² Barker, *Rhodesia: The Road to Rebellion*, p. 215.

⁷⁷³ Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks*, p. 175.

⁷⁷⁴ *The Herald*, 21 March 1962.

⁷⁷⁵ Warden’s Memorandum, 29 July 1963, F128 TD 1079/1, Volume 3.

⁷⁷⁶ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp. 214 & 358-359.

⁷⁷⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 49 & 358.

mobilised the populace of Sangwe, Sengwe, Xilotlela and Marhumbini to resist forced displacements from the GNP and compulsory cattle dipping.⁷⁷⁸ Significantly, Shangane communities closer to the Portuguese border constantly reminded Rhodesian administrators that their kinsfolk across the border in Mozambique were never forced to dip or spray cattle yet the stock appeared healthy. Their conclusion, which was not entirely illogical was that the Rhodesian government's motive for enforcing dipping was driven by the desire to control cattle stock. Given the charged political climate of the time, traditional leaders used the opportunity to revive their war with the government over lost lands. It was a war that was buoyed by the timely incarceration of ZAPU nationalist leaders at GRC in the Gonarezhou Park in the first half of 1964.

Getting entangled in Gonakudzingwa politics

The confinement of ZAPU politicians at Gonakudzingwa in the 1960s had an inspiring political effect on the Shangane people. The community was already simmering with grievances against the government chief among which was the forced removal from the Gonarezhou terrain. It became ironic and at the same time opportune that the very park they were removed from became the new home of political detainees who were to greatly stir their political emotions. While the government's resolve was to keep the troublesome politicians "out of circulation until their evil doctrines had been forgotten", the opposite happened.⁷⁷⁹

Quarantine political camps of the time were not confined to the south-eastern corner of the country. Several such camps with basically the same conditions were established throughout the country in

⁷⁷⁸ NAZ: ORAL/HO3, 'Position of Chiefs', p. 46 & Interview with Mbuya Mukaha, Sibizapansi, 24 December 2014. Her husband was one of the headman who defied government at the time. For an elaborate discussion on the resistance of chiefs to government control during the colonial period, see, J. Alexander, *The Unsettled Land: State-Making and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe, 1893-2003*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2006).

⁷⁷⁹ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 130. Also see, Native Affairs Annual Report, 1961 by Secretary for Native Affairs and Chief Native Commissioner, Extracts, *NADA*, 9, 40 (1963).

the 1960s to isolate and punish nationalists. There were two types of such incarcerations; detention and restriction. Detention camps were prisons of political activists. One would be locked up in such a way that normal life was impossible while with restriction, one was limited to an area where the individual could support oneself and lead a fairly normal life. Restriction was initially within one's home but later in faraway places such as Nkayi, Conemmara, WhaWha, Marandellas, Sikombela, Gokwe and Gonakudzingwa.⁷⁸⁰ Gonakudzingwa was one such restriction camp.

The establishment of the GRC right in the middle of GNP for ZAPU leaders had been mooted as early as 1959 by the then Minister of African Affairs, Jack Quinton. The plan, however, only came to fruition in 1964 following increased political tension in the country and the arrest of many nationalist leaders who, in the view of the government needed new homes away from the rest of the people.⁷⁸¹ The Restriction Camp was located on a forty hectare piece of land in the revered Mapokole forest of the GNP. It was also within the vicinity of the Sengwe TTL with the closest village being that of the Xilotlela people.⁷⁸² A special police camp was built at the site in 1964 under superintend R. E. Evans.⁷⁸³ Officers at the post were assisted in 'policing' the restrictees by the stroppy elephants of the park that imposed their own effective "dusk to dawn curfew."⁷⁸⁴ While Nkomo concurred that animals of the Gonarezhou forest did restrict their night movements, he

⁷⁸⁰ Barker, *Rhodesia: The Road to Rebellion*, p. 55. Alexander and Munochiveyi's works on detention camp experiences in Zimbabwe are illuminating. See, J. Alexander, 'Nationalism and Self-government in Rhodesian Detention: Gonakudzingwa, 1964-1974', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37, 3, 2011, pp. 551-569 & M. B. Munochiveyi, 'It was a Difficult Time in Zimbabwe: A History of Imprisonment, Detention, and Liberation Struggle, 1960-1980', PhD Thesis, University of Minnesota, 2008.

⁷⁸¹ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, p. 20.

⁷⁸² Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 58.

⁷⁸³ NAZ: S3330/1/35/25/T14A/2/2, Restricttees, Wha Wha/Gonakudzingwa.

⁷⁸⁴ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 364. Given that the camp was inside a game park, one could not dare venture out at night for fear of being attacked by dangerous animals.

pointed out that they were “not hostile by intent” to their new neighbours⁷⁸⁵, as if they knew why they had joined them in the Gonarezhou forest.

The first politicians to be confined to the camp were ZAPU leaders; Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo, Josiah Mushore Chinamano, Ruth Lettie Chinamano and Joseph Msika. They had been arrested under the LOMA on 16 April 1964 and accused of politically destabilising the country.⁷⁸⁶ They were, shortly after, joined by three more restrictees in the persons of Dan Madzimbamuto, Stanislas Marembo and Willie Musarurwa. They remained detained there, with many others who later joined them for the next ten years until they were released in 1974.⁷⁸⁷

Nkomo explained the reasons for their condemnation to the Gonakudzingwa forest area:

I am told that the idea of hiding prisoners away in the game reserves came from Sir Godfrey Huggins, the long-serving prime minister of Southern Rhodesia who later became Lord Malvern. It seems that he once met Dr. Salazar, the Old Portuguese dictator, and began to explain his country’s native policy. Salazar was not much interested. Portugal, he said, did not have a native policy; the natives were just there, part of the African fauna like the elephants. Portugal did not have an elephant policy, so he did not see why it should have a native policy. Huggins answered that the British colonies did have an elephant policy, where they were herded into reserves for their own safety, and its policy for natives was much the same...So here the four of us were, the first natives to be hidden away in the elephant reserve.⁷⁸⁸

Because there were no Shangane among the first restrictees, the state convinced itself, rather falsely that local people would most likely be averse to the influence of “dissidents from other tribes wondering among them.”⁷⁸⁹ It turned out to have been a wrong assumption as the local people had by then been politically conscientised to understand and appreciate national politics. In addition, the Shangane had interfaced with Ndebele and Shona groups since the 1950s and had

⁷⁸⁵ J. Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, (London: Methuen, 1984), p. 125.

⁷⁸⁶ Barker, *Rhodesia: The Road to Rebellion*, p. 208.

⁷⁸⁷ Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, pp. 122 & 124.

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid.* p. 124.

⁷⁸⁹ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 358.

been exchanging useful political notes especially on their eviction experiences. The experiences had strengthened their resolve to fight for the recovery of lost lands, this time, with the encouragement of the Gonakudzingwa internees.

DC Wright alleged that the Xilotlela people initially disliked these seemingly pompous, showy and glibly-spoken members of a different ethnic group and even blamed him for their presence in the area. The attitude soon changed when they realised that these strangers were after all generous free-spenders who behaved kindly to all, especially at beer parties.⁷⁹⁰ They then began to admire their new neighbours who moved around with pomp carrying knobkerries and donning animal skin hats, signs of defiance and challenge to the government. In the main, the restrictees had no problems of acceptance by the Shangane who shared the Nguni language with the mostly Ndebele internees.⁷⁹¹ To gain the political allegiance of the local people, Nkomo and his team had, for example, promoted the expression of a Shangane identity through encouraging them to defiantly garb prohibited attire such as animal skins and furs. The Gonakudzingwa restrictees also earned the respect of the local people when they paid homage to the *mikwembu* (spirits) of Mapokole, a clear acknowledgement of the importance of spirit mediums in the fight for land and independence.⁷⁹² The restrictees also openly encouraged the Shangane to reclaim lost hunting lands, if not now, at least in independent Zimbabwe.⁷⁹³

The Restriction Camp, therefore, became an instant magnet for admirers from near and far who were enthused by the courage displayed by the men and women of Gonakudzingwa. The conviction of those visiting the Gonakudzingwa Camp or *Tiko Rahina* (Our Land) as the local

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 364.

⁷⁹¹ Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, p. 127.

⁷⁹² Interview with Ward 9 Councillor, GNP, 6 September 2014.

⁷⁹³ NAZ: ORAL 219. SENN-Godfrey Cassin Senn was visiting nationalist restriction centres on behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

people called it was that Nkomo was a symbol of power, that he and his fellow prisoners were stronger than the government, that the party cards they were issuing out to all visitors were certificates to a new country and that there was an impending political arrangement of handing over political power to Joshua Nkomo. Shangane leaders were assured by Nkomo himself that after his takeover of government, they would be allowed to go back into the park and hunt wild animals as they had done in the past.⁷⁹⁴ Such a promise, coming from the ‘leader of tomorrow’ was not only appealing to a disgruntled community but also assuring.

As a sign of authority and also an expression of their independence, the restrictees bragged at beer parties that they were planning to burn down the DC’s offices at Malipati. Furthermore, they had the courage to openly insult and even jeer at the police without fear of reprisals. The political prisoners of Gonakudzingwa also sneered at, denigrated and publicly abused African policemen on regular cycle patrols.⁷⁹⁵ The Shangane greatly admired such unprecedented guts. To them, the authority of the restrictees was a clear demonstration of their powers and a powerful statement of their determination to dislodge the colonial state.

Restriction conditions at Gonakudzingwa during the early period were rather lax. The political prisoners were, for example, allowed to build their own pole and dagga huts in the assigned area. They generally took care of their own welfare such as sourcing for and preparing their meals. Restricttees could take private correspondence studies and Sikanyiso Ndlovu was given charge of the study group at the camp.⁷⁹⁶ Lazarus Nkala, one of the internees acquired his degree while incarcerated at Gonakudzingwa. They were also allowed to mingle with local people even at beer

⁷⁹⁴ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 372.

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid. pp. 364-365.

⁷⁹⁶ *The Herald*, 17 September 2015, ‘Sikanyiso Ndlovu National Hero’.

drinking parties.⁷⁹⁷ Furthermore, the prisoners could entertain relatives, well-wishers and admirers provided they were indigenous Africans.⁷⁹⁸ The internees were also allowed to wonder freely, within a ten hectare restricted area marked with white stones. After a successful fight for more space by their attorney, Leo Baron, they were allowed to move freely within a wider area of 650 km² in the Sengwe TTL.⁷⁹⁹ This provided them with the opportunity to mingle more with resident communities and, thus, influence their political orientation.

Visitors initially came to *Tiko Rahina* out of curiosity but later, to listen to the appealing messages of the restrictees. These were centred on land that had been expropriated from indigenous communities of the country and racial discrimination.⁸⁰⁰ Accounts of the courage and invincibility of the internees had spread into the entire neighbourhood and beyond. People journeyed in large numbers from places like Sengwe, Sangwe, Beitbridge, Maranda, Bikita and Ndanga to receive inspiration from these courageous men and women who dared challenge the Rhodesian government.⁸⁰¹ Headmen Chilonga, Mpapa and Masivamele clandestinely mobilised resources and sent a representative team to the Restriction Camp to pay homage to *Chibgwe Chitedza* (Nkomo) and his men on their behalf.⁸⁰²

People from the surrounding Shangane communities started visiting the camp in large numbers in mid-1964 and throughout the first half of 1965. During these visits, they brought the internees some food and they could stay for some days at the camp and receive inspiration from their

⁷⁹⁷ Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, pp. 126 & 134.

⁷⁹⁸ NAZ: S3338/2/2/2, Restricttees, 1961-1963 & NAZ: S3330/1/35/25/T14A/2/2, Restricttees, Wha Wha/Gonakudzingwa.

⁷⁹⁹ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly Hansard, 13 August 1964, Col. 712. For further detail on the subject, see, *The Sunday Mail*, 17 May 1964, 'Challenge on Nkomo Case'.

⁸⁰⁰ Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, p. 127.

⁸⁰¹ Interview with Joshua Dzviriri, Mupinga, 17 April 2014. The railway line from Rutenga to Lourenco Marques passed by the Restriction Camp making it easy for admirers to visit the place.

⁸⁰² Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 366.

political mentors. Headmen from Tsvovani in the Sangwe TTL and their subjects also flocked to the Camp to register support for the nationalist cause.⁸⁰³ They also used such trips to buy the symbolic party cards from Nkomo.⁸⁰⁴ As the numbers of indigenous visitors surged, some Shangane were enlisted as interpreters. The Shangane were also proud to later learn that among the restrictees was Maluleke, a Shangane from Matibi No. 1 Reserve who had lived most of his life in Salisbury where he had most certainly been initiated into national politics.⁸⁰⁵

African newspapers of the time also got into a fighting mood. On 12 April 1965, one such newspaper reported of an ‘Easter Pilgrimage’ to Gonakudzingwa:

The stream of visitors has increased rapidly in the past few weeks. Men, women and children from all over the country have been going to pay homage to Constanto Ncube [the *pseudonym* given to Joshua Nkomo by the author to hide his real identity] and get inspiration from him. Reports of several thousand people of all races intending to visit Gonakudzingwa-the Mecca of Rhodesia-over Easter have been received.⁸⁰⁶

Furthermore, restrictees produced a local publication, the *Gonakudzingwa News*. It was printed in various indigenous languages including Shangane. The paper became an instant hit with the Gonakudzingwa visitors because of its content and political symbolism. Its central message was that every Zimbabwean had a right to share in in the country’s governance and that it was the obligation of all to fight for it.⁸⁰⁷

The political socialisation that came from mingling with Gonakudzingwa internees inevitably worried the state. While these visits initially appeared harmless, they had far-reaching political implications on local politics as the discontented Shangane used them to air their political

⁸⁰³ Interview with Mbuya Mukaha, Zibizapansi, 24 December 2014. Her husband was a headmen who undertook one such ‘pilgrimage’ to GRC.

⁸⁰⁴ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 37.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 366. Also see, NAZ: S3330/1/35/25/T14A/2/2, Restrictes, Wha Wha/Gonakudzingwa.

⁸⁰⁶ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 370.

⁸⁰⁷ Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, p. 128.

grievances to their future leaders. These were complains centred on land appropriation and the prohibition of people from accessing old hunting grounds.⁸⁰⁸ Wright contended that the restrictees took full advantage of their interaction with these communities with the strategy being to gain the full confidence of the populace.⁸⁰⁹ Signs were that by mid-1965, Nkomo and his colleagues' influence on the local population had grown to unprecedented heights. DC *Chibgwe* was worried that his district was fast slipping from his hands and a full-scale rebellion brewing in his backyard.⁸¹⁰ The disturbing state of affairs was aptly summed by a warning report sent to *Chibgwe* by one of his African district intelligence messenger:

There is a fire of hatred and such things spreading through Maranda! The people are the flames and they have been set alight by the men of Vila Salazar [Gonakudzingwa]. If the DC does not put this fire out soon, I fear we will all be killed here in Maranda Sub-office, where we do not sleep one wink at night for fear of men in the dark.⁸¹¹

The DC was particularly worried that more and more headmen were looking to Vila Salazar than Nuanetsi for leadership. The people, with the backing of Gonakudzingwa nationalists, were even threatening to harm the DC and destroy government infrastructure in the district. Again, the restrictees had even promised the traditional leaders that they would help them re-take land they had lost to whites.⁸¹² Such a message was appealing to the Shangane whose loss of land to the game scheme was still fresh in their minds. Indeed, such a message encouraged full-scale revolt and *Chibgwe* was apprehensive that the whole Shangane clan had been subverted by the Gonakudzingwa political activists and was moving towards a revolt.⁸¹³

⁸⁰⁸ Interview with Joshua Dzviriri, Mupinga, 17 April 2014.

⁸⁰⁹ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 364.

⁸¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 373.

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 373. Gonakudzingwa was located just a stone's throw from the small border settlement of Vila Salazar. The names were often used interchangeably.

⁸¹² Extract from the Report of the Secretary for Internal Affairs and Chief Native Commissioner for the Year 1962, p. 11.

⁸¹³ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp. 367-368.

Restriction conditions were changed for the worse when the impact of the internees became apparent to the government. Stricter measures were enforced after the government's declaration of the State of Emergency in May 1965.⁸¹⁴ No one could, thereafter, visit the camp without official authorisation. All non-restrictees staying at the camp were forced to leave. Unsanctioned meetings were banned and suspected subversive paraphernalia, including Nkomo's symbolic fur hat and walking stick were confiscated. The Restriction Camp was, overnight, transformed into a "full-time prison...inside a game sanctuary."⁸¹⁵ By October 1965, all types of visitors had been stopped altogether as the country moved towards the Unilateral Declaration of Independence.⁸¹⁶ Nkomo and his prisoner colleagues were completely cut-off from the outside world. Security at the camp was tightened and daily patrols by intimidating dogs was beefed up. For the next nine years, the internees were to be denied visits, even from their wives and children.⁸¹⁷

The location of the camp, close to a disgruntled community was in the first place, a grave mistake on the part of government. Arguing from a colonial administrator's point of view, Wright lamented such a move for exposing his district to a state of near revolt.⁸¹⁸ Mavhunga concurred, though for different reasons when he contended that the Restriction Camp was ironically transformed from a place of restriction to a centre of intrigue and subversion against the state.⁸¹⁹ Politicians at the camp wisely used the opportunity to propagate their political ideas which fermented rebellion against the government.⁸²⁰ While on the surface, chiefs and headmen of the area pretended to

⁸¹⁴ State of Emergency, 27 May 1965.

⁸¹⁵ Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, pp. 128-129.

⁸¹⁶ On 11 November 1965 and, in an act perceived to be one of rebellion, the Rhodesian Front Party of Ian Douglas Smith declared independence from Britain. The international community condemned the act and imposed sanctions on the country.

⁸¹⁷ Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, p. 133.

⁸¹⁸ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 368.

⁸¹⁹ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 368.

⁸²⁰ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 58.

support the government, as they were expected to, they were organising underground political activities in their villages and defiantly paying homage to *Chibgwe Chitedza*.⁸²¹ There is no doubt that the GRC played a crucial role in shaping the local people's orientation against unpopular colonial policies such as land expropriation, for the nationalists of the Gonakudzingwa kept on reminding them of the need to fight for the recovery of lost lands. They gave them the gusto to do so by assuring them of the imminent deliverance.

The Sengwe and Matibi No. 2 disturbances

Local Shangane revolt, ignited by Gonakudzingwa contacts, soon found open expression through the political upheavals that engulfed the lower Limpopo area of Sengwe and the Chikombedzi area of Matibi No. 2 in May 1965. The events caused real panic on the government's part and partly accounted for the fast-tracked declaration of the State of Emergency on 27 May 1965. The scare came from a letter written to DC Wright by a group of 'Concerned Shangane Women'. The unsigned and undated letter, posted from northern Transvaal had an explicit message:

We are some women of your Sengwe who are worried by our husbands' ideas (things they will do) and there will be a killing of all these peoples (sic). We want the *Ishe* [Chief] *Chibgwe* (Note: My African name) to meet us to talk on Monday and we will be at...old kraal near the big *mukamba* tree there in the morning. We beg the *Ishe* to see us there and not to bring his *Mapurisa* or the *Majonis* [police officers] with him. We want to tell you these things are troubling us (sic).⁸²²

It was later established that the letter had been written for the women by a carpenter stationed at a mission post across the Limpopo River, under sworn secrecy. There were a number of puzzles about the letter which the DC had to untangle. Firstly, it was received on a Tuesday, having been posted on a Thursday bringing the question of which Monday the women were referring to.

⁸²¹ Interview with Mbuya Mukaha, Zibizapansi, 24 December 2014.

⁸²² Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 374.

Secondly, he had to deal with the possibility of this being a trap to eliminate him and, thirdly, he was worried that the invitation could be another hoax of the Klass nature. He, however, decided to take the risk of meeting the women the following Monday, without his *majoni*.⁸²³

At the suggested venue and time, he met three Shangane women, one of whom spoke fluent Karanga which language they used to communicate. The women informed the DC of a terrible plan being hatched by Shangane men of Sengwe to kill some targeted white settlers in the area. He came to learn that these men had been sharpening spears and fresh arrows and hiding them in the bush in preparation for the onslaught. He was also informed that old muzzle-loaders were being retrieved from hidden kopjes and cleaned, again, in preparation for the kill. He was, furthermore, informed that the husbands of the ‘Concerned Women’ were among those who were holding suspicious nocturnal meetings. The women specifically mentioned six white farmers who were targeted for murder but confessed that there could have been many more. They gave their names and location: one lived in the West Nicholson area, three in the Mateke Hills adjoining Sengwe, one near Beitbridge and the other one had a ranch in the Chiredzi District across the Lundi River.

The worried women informers revealed that the order to kill the white farmers had come from Vila Salazar and was planned for June 1965. Their chilling revelations were that four of the six were to be eliminated by their husbands. DC *Chibgwe* knew four of those mentioned and was to later identify the other two. To him, the whole plot seemed real and frightening especially the connection with Gonakudzingwa and the land question. Wright conceded that the six mentioned Europeans did occupy land which the Africans claimed was theirs and, hence, the reason why they were singled out.⁸²⁴

⁸²³ Ibid.

⁸²⁴ Ibid. pp. 376 & 394.

The DC suggested to his superiors in Salisbury that given the precarious political climate in the district, as exemplified by this and other similar incidents the government consider declaring a State of Emergency. Salisbury responded by dispatching a high-powered team headed by the Secretary of Internal Affairs to investigate the reported incident. It got to Sengwe on 11 May and immediately convened an emergency meeting with the local traditional leadership. The meeting deliberated on the perceived state of lawlessness in the area, the influence of the Gonakudzingwa restrictees on the local population, the possible “general uprising of the Shangaan tribe” and Europeans on the death list. After its assessment of the situation, the Salisbury team concurred with the DC’s recommendation that a State of Emergency be declared in the district. In addition, they suggested that the High Court judgement allowing detainees unlimited movement in the Sengwe area be suspended and that the GRC be sealed off.⁸²⁵

Another disturbing incident that came out of the heightened political mood had taken place at the Chikombedzi Mission on the night of 8 May. Dr. Paul Embree, the Chikombedzi Mission resident doctor had, together with his family and other European staff members been forced to leave the station in a hurry for Lundi Mission following reports that they were targeted for massacre by some local Shangane.⁸²⁶ After the doctor had reported the case at Nuanetsi Police Station, the police made a follow-up the following morning and found nearly two hundred people assembled at an illegal gathering at Chikombedzi.⁸²⁷ When ordered to disperse, the group defiantly refused leading to the arrest of up to one hundred and seventy three of them. They were forcibly loaded into trucks and driven to Nuanetsi. On the way, they were singing revolutionary songs and chanting

⁸²⁵ Ibid. p. 377.

⁸²⁶ Ibid. p. 378.

⁸²⁷ The LOMA stipulated that all political gatherings were supposed to be sanctioned by the DC and such permission had not been sought for the particular meeting.

the *Zhee* slogan of ZAPU, a clear indication of being imbued with the spirit of rebelliousness.⁸²⁸

When ordered to disembark from the truck at the police station, they obstinately clung to the sides of the trucks. In the end their hands had to be flung-open by force. They were subsequently tried and convicted of attending an illegal gathering and for inciting violence.⁸²⁹

Following these and such similar incidents, the Department of Internal Affairs deployed more police and army personnel into the area. The Minister of Law and Order went a step further by pushing for the declaration of a State of Emergency.⁸³⁰ He was, in addition influenced by a letter directly written to him by one of the six Europeans targeted for elimination:

Owing to the serious nature of the deteriorating situation in the south-east Shangaan territory, I am writing to you direct. Having resided here at this out-post of the country for many years, I have become acquainted with the Shangaan people, speaking their language fluently and being familiar with their ways and customs. I have watched with interest this people's determination to isolate themselves from their northern and western neighbours, considering their lineage closely linked with the Zulu and ever maintaining an arrogant yet respectful relationship with Europeans. The Shangaan has, until recently, been a bulwark of defiance against Black Nationalism and thus an asset to the country.

Very recently, however, during the last month or two, envoys of restrictee Constanto Ncube [Joshua Nkomo] have succeeded in winning over the loyalties of these people to such an extent that there has been a mass pilgrimage to Gonakudzingwa Camp for purpose of personal visits to Ncube and to receive a token of allegiance in the form of cards or supposed spirit-indoctrinated 'symbol of war' Zulu-type knobkerries, both of which they keep hidden pending a campaign of violence to be directed at outlying farms, ranches and habitations on an already divulged date, the 1st of June, 1965, being quoted by reliable informers who are most loyal and long-standing employees. Fearing for our safety, they have volunteered this information at great risk to themselves owing to the fact that they are in some cases well-known Shangaans...A state of widespread unrest exists in various tribal areas and the position is fast deteriorating. Something must be done before violence breaks out.⁸³¹

⁸²⁸ The ZAPU slogan then was *Zhee! Zhee!* And the response was *Zhee!* It was very popular with all GRC visitors.

⁸²⁹ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 378.

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 379.

⁸³¹ *Ibid.* p. 381.

The state became more than convinced that the bad influence was coming from Vila Salazar and that political disturbances in the month of May were pointing in the direction of a full-scale uprising in the area. The government decided to take decisive action. On 21 May, it banned the possession of party registration cards issued at Gonakudzingwa. Thorough searches were conducted in all adjacent villages and many of those found in possession of Gonakudzingwa paraphernalia considered to be associated with rebellion were arrested.⁸³² During the same week, and in protest, the Sengwe people declined famine relief food that was being distributed by the state. They were determined to starve now and rejoice later as they were convinced that deliverance was imminent.⁸³³ To the DC, the refusal to take government aid at a time they were facing starvation was the most ominous signal of a brewing uprising.

The declaration of the State of Emergency came at midnight on the 27th of May 1965.⁸³⁴ The following morning, a Dakota plane and a helicopter of the Rhodesian Air Force flew over “every nook and cranny of the tribal lands” of Nuanetsi District broadcasting material publicising the declaration. The literature, written in Shangane, Ndebele and Karanga informed the people of the banning of visits to the GRC, the prohibition of possessing political paraphernalia from the camp and the outlawing of literature considered to be subversive. The government promised, henceforth, to deal decisively with any acts of violence and insubordination. Chiefs and headmen were summoned to meetings with the DC at Malipati, Boli, Maranda and Neshuro where the riot act was read to them. The whole district was overnight brought under state siege.⁸³⁵

⁸³² Interview with Mbuya Mukaha, Zibizapansi, 24 December 2014.

⁸³³ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p. 382.

⁸³⁴ State of Emergency Act, 27 May 1965.

⁸³⁵ Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp. 383-384 & 386.

Taking on a no nonsense approach, the DC seized on the opportunity to state his new found authority warning traditional leaders that time for dissent was over. His meetings became the tests of authority as they served to confirm *Chibgwe*'s office as the real centre of power and not Vila Salazar. In typical colonial posture, Wright was to boast that he was no longer entertaining any debates with traditional leaders at the gatherings he convened in the district as he crudely asserted that the "tribesmen" had no real grievances worth airing to the state.⁸³⁶ However, the truth of the matter was that they had clearly recorded land grievances.

A witch-hunt that followed the Declaration of the State of Emergency led to massive arrests of suspected political agitators, including professed church leaders. Many were implicated in clandestine connections with Vila Salazar. Others were accused of planning to attack mission stations. The DC was convinced that the timely declaration of a State of Emergency that he had campaigned for averted a Shangane upheaval which would have cost the country heavily. The political agitation, coupled with the harassment from the state undeniably set the stage for the armed phase of the nationalist struggle. The GNP terrain was to play a critical role in the period.

The armed struggle phase

The perceived picture of the Shangane as an unruly people always on the verge of revolt was to re-surface once again in the 1970s during Zimbabwe's liberation war.⁸³⁷ The depiction was that as in the days of *Vhekenya*, the Gonarezhou land became, once again, "a savage land of *desperados* and dissidents: a wild place with similarly wild and ungoverned inhabitants, hiding on the margins from the state's authority and making occasional incursions from their remote lair."⁸³⁸ The state

⁸³⁶ Ibid. p. 396.

⁸³⁷ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 37.

⁸³⁸ Ibid. p. 157.

was accused of surrendering its control of the game land to other forces as the war took over. Indeed, the park was transformed into an arena of violence as both the Rhodesian and ZANLA forces battled for its control.⁸³⁹

The victory of FRELIMO over the Portuguese in 1975 opened new opportunities for ZANU when it was allowed to open new frontlines in southern Mozambique, making penetration into Rhodesia and more specifically south-eastern Zimbabwe much easier.⁸⁴⁰ The south-eastern corner of the country was transformed into a bitterly contested terrain and the park, the indigenous people of the area and ZANLA fighters became entangled in the contest.⁸⁴¹ The local people took advantage of the war to articulate their land grievance. It is, however, important to point out that land was not the only issue on the table. Others joined the war to fight racism, fight for improved working conditions and access the country's economic resources.⁸⁴²

Agitated by the national political developments of the 1960s and in particular the Gonakudzingwa influence, the community contiguous to the GNP became front-liners of this war. Between 1975 and 1980, the GNP was turned into a war zone as ZANLA forces battled it out with Rhodesian forces. In particular, the park was used by ZANLA forces as a transit route into the villages abutting the park fence as shown in Map 4.1. Local people found themselves embroiled in a war they had not initiated but were obliged and happy to support.⁸⁴³ Supporting the armed struggle was perceived to be a way of meting out revenge against a government that had arbitrarily pushed them off their land. There were many from the disgruntled border villages of Xilotlela, Chisa,

⁸³⁹ ZANLA guerrillas were using it as an entrance point into the peripheral villages while the Rhodesian army was fighting to rid it of the infiltration force.

⁸⁴⁰ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, pp. 24 & 40-41.

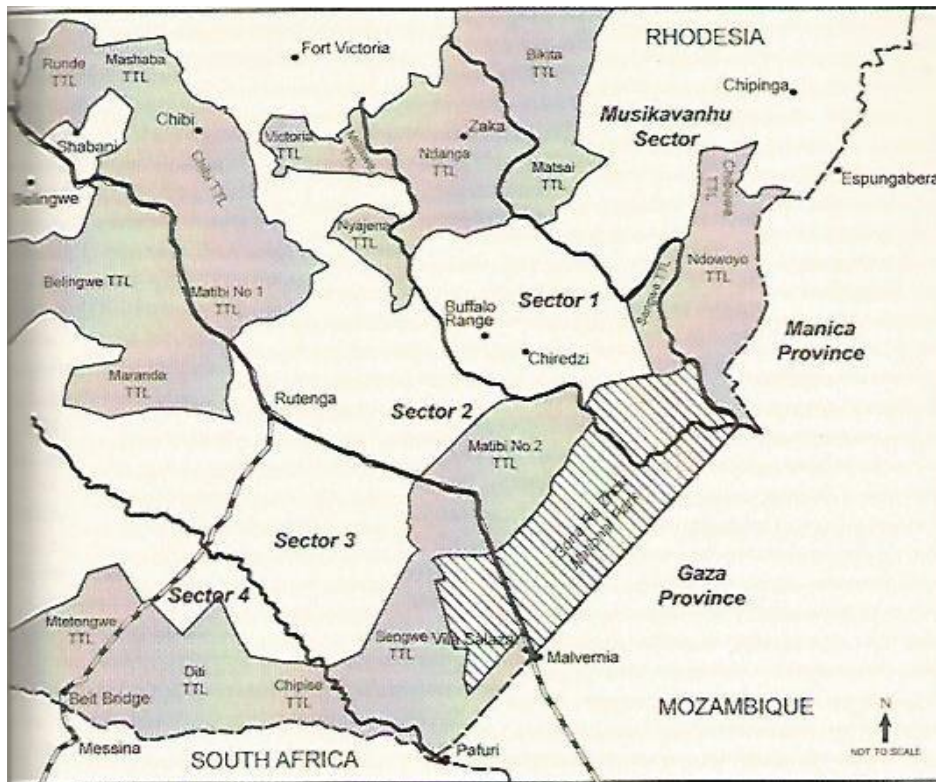
⁸⁴¹ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 37.

⁸⁴² For a detailed discussion on peasant grievances in Zimbabwe see, N. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁸⁴³ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 22.

Ngwenyeni and Sengwe who fled Rhodesian torture and joined others in Mozambique for military training. On 13 March 1978, a group of about fifty young recruits from Matibi No. 2 accompanied by twelve guerrillas came under enemy fire in the park on their way to Mozambique. The battle that ensued led to the death of one young recruit while the rest disappeared into the Gonarezhou thicket.⁸⁴⁴ Those who successfully underwent military training in Mozambique came back to fight for the recovery of the lost ancestral lands.⁸⁴⁵

Map 4.1: Areas of ZANLA penetration into south-eastern Zimbabwe



Source: Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, p. 47.

The whole area, stretching from Manica in the north to the Limpopo River in the south became a battle zone divided into ZANLA operational Sectors 1 to 4, again, illustrated in Map 4.1. Those

⁸⁴⁴ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, p. 167.

⁸⁴⁵ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 369.

operating in Sectors 1 to 3 passed through the GNP on their way to deployment zones. Sector 1, which covered the Chisa, Tsvovani and Gudo areas extended from the Sabi/Lundi confluence through the PA into the southern part of Sangwe TTL. Sector 2 combatants operated in Matibi No. 2 TTL having walked roughly two days through the park into the communal areas adjoining the park. Sector 3 stretched southwards to the Sengwe TTL.⁸⁴⁶

The Rhodesian government put the whole area covered by ZANLA Sectors 1-4 under a counter operation called Repulse. By the end of the war in 1980, Operation Repulse accounted for the highest number of “terrorist incidents” with five thousand six hundred and seventy six recorded cases compared with two thousand seven hundred and twelve for the combined incidents of Operation Tangent and Operation Grapple (Matabeleland South and Midlands, respectively) and twenty one thousand seven hundred and eighty two recorded in the whole country between 1973 and 1980.⁸⁴⁷ This clearly demonstrated the strategic importance played by south-eastern Zimbabwe in the war.

Guerrilla operations were punctuated by a string of attacks on enemy targets. These were mainly supported by local communities who had a bone of contention with the colonial government over lost lands. A few examples, stretching over the entire area will suffice to illustrate the point. On 17 March 1976, a report of the presence of eight *gandangas* in headman Chisa’s area was made at the police Central Investigation Department in Chiredzi.⁸⁴⁸ The investigating team, led by

⁸⁴⁶ MRC: OH/1/CHR/90, MRC, An Interview Between W. Muvundla Chiseko (CH) Born on 14 April 1940 at Chiredzi and Mr. Patrick Ngulube (NG) of the Department of National Archives & Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, pp. 48-49.

⁸⁴⁷ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, p. 54. For an illuminating account on the war having been fought for the recovery of lost ancestral lands, see, T. O. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study*, (London: James Currey, 1985).

⁸⁴⁸ The term *gandanga* was used by the Rhodesian government to refer to freedom fighters of the Second Chimurenga. It was, thus, used in a negative sense as it implied that these were plunderers or lawless bandits.

Inspector Dick Robins got caught up in an exchange of fire with the guerrillas in the area. The police operatives were beaten off and forced to retreat.⁸⁴⁹ The incident effectively marked the beginning of war in the Sangwe area.

That the war began in Chisa's area was no coincidence. The guerrillas had done their homework and connected well with a community that had been a bastion of resistance to colonial rule. It was a community that was still bitter over its forced removal from the PA. It was also strategically located on the fringes of the GNP making it ideal for ZANLA forces to attack and simply retreat into the safety of the sanctuary. In addition, ZANLA combatants were assured of the local people's total support. To the people of Chisa and others living on the periphery of the park, there was no better time to fight for the recovery of the lost land.

Another incident occurred south-west of the GNP when on 18 April 1976 a group of twelve guerrillas mounted a makeshift roadblock along the Fort Victoria-Beitbridge road about twelve kilometres south of Nuanetsi Police Station. A car carrying South African tourists coming from the Easter holiday in Rhodesia was attacked and three people killed. One passenger was seriously injured.⁸⁵⁰ In yet another incident that happened on 19 April 1976, the police were tipped of a nocturnal meeting that had been organised by Headman Chilonga to introduce a new group of guerrillas to the villagers. The police and army mounted a combined attack on the gathering which resulted in the death of twelve civilians. A few days later, the "distracted" headman was found hanging from a tree under suspicious circumstances.⁸⁵¹

⁸⁴⁹ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, p. 49.

⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 51-52.

⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 53.

The Shangaan army

As the war intensified, it assumed some dirty tactics. A pseudo-guerrilla unit called the Shangaan Army was created in 1976 by the Rhodesian government as part of a wider initiative to counter guerrilla activities in the area using local people. The unit was exclusively composed of Shangane recruits. It became part of a bigger counter-insurgency movement run by Ken Flower of the SS fame.⁸⁵² During its lifespan, the SS grew in notoriety and lived to commit heinous crimes against the population of the country through employing dirty combat tactics.⁸⁵³ A case in point was when they poisoned water holes in the GNP during the 1976 drought year using a dipping chemical called Supermix DFF. The killing that followed was indiscriminate as both ZANLA fighters and animals of the park that drank the water succumbed to the chemical.⁸⁵⁴

Parker, who was given the task of creating the Shangane Army contended that it was formed to win back the local population that had been subverted by the guerrillas and to invoke ill feelings against the guerrillas. It was, by and large, created to derail the efforts of the armed struggle in southern Zimbabwe. John Henning, a local white police reservist was enlisted as the leader of the pseudo-army. Recruitment largely involved press-ganging and the training which had a heavy dose of political indoctrination was conducted in Shangane to give the unit an identity. On graduation, the trainees were deployed in Sangwe TTL to gather intelligence information and forward it to the SS. Over time, the elite army grew to five sections of eight men each. While the numbers remained

⁸⁵² As earlier stated, the SS was a counter-insurgency group created by the Rhodesian government to cause mayhem in the battle field. SS operatives were trained to dress, talk and act like guerrillas in order to glean intelligence information from combat zones. For detailed accounts of SS operations, see, among others, K. Flower, *Serving Secretly*, (Harare: Quest Publishers, 1987), H. Ellert, *The Rhodesian Front War: Counter-Insurgency and Guerrilla War in Rhodesia, 1962-1980*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1993) & P. Godwin & I. Hancock, *Rhodesians Never Die: The Impact of War and Political Change on White Rhodesia, c. 1970-1980*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

⁸⁵³ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 377.

⁸⁵⁴ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, pp. 80-81.

small, they were reported to have provided good intelligence information covering about 90% of the Sangwe TTL.⁸⁵⁵ As with its mother body, it conducted dreadful counter-insurgency acts in the south-eastern corner of the country against local Shangane people. The unit, thus, became very unpopular with the local people who regretted the use of their children to conduct dastardly acts against their own people.

At the height of the war, Ray Sparrow and sons Laurie and Mark, the owners of Lone Star Ranch recommended that one of their senior Shangane trackers, Pahlela Mahungu be enlisted in the Army in order to tap on his tracking skills. He, however, turned out to be an unreliable operative as he often deliberately led them to groups of guerrillas. In a clear statement of the urgency with which the local people wanted their former land restored to them by the new government of Zimbabwe Mahungu and his Shangane clan attempted to evict Sparrow from Lone Star Ranch at independence in 1980. It was the same contested piece of land that the Chisa people had lost at the height of the Gonarezhou evictions. Their action became warning shots of what was to come after 2000. The event, though rarely cited became one of the first recorded farm invasions in independent Zimbabwe.⁸⁵⁶

Caging people in Protected Villages

The people of south-eastern Zimbabwe suffered yet another blow when from 1976 they were ‘kraaled’ into Protected Villages (PVs) also known as *Keeps* or *Makipi*. The idea of quarantining people into PVs was the brain child of Noel Allison Hunt, a Rhodesian administrative operative in the Native Department. While he and others of his kind argued that the scheme was directed at removing civilians from combat zones for their safety, in reality, it was crafted and implemented

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid. pp. 64 & 66.

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 54.

with the intention of collectively punishing supporters of the guerrillas.⁸⁵⁷ To Wolmer, *Makipi* were instruments of surveillance of perceived supporters of *Chimurenga II* guerrillas⁸⁵⁸ while Mavhunga judged them to have been a dehumanising feature of the Rhodesian war.⁸⁵⁹

Keeps were first established in the Chiweshe TTL.⁸⁶⁰ *Makipi* were then extended to many other eastern border areas of the country. From 1976, villagers of southern Zimbabwe were removed from their homes and emptied into these high fences reminiscent of national park barriers. Such forced uprooting reminded them of earlier removals from the Gonarezhou milieu as the same strong hand tactics were used. The forced movements further away from the people's homes were not without its challenges. The relocation of people into the PVs forced them to leave some of their property behind which was subsequently burnt the scotched-earth style to deny the ZANLA forces any support.⁸⁶¹ Testimonies from several villagers in the Chibwedziva area of Matibi No. 2 revealed that those who resisted relocation to the *Keeps* had their huts burnt and crops destroyed.⁸⁶² People's lifestyles changed as life in the PVs was strictly regulated. Traditional initiation practices such as *hoko* and *komba* were abandoned for security reasons.⁸⁶³ While PVs were meant to deny ZANLA forces support from villagers, the local people devised ingenious ways of dodging security restrictions and, so, continued providing clandestine support to *vakomana* (boys) and *vasikana* (girls) as the freedom fighters were called.⁸⁶⁴

⁸⁵⁷ NAZ: ORAL/240: Noel Allison Hunt (30 December 1916-), Protected Villages, Curfew System and Collective Punishment, 1970s, pp. 52 & 56. Also see, Zimbabwe Parliamentary Debates, Hansard, 22/11/89, p. 2332 & I. Mazambani & T. M. Mashingaidze, 'The Creation of Protected Villages in Southern Rhodesia: Colonial Mythologies and the Official Mind, 1972-1980', *Dyke*, 8, 3 (2014), pp. 1-21.

⁸⁵⁸ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 37.

⁸⁵⁹ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 382.

⁸⁶⁰ A. R. Fynn, 'The New Administration', *NADA*, 11, 5 (1978), p. 519.

⁸⁶¹ *MRC: OH/1/CHR/90, MRC, An Interview Between W. Muvundla Chiseko (CH) Born on 14 April 1940 at Chiredzi and Mr. Patrick Ngulube (NG).*

⁸⁶² Group interview in Chibwedziva conducted in June 2014.

⁸⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁴ *ibid.*

In their new caged homes, they were forced to live under inhuman conditions. The people were exposed to daily patrols by intimidating armed guards in the PVs. They remained on the fringes, with a different status in their new crowded places of residence. The quarantine made it impossible for them to sneak out and hunt game in the GNP as they were under the constant watch of the regime through its various surveillance systems. In protest, some villagers chose to live a life of defiance in the bush. One such group took up residence at the junction of the Sabi and Lundi Rivers under Chief Mahenye. They reverted to a nomadic life of hunting and trapping wild animals in their old place of residence but now part of the GNP.⁸⁶⁵ They conveniently collaborated with their kinsfolk across the Portuguese border. Again, some of those who did not want to be caged in *Makipi* crossed the border to live with relatives in Mozambique.⁸⁶⁶ Others chose to hide in the ancestral forests of Mapokole inside the PA which remained largely unguarded and a no-go-area for most of the war years of 1975 to 1980. The guerrillas and these ‘rebellious’ villagers, thus, formed strong collaborative alliances in the park as they jointly sought protection from the *mikwembu* of Mapokole.⁸⁶⁷

While life in *Keeps* appeared secure as the occupants were guarded all the time by District Assistants of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, they did suffer regular attacks from guerrillas. On 4 August 1977, Mpagati *Keep* in Sengwe was attacked by ZANLA forces and one Guard Force injured. Rimbi PV in Ndowoyo Communal Area was also attacked on 19 October 1977 and Chikombedzi PV in Matibi No. 2 was also attacked on the night of 4 October 1978.⁸⁶⁸ Again, it was easy for the guerrillas to attack and retreat into the protection of the game sanctuary.

⁸⁶⁵ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, p. 164.

⁸⁶⁶ Interview with Mbuya Mukaha, Zibizapansi, 24 December 2014.

⁸⁶⁷ Group interview in Chibwedziva conducted in June 2014.

⁸⁶⁸ Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*, pp. 89, 112 & 168.

Conclusion

When hordes of Shangane communities were ejected from the GNP between 1934 and 1968, the people cried foul. This was because they were forced to settle in areas adjoining the park which were already overcrowded due to earlier settlements. The embittered communities continued with their old-age tradition of poaching in the PA for survival and also as a form of protest to eviction from the park-designated area. While they devised ingenious ways of avoiding arrest, they continued to suffer pressure from zealous colonial administrators like Wright. In an act perceived as surrender but certainly one of adaptation to the changed environment, many able-bodied members of the community emigrated to South Africa to seek fortunes in the new ‘forests’ of South African mines. Another form of response to their predicament was through full participation in radical nationalist politics from the 1960s. They were encouraged by the Gonakudzingwa internees who became their source of inspiration.

Chapter 4 has shown how the indigenous communities of the Lowveld region of southern Zimbabwe sought alternative means of survival outside their Gonarezhou homeland. It has revealed that the three main means of survival were protest poaching, emigration to South Africa to work and protesting through supporting the nationalist cause. The chapter has also shown how these various survival strategies attracted the wrath of the state and as a result generated further confrontation and contestation between the local Shangane and the Rhodesian government. The chapter also examined how poaching escalated after the declaration of the area as a game reserve. It revealed how, in the 1960s, the GRC located inside the old ancestral lands of the Shangane, became a source of inspiration to the local people and even those from afar. The chapter, furthermore, demonstrated how the people’s grievances arising from the loss of their ancestral lands rallied them behind the nationalist cause and particularly the armed struggle of the 1970s.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT SINCE INDEPENDENCE

Introduction

Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 brought hope to the indigenous communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe that they would regain ancestral lands lost to the GNP during the colonial period. Such hope was that the restitution would be quick and fair. These were lands full of people's memories; their old fields, hunting grounds, fishing ponds and rivers, ancestral graves and places of traditional rendition. The new Department of Parks decided to maintain the status quo, thus, drawing new battle lines with the agitated indigenous communities of the area.

The new government, however, had to find a way of balancing the act of retaining the park institution and addressing the burning concerns of local people. It adopted a paradigm shift that involved the engagement of communities contiguous to parks in some management partnership with the Department. This was done through the introduction of the CAMPFIRE programme in the early years of independence. In south-eastern Zimbabwe, the Mahenye project became the flagship of the programme. While the previous chapter concerned itself with the people's survival strategies outside the game reserve during the colonial period, the current chapter focuses on the independence era. It specifically interrogates the people's reception of the CAMPFIRE programme and assesses how it addressed the worries of the people living next to the GNP.

The chapter begins by scrutinising the post-independence expectations of the indigenous people living on the periphery of the GNP. It then strives to show how the government's failure to immediately address the question of land restitution created new centres of confrontation with agitated local residents. In addition, the chapter explores the state's adoption of a new wildlife

management strategy of engaging local people in the management of game in PAs next to their villages. It, furthermore, analyses the role and impact of the CAMPFIRE programme, a purportedly people-centred project, by focusing on the Mahenye Ward as a case study. The chapter suggests that while the CAMPFIRE programme did bring about some noticeable benefits to local villagers in wards contiguous to the park during the first decade of its implementation, these gains were wiped out by the challenges that confronted the country during the period 2000 to 2008. It, therefore, investigates the extent to which the demise of the wildlife management partnership between the local community and conservation agencies may have resulted from the inability of the sponsors of the programme to fully devolve management powers to indigenous peoples. Additionally, it also explores the seeming inability of the indigenous partners themselves to take full advantage of the management arrangement. The chapter concludes by demonstrating how, in spite of concerted effort, the indigenous people's total claim to the Gonarezhou heritage had remained a mirage by 2008.

The indigenous people's independence expectations

Zimbabwe attained independence on 18 April 1980 after a protracted armed struggle. Not surprisingly, the citizens of the country hoped that self-rule would lead to better lives for all of them. Different areas of the country had unique expectations from the new government but common in all parts of the country was the anticipated restitution of land that had been expropriated from indigenous communities by the colonial government and distributed on racial lines.⁸⁶⁹ The indigenous people of south-eastern Zimbabwe's hopes had been whetted by the promises of land

⁸⁶⁹ For insights into land alienation, see, among others, Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, Moyana, *The Political Economy of Zimbabwe*, R. Blake, *A History of Rhodesia* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1977), Alexander, *The Unsettled Land* & S. Moyo, *The Land Question in Zimbabwe* (Harare: SAPES Books, 1995). As was indicated in chapter 3, the bulk of the land had been dished out to white settlers at the beginning of colonial rule.

restitution made by freedom fighters during the war of liberation.⁸⁷⁰ ZANLA fighters, together with Gonakudzingwa restrictees had mobilised local support against the park by promising land changes after independence. The Shangane community had been promised that white people would be chased out of the land they were occupying and park lands returned to the rightful owners.⁸⁷¹

Accordingly, many residents of south eastern Zimbabwe had expected a quick restoration of the Gonarezhou land. Many wanted to continue hunting animals and harvesting fruits and vegetables such as *ntoma*, *nyii*, *buu*, *kwankwa*, *masala*, *madokomela*, *khuhluru*, *ntsengele*, *bangala*, *mowa*, *gusha* and *nyapape* from the park. They also longed to be allowed back into the old forests to gather *masonja* (caterpillars), *timera* (locusts), *zvidhongoti* (army worms) and *zvingozi* (quelea birds) and to collect honey and edible tubers such as *mongwa*, *mugugudu* and *ndhungila*. The people also wanted access into the park to dig various therapeutic roots and gather firewood and timber. Others were excited about the prospect of getting a greater stake in the ownership of the park resources.⁸⁷²

To the disappointment of many, early land restitution was not to be as the new government created a new crisis of expectations when it took its time to return the ancestral land to the rightful owners, the Shangane. The park continued to exist “untouched” much to the bitterness of many as the government maintained the colonial position that treated game parks as sacrosanct places that were not to be tampered with. The people were forbidden to hunt not only in the park but even in their

⁸⁷⁰ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 157.

⁸⁷¹ NAZ: S4061, D. Chavhunduka, ‘Is There a Future for National Parks in Zimbabwe’, p. 13 & Mavhunga, ‘The Mobile Workshop’, p. 398.

⁸⁷² The listed demands were echoed by almost all the people interviewed in the field of study. Also see, P. Chibisa, A. Ruzive & C. T. Mandipa, ‘The 2000-2004 Fast Track Land Reform Program and Biodiversity Issues in the Middle Save Conservancy’, *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 12, 6 (2010), p. 78.

own backyards.⁸⁷³ GNP remained closed to the people and the use of its resources strictly forbidden. The same position applied to most African countries that had attained independence earlier. Some, like Malawi, with a high human population density had even increased the number of national parks after independence.⁸⁷⁴ The government of Zimbabwe simply followed suit. Its position was that under majority rule, parks had in effect been ceded back to the people and, so, there was no need to grant special concessions to local groups who wanted to return to park areas.⁸⁷⁵ Terence Ranger explicitly articulated the government's stance:

The modernist doctrines of international conservation are [were] embraced by the Zimbabwean state, which in the interest of the whole country does not allow locals to collect plants, or hunt, or visit holy places within the parks. The imperatives of international tourism have ensured that the park still presents much the same symbolic face that it did under settler rule.⁸⁷⁶

It was, therefore, no surprise that the Department of Parks in independent Zimbabwe continued to operate with and enforce the old game laws, much to the chagrin of the local people. These were the very laws that had been used to evict the people from the Gonarezhou homeland. They were the same laws that had been used by the colonial regime to bar the people from accessing the sanctuary's resources. The laws had also been used to persecute and prosecute the indigenous communities for trying to live off their old lands. They were the hated laws they had fought to remove or change. The government did not show any urgency to remove let alone change the reviled laws and the people felt betrayed.⁸⁷⁷ Poaching and unauthorised use of park resources

⁸⁷³ J. Mashinya, 'Participation and Devolution in Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE Program: Findings from Local Projects in Mahenye and Nyaminyami', PhD Thesis, University of Maryland, 2007.

⁸⁷⁴ NAZ: S4061, D. Chavhunduka, 'Is There a Future for National Parks in Zimbabwe' p. 13.

⁸⁷⁵ Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks*, p. 269.

⁸⁷⁶ T. O. Ranger, 'Great Spaces Watched with Sun: The Matopos and *Uhuru* Compared', in K. Darian-Smith *et al* (eds), *Text, Theory and Space*, (Routledge, 1996), p. 161 & T. O. Ranger, 'Whose heritage? The Case of the Matobo National Park', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 15, 2 (1989), p. 249.

⁸⁷⁷ E. Rihoy, C. Chirozva & S. Anstey, 'People are not Happy-Speaking Up for Adaptive Natural Resource Governance in Mahenye', Unpublished paper, Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies, Paper 31, School of Government, University of the Western Cape, 2007, 13.

persisted and even assumed greater proportions as the people protested against their continued exclusion from their heritage.

Furthermore, the Parks Department continued to be run by white wardens. These were people associated with the white settler administration that had used repressive colonial game laws to deny the local people access to the land of their ancestors. The game officers were perceived by the indigenous people of the area to be pursuing old agendas. Again, the officers' attitudes and actions were considered to be out of sync with the aspirations of the local people in a new Zimbabwe. Some of the game officers had only recently been appointed into the Parks Department from the police and army and they continued with their tradition of harassing villagers who were striving to eke a living out of the GNP.⁸⁷⁸ The dreadful war records of some of them were still fresh in the minds of many and, hence, the feeling of betrayal by the new political leadership.

It was apparent that the government's decision to maintain the status quo was driven more by national rather than local considerations. The GNP, like other parks in the country was seen as a potential source of revenue with prospects of boosting the country's economy. Thus, parks became icons of conservation and international tourism than part of the local history. In effect, they were externalised.⁸⁷⁹ In addition, the government was wary that once it allowed the Shangane back into the PA a precedent would be set for park land demands by communities in similar circumstances across the nation; a situation it felt would be difficult to contain.⁸⁸⁰ The government also feared that if indigenous communities were allowed back in the park, this would most likely trigger an

⁸⁷⁸ From interviews conducted in the Sangwe area, the general resentment, especially to the seemingly unchanged operational procedures of the Parks Department was given as the main reason for the local people's bitterness against the new government. See, Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 158 & Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', pp. 398-399.

⁸⁷⁹ Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks*, p. 270.

⁸⁸⁰ Mavhunga, 'Wildlife and Firearms Proliferation in a Transfrontier Area: Some Thoughts on Gonarezhou Wildlife Heritage, 1500-1993', Unpublished paper, History Seminar Series, Department of History, University of Zimbabwe, 8 November, 2001, p. 12.

uncontrolled resurgence of diseases such as the foot and mouth, *nagana* (caused by tsetse-flies) and malaria, scourges that were by then under control. Again, the government was afraid that the spread of foot and mouth disease, for example, would negatively impact on the country's beef exports to especially the European Union (EU). It was, thus, regarded prudent to maintain the GNP as it was given the fact that the game park also served as a buffer to the spread of animal diseases into adjacent commercial farms.⁸⁸¹

Not surprisingly, the post-colonial government elevated the national heritage over and above the local birthright as the Shangane people's immediate needs were subordinated to those of the bigger political unit, the nation. Tourism and international obligations took priority over the local people's demand for the restoration of the ancestral lands. Mavhunga contended that the concept of a national heritage which was itself a colonial invention was as alien as the colonial government. Both were imposed on the indigenous communities of the country and both were understandably hated for that reason.⁸⁸² In addition, he argued that the invented model effectively "transferred heritage from local communities to national proprietorship, with the result that it left the local people hard done."⁸⁸³ The Shangane of southern Zimbabwe were certainly correct in arguing that the Gonarezhou land had in the past served them first before serving others. It was undoubtedly a local heritage that was forcibly expropriated from the local people by the colonial state and now 'nationalised' by the post-colonial government without consulting the rightful owners. The arbitrary decision to 'nationalise' the park irked the Shangane and subsequently drew new battle lines between them and the state.⁸⁸⁴

⁸⁸¹ Interview with a former white commercial farmer (anonymous), Chiredzi, 15 September 2015. Zimbabwe, through the Cold Storage Commission was a big exporter of quality beef to the EU during the first decade of independence. Such beef had to be free from any diseases.

⁸⁸² Mavhunga, 'Wildlife and Firearms Proliferation in a Transfrontier Area', p. 12.

⁸⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁸⁴ Ibid.

As the game land question remained unresolved, human and wildlife discord on the periphery of the GNP continued unabated. Local people continued to suffer from stress arising from the destruction of their crops by animals from the park. The villagers argued that officials from the Parks Department came into their settlements to harass and apprehend poachers and yet did nothing to prevent park animals from destroying the people's crops, eating domestic animals and even threatening the people's lives.⁸⁸⁵ They, thus, strongly believed that the Parks Department did not care about their welfare as in the 'duel' between them and the Gonarezhou animals, they always favoured the latter.

The extent of the conflict was illustrated by a statement made by a Chisa villager who stated:

There was war [soon after independence]. We tried but did not get our original land back. The government only allowed us to acquire another piece of land which is along Gonarezhou National Park causing our animals to be eaten by their lions. Our crops suffered from warthogs and elephants. If we killed wild animals that got out of the game park, we were arrested. Our livestock would break the fences into the game park. If we got into the park to look for our livestock, we got arrested. That is why Ndali Police Camp was established, to arrest those who tampered with Gonarezhou National Park animals.⁸⁸⁶

Again, the local people expressed resentment to the park entity through Clive Stockil, a trusted local white farmer who had been requested by the Department of Parks to mediate. They protested, through him that if the Department contained its Gonarezhou animals, then they would grow their crops in peace and refrain from poaching and conflict between them and the park would abate.⁸⁸⁷

It is, therefore, understandable why local residents were bitter over the maintenance of the old system of park management that they felt did not prioritise them.

⁸⁸⁵ J. H. Paterson, 'Bottom Up Development in Decentralized Common Property Regimes: The Experiences of Two District Councils in South-Eastern Zimbabwe', Paper Presented at the International Association for the Study of Common Property', Unpublished paper, Common Property Conference, Winnipeg, Canada, September 26-29, 1991, p. 2. The position was echoed by many villagers in the Mahenye field of study.

⁸⁸⁶ Interview with Hlengani Phineous Magatse, Villager, Chisa, 28 June 2014.

⁸⁸⁷ Mashinya, 'Participation and Devolution in Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE Program', p. 92.

Around 1983, the local residents were further irritated by and protested the massive culling of over two thousand elephants by the Department of Parks at a time when the government was enforcing coercive controls on poaching in the park.⁸⁸⁸ Earlier, the Chairman of the Wild Life Society of Rhodesia had, in 1971, noted the Parks Department's insensitivity when it culled elephants in the country's game reserves and left meat to rot in *situ* when thousands of African villagers abutting the parks were starved of meat.⁸⁸⁹ In such circumstances, it was understandable why the local people were aggrieved that the game animals they were forbidden from killing for their subsistence were, in this instance, culled with impunity by the same government that was supposed to be take care of them.⁸⁹⁰ To them, such action was a clear demonstration of the government's inconsiderateness. Consequently, the war over game control continued.

Protesting against unfulfilled promises

The escalating war between the local people and the state was demonstrated by increased poaching in the GNP and the surrounding conservancies soon after independence. The people took to clearing of forests for firewood and thatching grass and the burning of the veld.⁸⁹¹ The people's frustration was, furthermore, illustrated by the defiant driving of cattle into the game area. Areas such as Madlazimbuzi, Makondweni, Machana, Maguu and Tembohata right inside the park were invaded and literally became cattle grazing zones. The people also increased the collection of various plant products and the gathering of honey from the PA.⁸⁹² The Department of Parks observed that thousands of metres of fence was stolen and converted to snares during the early

⁸⁸⁸ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 158.

⁸⁸⁹ NAZ: S4061, 'Elephant Culling', Wild Life Society of Rhodesia, Newsletter No. 51, September 1971.

⁸⁹⁰ Mombeshora & Wolmer, 'Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa', p. 20.

⁸⁹¹ Report of the National Parks and Wild Life Management, Year 1979-80, p. 2.

⁸⁹² Gonarezhou Plan: January 1994, Annex 9, p. 1.

independence period. These were certainly acts of defiance but also probably driven by real need. The Department further noted, with concern, that between 1980 and 1983 the hippo population of the GNP had declined by 10% and that at the same time, the crocodiles of the park had become an endangered species. Of further concern was what the Department of Parks called wanton and wasteful killing of animals in the PAs of south-eastern Zimbabwe.⁸⁹³

Most of the poaching, which significantly increased after the milestone February 1980 elections was attributed to the local people some of whom wanted to continue with the legacy of *Shadi* the infamous poacher who in the 1970s is reported to have killed over twenty elephants in the forests of the Gonarezhou.⁸⁹⁴ The people's hopes of quickly recovering the ancestral land which had been heightened by the attainment of independence, were quickly deflated by the state's seeming disinterest and inaction. Again, the government of independent Zimbabwe retained colonial terminologies such as poaching and continued to generally treat 'poachers' as criminals who deserved to be heavily punished when apprehended.

Table 5.1: Estimated elephant population in the GNP between 1980 and 1995

1980	1983	1987	1989	1993	1995
4704	3985	3802	5286	5241	4156

Source: Elephant Census in Zimbabwe, 1980-1995, An Analysis and Review, 1996.

Poaching had, thus, escalated as demonstrated by the arrest of up to two hundred and twenty poachers in the year 1980 and the recovery of over one thousand five hundred and eighty snares

⁸⁹³ Report of the National Parks and Wild Life Management, Year 1979-80, pp. 2, 7 & 39.

⁸⁹⁴ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 158.

in the park in the same year, a concern noted by the Parks Department.⁸⁹⁵ Poachers from the Pahlala and Gonakudzingwa areas were known to start fires to facilitate the easy killing of game. During the early years of independence, the Department of Parks recorded an average of four uncontrolled fires per year in the GNP burning up to 25% of the park.⁸⁹⁶ Again, in a raid conducted in Mahenye in 1982, the park officers arrested eighty one poachers and confiscated large quantities of ivory, skins and traps. This signified increased poaching.⁸⁹⁷ Table 5.1 documents a relative decline in the elephant population of the PA between 1980 and 1995, a confirmation of the intensified rate of poaching.

In 1983, R. L. Murray, the warden of Mabalauta had noticed increased poaching by juveniles in the Mabalauta sub-region of the GNP during school holidays. He was convinced that these youngsters were proxies of adult village poachers who knew that under-age children would normally not be prosecuted and, so, were conveniently fronting them. What the line of argument failed to appreciate, however, was that hunting among the Shangane was an esteemed activity that every young boy was initiated into at a tender age. It was, therefore, a skill they were proud to exhibit in the forests of their ancestors and, so, to some extent were representing themselves.

Poaching in the Gonarezhou sanctuary worsened after the increase in the circulation of illegal arms brought about by the extension of the RENAMO war into Zimbabwe from the mid-1980s. The closure of the park to the public in 1987 due to the RENAMO war activities exposed it to further massive poaching. It was estimated that between 1987 and 1988 alone, illegal hunters killed over eight hundred elephants in the park.⁸⁹⁸ High level domestic and commercial poaching continued

⁸⁹⁵ Report of the National Parks and Wild Life Management, Year 1979-80, p. 8.

⁸⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 55.

⁸⁹⁷ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 158.

⁸⁹⁸ Gonarezhou Plan: January 1994, Annex 9, p. 2.

into the 1990s with the estimated figure of elephants killed rising sharply to six thousand four hundred and six in 1992.⁸⁹⁹

Table 5.2: Showing law enforcement statistics for the year 1993

Item	Total
Arrests	95
Contacts	18
Convictions	33
Incursions	30
Poachers escaped	28
Poachers killed	1
Animals killed	14
Ammunition recovered	49
Fish recovered	50
Tusks & horns recovered	8
Weapons recovered	5
Patrol man days	2090

Source: Gonarezhou Plan: January 1994, Annex 9, p. 2.

Law enforcement statistics, documented in Table 5.2 for the year 1993 are a pointer to that level of poaching. Again, the practice intensified with the hardships of the 2000s. The suspicion was that some of the villagers were colluding with park officials, a sizeable number of whom were local Shangane with a bone to chew with the Parks Department. Again, courts continued to be accused of lenience in dealing with game offenders.⁹⁰⁰ The government was, therefore, concerned

⁸⁹⁹ Elephant Census in Zimbabwe, 1980 to 1995, An Analysis and Review, 1996, p. 32.

⁹⁰⁰ *The Herald*, 10 May 2011 & *The Herald*, 4 August 2011.

that if there was no change of strategy, poaching would further escalate and human-wildlife relations would remain strained.

Empowering local villagers in wildlife management

I predict quite confidently that we will soon see a much freer use of our parks as a source of wild animal harvest, in contradiction to the strictly protectionist ethics many of our fathers held for the areas... To make this credo acceptable to more people, and in particular to those who live in close proximity, and some of whom might claim that the land by virtue of ancient usage or traditional rule, it is essential that we change our thinking to permit of more benefit from wild life to local populations, whether they buy the product, or profit from royalties, or whatever [Saunders, 1977].⁹⁰¹

The above forecast by Saunders, an animal rights activist and Lowveld farmer in 1977 came to be fulfilled after the country had attained self-rule. The move was partly in response to increased poaching and at the same time an attempt to assuage the pain of the local people in the face of their claims to the lost Gonarezhou land. The state was awakened to the reality that it could no longer go it alone in the management of animal sanctuaries located next to agitated indigenous communities as raised by Saunders in the preceding quotation. There was undeniably a concession that earlier wildlife management strategies had not addressed the problems of people living on the fringes of national parks. In particular was a realisation by the state and other animal protection stakeholders that the conservation war could not be won through conflict but through the engagement of affected communities on the basis of schemes such as CBNRM programmes.

Wildlife administrators also accepted the existence of a close link between rural poverty and environmental degradation; features prevalent in most communities adjacent to state PAs. Facts on the ground had proved that the poor and hungry were “short-term maximizers (sic)” with a

⁹⁰¹ NAZ: S4061, C. Saunders, ‘Wildlife and the N. R. B: The Use of Land for Parks and Wildlife’, *Wild Rhodesia*, No. 14, July 1977, pp. 23-25.

proclivity to destroying the immediate environment in order to survive today.⁹⁰² Such a position was aptly summarised by Murphree in relation to most rural areas of Zimbabwe:

[The] growing population in Zimbabwe has resulted in the increased exploitation of marginal land for subsistence agriculture which would have been better suited for wildlife...A culture of poverty [not of their making] exists in which the individual is preoccupied with survival in the present and where any effective concern for the future is missing. A culture of poverty is one in which the future is discounted at a very high rate. This is a recipe for accelerated degradation because poverty is both the cause and the effect of environmental degradation.⁹⁰³

It was, therefore, believed that poverty impacted on communities' desire to conserve wildlife and had to be first eliminated if the people were to embrace sustainable wildlife conservation ethics.

In response to the above realisations, the government came up with a new thinking that acknowledged, though belatedly that over the years poor communities living next to animal rich PAs had suffered uncompensated costs in the form of the destruction of their crops by prowling animals and often deaths from attacks by park game. It, furthermore, accepted some responsibility, although grudgingly for the human-wildlife conflicts that had characterised relations between these communities and state PAs. The paradigm shift also recognised that an effective rural resource management programme would have to encourage the injection of local people's indigenous knowledge into its processes. The custodian of the new thinking, the Department of Parks, then adopted a new stance which sought collaboration in wildlife resource management with the very communities they had alienated in the past.⁹⁰⁴ Such neighbours were to be given stewardship of animals in their neighbourhood, partly as a way of delegating responsibility to them but also to

⁹⁰² 'World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED)', *On Common Future*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 28. Also see R. Broad, 'The Poor and the Environment: Friends or Foes', *World Development*, 22, 6a (1987), p. 812.

⁹⁰³ M. Murphree, 'Communal Land Wildlife Reserves and the Rural District Council Revenues', Unpublished paper, CASS, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, 1993, pp.1-2.

⁹⁰⁴ B. I. Logan & W. G. Moseley, 'The Political Ecology of Poverty Alleviation in Zimbabwe's Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE)', *Geoforum*, 33 (2002), pp. 3-4.

assuage the pain of exclusion and the harassment they had suffered all along. The argument presented in support of the new approach was that there was a clear synergy in poverty alleviation, environmental conservation and game management with “each serving as a solution for the other” and “each feeding off the other.”⁹⁰⁵

The changed state position was followed by concerted efforts to devolve resource management to indigenous people abutting PAs as was the case with the Makuleke project of the KNP. The government was guided by the new philosophy that submitted that for people to put up with animals, they have to realise real benefits from such an arrangement and that if resource management programmes were to be effective over the long term they must offer indigenous peoples clearly defined rights, privileges and responsibilities.⁹⁰⁶ Indigenous communities, therefore, were to be empowered to develop and make use of their own abilities and be able to take charge of projects that affected them.⁹⁰⁷ The thrust of the CBNRM programme adopted by the government was, thus, one of capacitating previously disadvantaged communities living next to wildlife resources.⁹⁰⁸ Conditions were created for them to jointly co-manage state controlled resources such as wildlife, fishery, land and forests. For the GNP, wildlife was singled out as the most economically viable of the above and, so, the focus of the current discussion.

The central tenet of the CBNRM programme was that of integrating the goals of conservation, sustainable community development and community participation in resource management. The thinking was guided by the rationale that allowing poor people living next to PAs a greater stake

⁹⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 4.

⁹⁰⁶ I. Bond & P. G. H. Frost, ‘CAMPFIRE and Payment for Environmental Services’, Unpublished paper, Paper Prepared for the Workshop: Payment for Environmental Services (PES), Centre for Development Research, Titisee, Germany, 15-18 June 2005, p. 8.

⁹⁰⁷ V. Dzingirai, ‘CAMPFIRE is not for Ndebele Migrants: The Impact of Excluding Outsiders from CAMPFIRE in the Zambezi Valley, Zimbabwe’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29, 2 (2003), p. 446.

⁹⁰⁸ Gonarezhou National Park Management Plan, 2011-2021, p. 173.

in the management of wildlife next to their villages would lead to improved lifestyles for them and consequently the threat to conservation would abate.⁹⁰⁹ Furthermore, the new viewpoint was directed by the assumption that CBNRM programmes had the potential of generating enough funds to compensate local residents for earlier game losses.⁹¹⁰ It was, therefore, supposed that such a programme would take local communities out of poverty by empowering them through receiving dividends generated from the management of wildlife next to their settlements.

In light of the above, the CBNRM programme entailed fostering productive conservation relations with traditional resource users through assigning them some custody of PAs adjoining their homes. The belief was that the approach would promote positive attitudes in people's use of wildlife and the environment and, in the long term, induce them to support rather than undermine state initiated conservation efforts.⁹¹¹ It was also thought that the programme would diffuse tension between the park institution and the affected indigenous communities and serve as an incentive for local residents to abandon what the state considered to be destructive conservation practices. Advocates of the programme also argued that park projects would create jobs for local communities and in turn improve the people's living standards.⁹¹²

The proposed approach also advocated a shift from the state-centric mode of conservation to the inclusionary model whose flagship was the engagement of affected local villagers in the management of resources in PAs adjacent to their settlements. In practice, it was an antidote to the colonial fortress conservation of fences and fines.⁹¹³ The new drive was also a move away from Wright's concerns with preserving game for the aesthetic pleasure of the elite white population of

⁹⁰⁹ Balint & Mashinya, 'The Decline of a Model Community-Based Conservation Project', p. 806.

⁹¹⁰ Mashinya, 'Participation and Devolution in Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE Program', p. 36.

⁹¹¹ Ibid.

⁹¹² Bond & Frost, 'CAMPFIRE and Payment for Environmental Services', p. 4.

⁹¹³ Dzingirai, 'CAMPFIRE is not for Ndebele Migrants', pp. 445-446.

the country.⁹¹⁴ Indeed, it was tailored to reverse exclusive colonial conservation policies that had antagonised local communities and forced them to sabotage existing conservation efforts. The shift, thus, served to incentivise local communities to limit poaching and, so, maintain the wildlife habitat of the country's national parks. It also strove to reduce conflict between wildlife and humans. Of note with the new approach, however, was the seeming dominance of the conservation drive over that of development.

The Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources

The flagship of the CBNRM scheme in Zimbabwe was the widely publicised and highly celebrated community conservation CAMPFIRE programme which is the focus of the current sub-section. The CAMPFIRE programme came about as a result of radical conservation policy alignments adopted by the Zimbabwean government during the first decade of independence. As Child explained, the core principle of the programme was:

The empowerment of community members at village level to control wildlife and its revenues, the internalisation of costs and benefits at this level, and an underlying belief that wildlife was the most sustainable land use option in many of these remote areas.⁹¹⁵

The programme was essentially premised on the principle that wildlife revenue from PAs next to impoverished villagers must accrue to the affected villagers so that they appreciate the value of local resources.⁹¹⁶ It was, at the same time, directed at encouraging indigenous communities living

⁹¹⁴ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, 160.

⁹¹⁵ B. Child, 'Origins and Efficacy of Modern Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) Practices in the Southern African Region', Unpublished Paper, 2003, p. 6.

⁹¹⁶ Report of the National Parks and Wild Life Management, Year 1979-80, p. 4.

next to the country's parks to value game ranching. The programme also aimed at economically empowering the marginalised communities with management skills of wildlife.⁹¹⁷

It was, thus, argued that income from a region such as Zimbabwe's Lowveld would mainly come from consumptive tourism, which had the potential of high and immediate returns as compared to ecotourism (bee keeping, fisheries, timber harvesting, crafts etc.) whose returns were long term. The supposed attraction of the CAMPFIRE programme to indigenous peoples was in that it proposed a return to a time when they used to control and benefit from their wildlife heritage. Through the initiative, local villagers also felt they would be able to reclaim wildlife ownership and management after years of colonial denial.

It is crucial to point out that colonial wildlife management was racially configured. While wildlife belonged to the state, one could, if the skin was white use it commercially through the acquisition of a licence. The black majority were excluded from accessing wildlife in PAs and were instead, labelled as pests together with other Gonarezhou bugs such as tsetse-flies.⁹¹⁸ Inversely, peasant farmers living on the margins of the GNP incidentally considered park animals next to their settlements as pests that frequently destroyed their crops and, so, were to be equally eliminated.⁹¹⁹ They, furthermore, considered wildlife to be in competition with them over land and water and, again, a menace to their livelihoods.⁹²⁰

⁹¹⁷ W. Wolmer, J. Chaumba & I. Scoones, 'Wildlife Management and Land Reform in Southeastern Zimbabwe: A Compatible Pairing or Contradiction in Terms?' Unpublished paper, Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa Research Paper 1, 2003, p. 5.

⁹¹⁸ In his PhD thesis (Chapters 7 and Conclusion), Mavhunga discusses the Gonarezhou human 'pest' in an interesting way.

⁹¹⁹ P. G. H. Frost & I. Bond, 'The CAMPFIRE Programme in Zimbabwe: Payment for Wildlife Services', *Ecological Economics*, 65 (2008), p. 777.

⁹²⁰ K. Vorlauffer, 'CAMPFIRE-The Political Ecology of Poverty Alleviation, Wildlife Utilisation and Biodiversity Conservation in Zimbabwe', *Erdkunde Bd*, 56, 2 (2002), p. 186.

Exclusive wildlife ranching by white farmers of southern Zimbabwe had started in the 1960s. The area was considered ideal for ranching owing to a number of reasons. In the first place, game was easily adaptable to dry conditions. Secondly, wild animals had higher chances of surviving drought(s) and, thirdly, game animals were said to be more resistant to diseases of the region than domestic animals.⁹²¹ So, the lucrative industry had after its launch in the 1960s flourished throughout the 1970s but benefitted only the white population.⁹²² User rights of white ranchers were formally conferred in 1975 by the Parks and Wild Life Act that gave them authority to engage in safari hunting and capture animals for sale.⁹²³

Wildlife production was officially opened to all races at independence and previously disadvantaged blacks were now allowed ownership of ranches and the management of wildlife, for commercial gains.⁹²⁴ The amended 1982 Parks and Wild Life Act specifically gave such rights to blacks through their Rural District Councils (RDCs).⁹²⁵ The indigenous people of southern Zimbabwe welcomed the move. In practice, it was still not possible for many blacks to do so as they lacked the financial capacity to engage in capital-intensive ventures. The amendment had, however, created the statutory framework for the CAMPFIRE programme to engage in wildlife production through RDCs.

While most academic scholarship has viewed the CAMPFIRE programme as a new initiative, history situates it in the pre-colonial period when it was said to have been practised by many indigenous African communities. Turner contended that the programme was, indeed, an

⁹²¹ Ibid. p. 191.

⁹²² Government of Zimbabwe, Wildlife-Based Land Reform Policy, Revised April 2, 2004, p. 4.

⁹²³ Parks and Wildlife Act No. 14, 1975.

⁹²⁴ V. N. Muzvidziwa, 'Eco-tourism, Conservancies and Sustainable Development: The Case of Zimbabwe', *Journal of Human Ecology*, 43, 1 (2013), p. 47.

⁹²⁵ Parks and Wildlife (Amended) Act, 1982.

indigenous practice which was deeply rooted in indigenous governance systems evolved over generations.⁹²⁶ Arguing from a radical Walter Rodney perspective, he submitted that the practice was then interfered with and its direction changed by colonial intervention.⁹²⁷ Turner posited that traditional Zimbabwean societies had practised it through some prudent accounting of land under their jurisdiction. He alleged that under the principle of common property resource ownership and the application of the principle of collective management of resources, land was allocated systematically, natural resources shared equitably, grazing areas regulated and everybody taken care of fully.⁹²⁸ While his position appear rather exaggerated, it is a pointer to some shared pre-colonial African values. In light of Turner's argument, it is reasonable to view the CAMPFIRE programme as simply a modified plan crafted to suit new operational environments.

In its modern modified form, however, the programme combined wildlife conservation and rural development. The highly praised programme, celebrated as a model for Southern Africa was launched in the Zambezi Valley districts of Nyaminyami and Guruve where it initially focussed on sustainable trophy hunting.⁹²⁹ It was later expanded to cover nature tourism, renting out lodges and the sale of live animals.⁹³⁰ In south-eastern Zimbabwe, it was implemented in wards contiguous to the GNP in the three districts of Chipinge, Chiredzi and Beitbridge.⁹³¹

⁹²⁶ S. Turner, 'A Crisis in CBNRM? Affirming the Commons in Southern Africa', Centre for International Co-operation, Unpublished paper, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Paper for the 10th IASCP Conference, Oaxaca, 9-13 August, 2004, p. 1.

⁹²⁷ Ibid. For the radical perspective on the underdevelopment of Africa, see Walter Rodney's book, W. Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1972).

⁹²⁸ Turner, 'A Crisis in CBNRM?' p. 4.

⁹²⁹ Trophy hunting was also known as sport or safari hunting.

⁹³⁰ E. Mapedza, 'Keeping CAMPFIRE Going: Political Uncertainty and Natural Resource Management in Zimbabwe', Unpublished paper, International Institute for Environmental Development, Gatekeeper Series, 133, 2007, p. 5.

⁹³¹ In Zimbabwe, a ward is an administrative unit of the Ministry of Local Government. It has about ten villages, each with about one hundred households, giving a total population of about one thousand people. Each ward is under an elected superintendent called a councillor.

The CAMPFIRE programme was the brainchild of the DPWLM.⁹³² Logan and Moseley contended that one unique feature of the programme was its Zimbabwean origin, having been mooted locally. It was, indeed, hailed as one good example of an indigenous bottom-up initiative because of the perceived community input and participation.⁹³³ The scheme had, by 1990, been fully embraced by the government of Zimbabwe as a holistic approach to rural development and wildlife conservation and, so, marketed throughout the country. At its zenith, around 1998, it had spread its wings to thirty six of the country's fifty six districts and was benefiting up to two hundred thousand households.⁹³⁴

During its formative years, the programme received high publicity and was spoiled with generous donations. It subsequently generated innumerable workshops and conferences and attracted a wide range of academic publications.⁹³⁵ The main funders were organisations that were looking for a paradigm shift in wildlife management. These included the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) group, the EU and the Norwegian Agency for Development Corporation.⁹³⁶ The programme got a donor boost at the 1992 World Congress on National Parks and PAs held in Caracas, Venezuela and the 1992 United Nations Rio de Janeiro Summit on Sustainable Development. The support was centred on promoting sustainable conservation approaches.⁹³⁷ During its first ten years of operation, it received up to US\$30 million of donor support half of which directly benefited local communities in the CAMPFIRE zones. The other

⁹³² Rihoy, Chirozva & Anstey, 'People are not Happy', p. 6. The name was later changed to National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority.

⁹³³ Logan & Moseley, 'The Political Ecology of Poverty Alleviation in Zimbabwe's Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE)', p. 2.

⁹³⁴ Rihoy, Chirozva & Anstey, 'People are not Happy', p. 6.

⁹³⁵ Wolmer, Chaumba, Scoones, 'Wildlife Management and Land Reform in Southeastern Zimbabwe' p. 5.

⁹³⁶ Frost & Bond, 'The CAMPFIRE Programme in Zimbabwe', p. 778.

⁹³⁷ Metcalfe, 'Impacts of Transboundary Protected Areas on Local Communities in the Three Southern African Initiatives', p. 5.

half was withheld by the respective RDCs and the CAMPFIRE Association for administrative purposes.⁹³⁸ Mahenye Ward, under the Chipinge RDC is presented as a case study of the indigenous people's participation in the CAMPFIRE scheme.

The Mahenye CAMPFIRE community programme

The Mahenye CAMPFIRE programme has, from one angle, been exalted as positive:

Campfire was a good model in its early years but now it is different because they no longer give us our dividends. We got cash in its early years. They paid us dividends four times a year and at the same time we could pay tax and remain with change. Now, they just say the tax has been deducted from Council.⁹³⁹

It has, from another viewpoint, been condemned for lacking accountability and failure to fully compensate the Mahenye community for the earlier loss of land to wildlife.⁹⁴⁰ The two positions, while not exhaustive are but summative of the divergent perceptions of the indigenous people of the region on the performance of the CAMPFIRE programme in Mahenye and certainly other areas of south-eastern Zimbabwe.

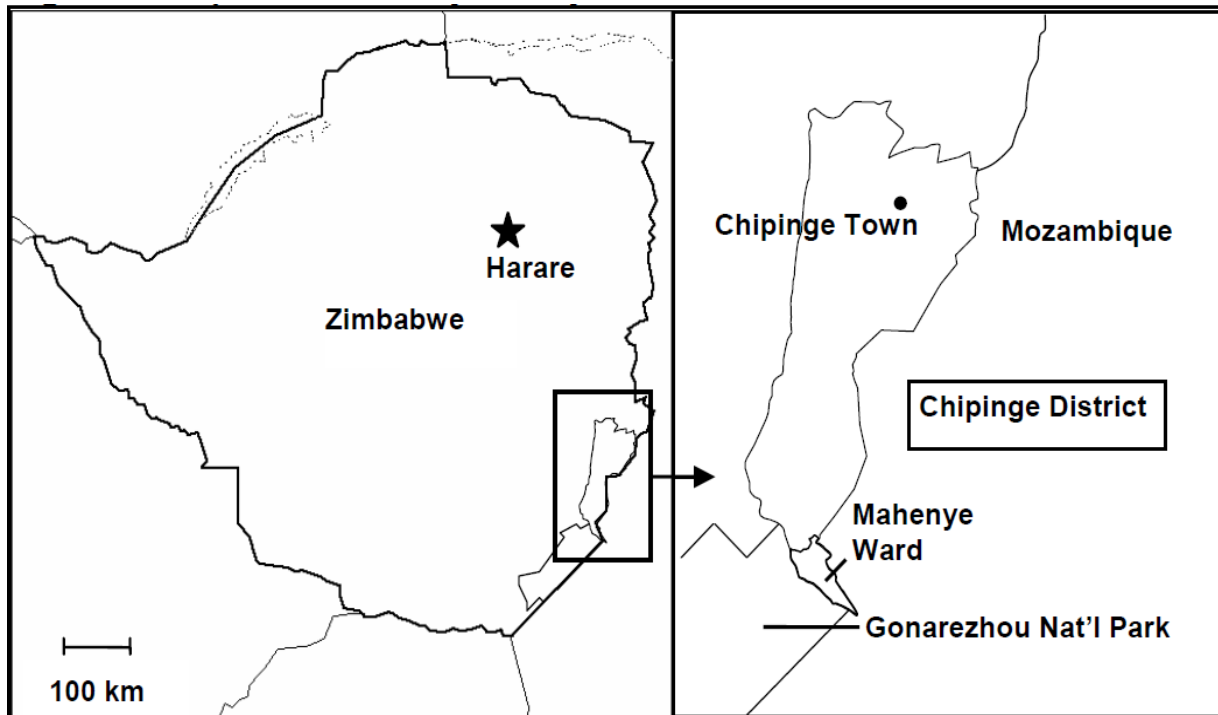
To begin with, there are a number of fundamental questions that need to be posed: Why was Mahenye Ward chosen as a CAMPFIRE zone? How was the programme rolled out in the Ward? Who were the participants in the programme? Who controlled the project? What benefits did the local people gain from the programme? Did costs incurred in managing wildlife justify the people's engagement? Was the human-wildlife conflict eased by the scheme? The current subsection interrogates these and related issues.

⁹³⁸ Balint & Mashinya, 'The Decline of a Model Community-Based Conservation Project', p. 807.

⁹³⁹ Interview with Mhlava Chirhindze, Mahenye Ward, 7 August 2014.

⁹⁴⁰ Interview with Stewart Hobyani, Mahenye Ward, 2 August 2014.

Map 5.1: Location of the Mahenye CAMPFIRE Ward



Source: Mashinya, *Participation and Devolution in Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE Program*, p. 90.

The Mahenye Ward, indicated in Map 5.1 was chosen as a case study for various reasons. Firstly, the area is rich in wildlife resources. Secondly, it was a good example of a neglected border community that the state now decided to recognise. Thirdly, it was a first-class example of an area with human-wildlife conflict that went back to the 1960s. Fourthly, the area has been cited in several studies as an example of a CAMPFIRE programme with a positive record of community participation.⁹⁴¹ Finally, the programme was a pilot project initially credited with run-away success and considered a model for both the country and the entire Southern African region.

At Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, the predominantly underprivileged Shangane people of Mahenye were angered by the government's failure to give them back the Gonarezhou ancestral

⁹⁴¹ Balint & Mashinya, 'The Decline of a Model Community-Based Conservation Project', p. 805.

land. They were, furthermore, infuriated by the fact that hunting in the park remained strictly forbidden.⁹⁴² What disturbed them more was that the new government maintained the colonial position of barring them from even hunting in their communal areas. Subsequently, conflict between them and the state over wildlife control persisted.

Two years into independence, however, and in response to government policy shift Mahenye residents and the Parks Department worked out a plan to reduce tension between them. The arrangement, which was a precursor to the CAMPFIRE programme in the area saw the Parks Department sanctioning some limited trophy hunting in the area. Dividends in the form of royalties and meat from animals shot were distributed to Mahenye villagers living next to the park. Local residents were also afforded some limited hunting in the park. In response, the Mahenye community agreed to limit illegal hunts and to allow free game movement within specified wildlife corridors.⁹⁴³ In a 1983 follow up gesture of goodwill, the community voluntarily moved seven villages from an island in the Save River basin to allow the area to revert to an exclusive wildlife and safari hunting enclave.⁹⁴⁴

Three years later, after a noticeable increase in the wildlife population, the Parks Department reciprocated the gesture by increasing the hunting quota of elephants and other animals to enable the communities to realise more shares.⁹⁴⁵ There was, however, conflict between the parent Chipinge RDC and the residents over the disbursement of the proceeds from the hunting project.⁹⁴⁶ The money meant for the community and held by the Council since 1982 was only paid out to the people in 1987, again, in the spirit of collaboration. When released, it was used to complete the

⁹⁴² Interviews conducted with villagers in Mahenye in July & August 2014.

⁹⁴³ Balint & Mashinya, 'The Decline of a Model Community-Based Conservation Project', p. 808.

⁹⁴⁴ Paterson, 'Bottom Up Development in Decentralized Common Property Regimes', p. 2.

⁹⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁶ In all CAMPFIRE zones RDCs were responsible for managing CAMPFIRE funds on behalf of communities.

construction of classroom blocks and teachers' houses at the local primary school and a grinding-mill at Mahenye Township. These projects became the first tangible results of the pilot project.⁹⁴⁷

The Chippinge RDC joined the national CAMPFIRE programme in 1991. It was accordingly mandated to remit community earnings as per the constitution of the CAMPFIRE Association. A Mahenye CAMPFIRE Committee (MCC) was established to run the programme.⁹⁴⁸

Mahenye Ward is located in a discrete and marginal zone in the south-eastern corner of the Chippinge District as shown in Map 5.1. To the west and south of the Ward, the Save River separates it from the GNP. To the north, the Ward is bounded by Mutandahwe Ward and located to its east is the international boundary with Mozambique.⁹⁴⁹ The Mahenye Ward covers an estimated area of 210 km² and has a population of about one thousand households under twenty seven villages. Its population is predominantly Shangane in a district that is exclusively Nda.⁹⁵⁰

Prior to 1966, part of the GNP area was communal land of the Shangane of Chief Mahenye whose people were then forcibly removed from the area and settled across the Sabi River in what is now Mahenye Ward. The Mahenye people had since then been prohibited from hunting on either the old lands or in the new settlements, much to their disenchantment. Furthermore, they were prohibited from killing animals that strayed into their villages and threatened the people's livelihoods.⁹⁵¹ The residents of this borderland understandably felt neglected by both the colonial and post-colonial governments.⁹⁵² It was, therefore, apparent that the park shared a border with a disgruntled community that continued to consider the same park an extension of its Ward, hence,

⁹⁴⁷ Paterson, 'Bottom Up Development in Decentralized Common Property Regimes', p. 3.

⁹⁴⁸ Balint & Mashinya, 'The Decline of a Model Community-Based Conservation Project', p. 808.

⁹⁴⁹ Rihoy, Chirozva & Anstey, 'People are not Happy', pp. 13-14.

⁹⁵⁰ Balint & Mashinya, 'The Decline of a Model Community-Based Conservation Project', p. 811.

⁹⁵¹ Almost all men and women of all age groups interviewed in Mahenye Ward expressed frustration over the Parks Authority's failure to control the game of the GNP.

⁹⁵² Paterson, 'Bottom Up Development in Decentralized Common Property Regimes', p. 2.

their defiant hunting in the sanctuary. The government's wildlife management through the CAMPFIRE partnership arrangement with the Mahenye community was, therefore, adopted as a strategy that was partly aimed at reducing human-wildlife conflict.

It was the USAID's contention that in other areas of Zimbabwe where CAMPFIRE programmes had been implemented, it had led to improved management of community owned resources and to the general improvement of the lives of communities involved.⁹⁵³ The position was partly true for Mahenye Ward especially during the first decade of the programme's roll out leading to the year 2000. There were many factors that favoured the Mahenye scheme. In the first place the international donor community which was highly excited about the new home-grown experiment donated generously to the project. Secondly, at its inception, the Zimbabwean political and economic climate was stable and so conducive to investment in wildlife. Thirdly, the first MCC was prudent in its management of the scheme and, fourthly, there was considerable decentralisation of authority to indigenous participants that allowed for community involvement in the project during the formative years. It was for the above reasons that the project is credited for empowering the people of Mahenye Ward during especially its first ten years of operation.

Benefits came in various ways. Villagers received royalties for animals shot by sport hunters. The exact amount paid out at any given time depended on a number of variables ranging from the yearly quotas, the number of kills and the sizes of animals shot.⁹⁵⁴ A CAMPFIRE district was given hunting quotas based on estimates of animals in the hunting allocated area. Safari operators were then invited by the RDC on behalf of the Ward's CAMPFIRE committee to submit bids.

⁹⁵³ USAID, 1997, CAMPFIRE. US Agency for International Development Fact Sheet, <http://www.info.usai.gov/press/releases/9700101.html>, (accessed on 7/2/14).

⁹⁵⁴ Balint & Mashinya, 'The Decline of a Model Community-Based Conservation Project', p. 808.

Safari operators, in turn, gave contracts to professional hunters who mainly came from Europe and the United States of America. The hired hunters paid costs for the execution of the allotted animals. They also made further payments for the services of guides, porters and such related costs. The professional hunters would then kill specific animals in accordance with the specifications of the contracts issued. The fee for one elephant trophy could be as high as US\$10 000 and for a buffalo up to US\$2 000.⁹⁵⁵ A percentage of the kill would then find its way to the community. Household income received by members of the Mahenye community between 1992 and 1997 averaged US\$15 per year.⁹⁵⁶ About 90% of it came from sport hunting. The remainder was generated from lodge takings, the sale of meat, hides and from game viewing.⁹⁵⁷

The Mahenye community, working with the CAMPFIRE and Zimbabwe Sun Group of Hotels established two safari lodges on the fringes of the GNP; the Mahenye Safari and Chilo Lodge which were opened in 1994 and 1996 respectively. The two were strategically located along the scenic Save River and provided accommodation to high-paying tourists. Their rooms had a combined bedding capacity for forty five guests.⁹⁵⁸ They charged rates of up to US\$150 per person per night, a high amount by the going rates of other hotels in the country.⁹⁵⁹ The Mahenye community, through the Chipinge RDC initially signed a ten year contract with the Zimbabwe Sun Group Company whereby the people received, as community dividends, 8% of gross lodge receipts in the first three years, 10% in the next three years and 12% in the last four years. Of the percentage disbursed to the community, 50% was to be invested in village projects while the other 50% was directly paid out to participating individual households in cash form.⁹⁶⁰ Most of the CAMPFIRE

⁹⁵⁵ Mashinya, 'Participation and Devolution in Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE Program', p. 67.

⁹⁵⁶ Rihoy, Chirozva & Anstey, 'People are not Happy', p. 6.

⁹⁵⁷ Mashinya, 'Participation and Devolution in Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE Program', p. 61.

⁹⁵⁸ Rihoy, Chirozva & Anstey, 'People are not Happy', p. 15.

⁹⁵⁹ Mashinya, 'Participation and Devolution in Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE Program', p. 96.

⁹⁶⁰ Balint & Mashinya, 'The Decline of a Model Community-Based Conservation Project', p. 811.

revenue was generated from the lodges. In 1998, for example, up to 57% of the revenue was generated from lodge takings.⁹⁶¹ The total collected from the lodges and sport hunting reached its peak in 1998 when it got to US\$49 818-00 per annum.⁹⁶² Half of the amount was paid out as dividends to participating households.⁹⁶³ The money was, by Zimbabwean standards then, substantial given the general poverty prevalent in most rural areas of the country.

Furthermore, the lodges provided jobs to about forty local people. There was preferential recruitment of the Shangane at these lodges as part of some pay-back arrangement for earlier land losses to the park. Most were, however, employed in low skill jobs as waiters, cooks, drivers, housekeepers, maintenance workers, cleaners, mechanics and launderers.⁹⁶⁴ Such employment was sadly skewed in favour of men. At one time, only four out of thirty eight Chilo employees were women, a glaring gender disparity that did not speak well for the project.⁹⁶⁵ The ripple effect of those employed was, however, felt when many members of the extended families downstream benefitted. Some, nevertheless, bemoaned the lack of investment in the production of highly skilled local manpower, if not also to learn from their indigenous knowledge as stated:

The Government and Gonarezhou National Park administrators needed to employ local people even in the management sector in order to tap on the indigenous people's knowledge and skills. To date, most have only been employed in non-skilled areas at the two lodges and in the national park.⁹⁶⁶

At the expiry of the initial ten year contract in 2004, the Zimbabwe Sun Group of Companies declined to renew it citing the sharp decline in conventional tourism as a result of the country's

⁹⁶¹ Vorlaufer, 'CAMPFIRE-The Political Ecology of Poverty Alleviation', p. 196.

⁹⁶² Ibid, p. 198.

⁹⁶³ Rihoy, Chirozva & Anstey, 'People are not Happy', pp. 15-16.

⁹⁶⁴ Interview with Chilo lodge employee (anonymous), Mahenye, 2 August 2014.

⁹⁶⁵ S. Chiutsi, M. Mukoroverwa, P. Karigambe & K. Mudzeni, 'The Theory and Practice of Ecotourism in Southern Africa', *Journal of Hospitality Management and Tourism*, 2, 2 (2011), p. 18.

⁹⁶⁶ Interview with Director, Gaza Trust, Chiredzi, 12 August 2014.

economic crisis.⁹⁶⁷ However, after concerted negotiations facilitated by Clive Stockil who happened to have had a vested interest in the wildlife industry, a new contract was drawn. Under the new agreement, the lodges were taken over by the River Lodges of Africa consortium with Stockil as the Managing Director. A Board representing the Chipinge RDC and the MCC was instituted to run the lodges in an arrangement close to what one could call a joint ownership between the River Lodges of Africa and the Mahenye Community.⁹⁶⁸

The community was, this time around, to receive a percentage of net and not gross receipts and would only start getting the money when the lodges began making profit. The big challenge, however, was that such an arrangement came at a time when the country's economy was in free fall and so revenue generation from the lodges remained low right through the 'Zimbabwe Crisis' decade. The decline in revenue created anxiety on the part of community participants and partly explained the general decline of the programme in the latter half of the 2000s.

The Mahenye CAMPFIRE programme brought in infrastructural development to the Ward. The fifty kilometre gravel road stretch from Jack Quinton Bridge, off the Chiredzi-Birchenough Bridge road to Mahenye was widened and re-gravelled to accommodate all-weather driving. As part of the programme's community service, electricity and telephone lines were extended from the lodges to nearby villages for no charge. It was made possible for the MCC to operate an electric grinding-mill at Mahenye Business Centre as the entire township was electrified. Villagers of the Ward also

⁹⁶⁷ The political and economic challenges that were faced by the country after 2000 were referred to as the 'Zimbabwe Crisis'. For comprehensive accounts of the 'Crisis', see among others, B. Raftopoulos, 'The Crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008', in B. Raftopoulos & A. Mlambo (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe*, pp. 201-232, Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, pp. 231-248, P. Bond and M. Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's Plunge: Exhausted Nationalism, Neoliberalism and the Search for Social Justice* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003) & B. Raftopoulos, 'The Zimbabwe Crisis and the Challenges for the Left', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 32, 2 (2006).

⁹⁶⁸ Mashinya, 'Participation and Devolution in Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE Program', p. 98.

benefited from boreholes drilled for them by the CAMPFIRE programme.⁹⁶⁹ Other gains came in form of donations such as vehicles by safari hunters. The community also often received meat distributed by the Parks Unit from stray animals it sometimes killed. This did not, however, guarantee constant supply of game meat as the people would have wanted.

The cited developments had the effect of generally changing the lifestyles of community members for the better. It was believed that as a result of these extended benefits and in appreciation, the local people responded by reducing poaching:

We appreciate[ed] the CAMPFIRE programme that came. Wild animals were then able to cross from Gonarezhou National Park unmolested to the Mahenye wilderness area and Nwachumene Island. People were then able to get royalties from hunted game and their lives improved.⁹⁷⁰

Mashinya reported a noticeable increase in the various species of wildlife in the GNP during the decade, an indication of the reciprocal response of the community to the Parks's goodwill.⁹⁷¹

Overall, Rihoy, Chirozva and Anstey contended that the CAMPFIRE programme had a positive impact on the livelihoods of indigenous communities of Mahenye. They argued that the local people benefitted from royalties paid out to them. Communities also gained investment in infrastructural development that was rolled out through projects such as the construction of schools and clinics, the electrification of villages and the provision of telephone services. Over and above that, the Mahenye people gained knowledge and organisational skills that enabled them to run the CAMPFIRE project fairly smoothly during the first ten years of its existence.⁹⁷² Conversely, the

⁹⁶⁹ Ibid. pp. 69, 96.

⁹⁷⁰ Interview with Stewart Hobyani, Mahenye Ward, 2 August 2014.

⁹⁷¹ Mashinya, 'Participation and Devolution in Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE Program', p. 72.

⁹⁷² Rihoy, Chirozva & Anstey, 'People are not Happy', p. ii.

local people were able to pass on their indigenous knowledge to the project sponsors, thus, creating a symbiotic relationship.

While the CAMPFIRE programme was judged to have delivered concrete benefits to the Mahenye community during its first ten years of operation, there were some in the community who felt it did not do enough. A testimony by the Chiredzi-based Gaza Trust Director, while acknowledging the benefits brought about by the scheme to the community bemoaned its failure to do more:

The CAMPFIRE programme was a good idea. It brought some form of compensation for the land we lost. It should have been managed by the community so that it benefited that community most. It would have been best if hunting was also done by the community. The government should have empowered people to hunt game for their use legally.⁹⁷³

The general feeling among the interviewed Mahenye community members was that the programme should have allowed people more access into the park to get relish, hunt for subsistence and even herd their cattle during drought periods.⁹⁷⁴ Some felt that the project should have created more employment for the youth of the area to compensate for the pain suffered during the period of exclusion from the park. One interviewee, angry over past evictions demanded that the project dish out more cash to enable them to re-build the huts the state destroyed, in the 1960s.⁹⁷⁵

In a 2004 study of Mahenye Ward, Balint and Mashinya also lamented what they considered to have been a derailed programme. They highlighted what they alleged to have been inherent contradictions in stake holders' perceptions of the CAMPFIRE programme and pointed out how the differing views often exhibited by local community members, conservation NGOs and private firms made it difficult for all to work for the same goals.⁹⁷⁶ Their field findings were that, in spite

⁹⁷³ Interview with Director, Gaza Trust, Chiredzi, 12 August 2014.

⁹⁷⁴ Group interview, Mahenye, 5 August 2014.

⁹⁷⁵ Interview with Mhlava Chauke, Mahenye, 4 August 2014.

⁹⁷⁶ Balint & Mashinya, 'The Decline of a Model Community-Based Conservation Project', p. 807.

of its commitment to full devolution the programme did not give complete authority to local communities. Power remained with the parent RDC which continued to make and break contracts with trophy hunters and tourist operators and charge various levies and taxes without even consulting the MCC. Consequently, scholars were forced to conclude that the programme was really more about the decentralisation of control to the RDC than of devolving management powers to participating communities, a tragic situation indeed.⁹⁷⁷

In addition, a number of other factors that were perceived to have contributed to a sharp deterioration of CAMPFIRE services were cited. These included the excessive interference by the Chipinge RDC in the daily running of the programme, failure by the local leadership to run the programme professionally, the withdrawal of donor support and the economic and political turmoil that gripped the country after the year 2000.⁹⁷⁸ Balint and Mashinya referred to, for example, the MCC's abandonment of the democratic processes of selecting leaders every two years, the chief's interference in the day to day affairs of the programme and the general flouting of community participation procedures as some of the notable causes of the decline.⁹⁷⁹ The 'Zimbabwe Crisis' was also cited as a major contributor to the decline in service provision by CAMPFIRE. Inflation and lower lodge revenue takings after 2004 essentially eroded the little income that people were still getting and by 2008, that income had dwindled to almost nothing. The country's challenges continued until the beginning of 2009 when a Government of National Unity that brought together feuding political parties was formed.⁹⁸⁰

⁹⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁸ Logan & Moseley, 'The Political Ecology of Poverty Alleviation in Zimbabwe's Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE)', p. 1.

⁹⁷⁹ Balint & Mashinya, 'The Decline of a Model Community-Based Conservation Project', pp. 811-812.

⁹⁸⁰ The Government of National Unity which was brokered by the SADC and comprising the ruling ZANU (PF) party and the MDC started operating in February 2009. It, thereafter, managed to stabilise the economy.

Rihoy, Chirozva and Anstey identified four more related factors they considered prime in explaining the decline of the programme. These were: the death of the highly respected Chief Mahenye in 2001 which was followed by the ascendancy to the throne of his corruptible son, the change of the MCC office bearers, the election of a new councillor in the Ward and the irregular tendering of hunting concessions associated with the new leadership.⁹⁸¹ The new chief was particularly alleged to have used the programme to create a patronage system through which he could “construct and reproduce power relationships.”⁹⁸² Together with the chairperson of the MCC and local structures of the ruling ZANU (PF) party, the chiefly institution was accused of extending favours to colleagues such as giving credit facilities to friends at the CAMPFIRE grinding-mill and stores and giving buddies interest-free loans from the CAMPFIRE proceeds. The committee accused of corruption was only removed from office in 2005.⁹⁸³

It was, therefore, evident that developments in the Ward after 2000 negatively impacted on a, until then, strong and transparent programme. The leadership that assumed office in Mahenye Ward after 2000 was accused by the local community and the Chipinge RDC of abusing the CAMPFIRE funds and enriching themselves. For example, the chairperson of the MCC turned a donated CAMPFIRE vehicle into a personal car.⁹⁸⁴ The abandonment of regular elections by the Committee destroyed the community’s participatory aspect which was considered to be the pillar of the programme.⁹⁸⁵ As a result of a combination of factors such as the ‘Zimbabwe Crisis’ and the administrative rot, yearly dividends of households declined from a peak of US\$27.63 in 1997 to a low of US\$0.03 in 2004.⁹⁸⁶ With the country’s inflation running high then the amount was

⁹⁸¹ Rihoy, Chirozva & Anstey, ‘People are not Happy’, pp. 17-18.

⁹⁸² Ibid. p. 39.

⁹⁸³ Ibid. pp. 39 & 44.

⁹⁸⁴ Balint & Mashinya, ‘The Decline of a Model Community-Based Conservation Project’, p. 811.

⁹⁸⁵ Rihoy, Chirozva & Anstey, ‘People are not Happy’, p. 20.

⁹⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 21.

only enough to buy a piece of candy for a child and, “certainly, not sufficient to compensate families for the costs of living with wildlife.”⁹⁸⁷ Consequently, the decline of amounts paid out to residents of the Ward further reduced the people’s zeal to protect the wildlife of the GNP.⁹⁸⁸ Conservation efforts were derailed as people went back to poaching.

There was, therefore, a general feeling among Mahenye community members that in the period after 2000, the programme was no longer run to benefit them. The testimony of one villager cited below seems to represent the views of many:

CAMPFIRE was a good community programme in its early years before the CAMPFIRE model changed in 2000. We used to get dividends from elephant hunts and we could at the same time pay tax and have anything we wanted. Our benefits also included meat, payment of fees for our children in primary and secondary schools. CAMPFIRE built two blocks at Mahenye Secondary school and a house for teachers. However, they no longer give us our dividends as they used to do during the early years of the programme.⁹⁸⁹

Again, an internal audit report summary compiled by the RDC in 2004 and cited by Rihoy, Chirozva and Anstey bared it all when it exposed the corruption by a few elite community members and the abandonment of proper accounting procedures.⁹⁹⁰

Management, from local right up to district level, was accused by the local community and other stakeholders such as NGOs of failure to plough back the CAMPFIRE proceeds to the Mahenye producer community. They were, furthermore, charged with financial impropriety, corruption, nepotism and abuse of power in the granting of hunting quotas. Women and the youth were the most vocal as they felt most marginalised. A good example was that in the MCC of the year 2000, there were only two females and no youth members in a committee of fourteen people. The two

⁹⁸⁷ Balint & Mashinya, ‘The Decline of a Model Community-Based Conservation Project’, p. 811.

⁹⁸⁸ Mapedza, ‘Keeping CAMPFIRE Going’, p. 1.

⁹⁸⁹ Interview with Stewart Hobyani, Mahenye Ward, 2 August 2014.

⁹⁹⁰ Rihoy, Chirozva & Anstey, ‘People are not Happy’, p. 22.

female members also happened to have been connected to the chief's family which was accused of nepotism by the same villagers.⁹⁹¹

Villagers complained of poor service delivery by the local leadership.⁹⁹² Some even took on a fatalistic approach of: "it's for them, not us"⁹⁹³ as they regretted the deteriorating situation. Many went back to poaching because of the limited tangible benefits they were realising from the CAMPFIRE programme.⁹⁹⁴ The situation had, by 2004, become so dire that one senior member of the ruling Mahenye family, quoted by Rihoy, Chirozva and Ansley openly decried the corruption of the MCC and the chief's undue interference in CAMPFIRE affairs.⁹⁹⁵

It turned out that the supposed saviours' (Chipingwe RDC, NGOs and Safari Operators) had their hands equally tied. The chief's strong political connection with the ruling party was well known and feared. The 2000 national elections had, in the main, changed the political dynamics of most rural areas as the ruling party went on an aggressive defensive campaign to ward off strong opposition from the MDC. One of the strategies was to revive the powers of chiefs so that they become partners in whipping the opposition. Chiefs became untouchables. The Chipingwe RDC was understandably hesitant to take any drastic action against Chief Mahenye for fear of being painted with the opposition brush.⁹⁹⁶

NGOs that had been funding the programme had also been weakened since the launch of Zimbabwe's controversial land reform programme in 2000.⁹⁹⁷ Most were labelled enemies of the

⁹⁹¹ Ibid. pp. 27 & 42.

⁹⁹² Mashinya, 'Participation and Devolution in Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE Program', p. 99.

⁹⁹³ Ibid, p. 103.

⁹⁹⁴ Rihoy, Chirozva & Anstey, 'People are not Happy', p. 25.

⁹⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 24.

⁹⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 32.

⁹⁹⁷ The land reform programme saw large pieces of land belonging to whites being forcibly transferred to black owners. The move triggered an international outcry whose effect was the suspension of internationally sponsored projects such

state for their perceived opposition to the agrarian revolution underway and alleged support of the opposition MDC party. It then followed that anything associated with them henceforth including old and new wildlife conservation initiatives was treated with suspicion, if not totally condemned.⁹⁹⁸ Intimidated by a state gone paranoid, many withdrew their services from the area, a move that impacted negatively on the operations of the CAMPFIRE project already in progress. Those who remained and braved it through like the Tshabezi and Zambezi Safaris expressed their difficulties in working with the post-2000 Mahenye leadership under the volatile political environment of the period.⁹⁹⁹

The Chipinge RDC responsible for the programme was not only accused of administrative ineptitude in running the programme but also of abusing the CAMPFIRE funds to cover other council expenses. In addition, it was accused of interfering in the process of selecting hunters.¹⁰⁰⁰ Mombeshora and Wolmer contended that cash disbursements to members of the community, even during the celebrated decade had remained generally measly.¹⁰⁰¹ They, in addition, argued that such payments had remained too insignificant to compensate the crop damage and the loss of agricultural and grazing lands they had experienced. Their conclusion was that this had created the feeling among many local people that the GNP was of little practical value to them as it had led to the theft of their ancestral lands and yet not compensated them enough.¹⁰⁰² The majority of the

as the CAMPFIRE, in protest. The land reform programme, in relation to south-eastern Zimbabwe will be the subject of discussion in the next chapter.

⁹⁹⁸ Rihoy, Chirozva & Anstey, 'People are not Happy', p. 37.

⁹⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 29.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 23.

¹⁰⁰¹ S. Mombeshora & W. Wolmer, 'Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa: Institutions, Governance and Policy Processes', Unpublished paper, SLSA Working Paper 3, 2000, p. 20.

¹⁰⁰² Ibid.

marginalised Mahenye people continued to feel neglected and damned. They, thus, reverted to covert poaching after 2000.

The CAMPFIRE in other wards

Ward 4 and 5 are in the Sangwe Communal Area of south-eastern Zimbabwe. The two wards, under Chief Tsvovani and Headman Chisa, respectively, border with the northern section of the GNP. They also have been participating in the CAMPFIRE programme since its heydays. Among the benefits derived from the programme was the construction of a school block at Ndali Primary School in Ward 5, the refurbishment of the Ndali clinic, and the establishment of a communal grinding-mill and shop at the same township. Proceeds from the scheme were also used to construct dams for small scale irrigation and to supply drinking water to livestock.¹⁰⁰³

Communities from the two wards complained of not being involved in direct hunting in the park. The Ndali and Chisa community members wanted more than just hunting rights promises. They were worried about the misappropriation of CAMPFIRE funds by the Chiredzi RDC.¹⁰⁰⁴ They also complained of damages to crops and attacks by the Gonarezhou animals. There were four people reported to have been killed in the two wards since 1996 and many more harassed by game from the park. Compensation from the state, where it was extended was in most cases delayed and inadequate.¹⁰⁰⁵ Furthermore, such recompense was not enough to relieve the pain suffered for the loss of loved ones. In frustration and as an expression of dissent, people from the wards continued

¹⁰⁰³ Interview with Ward 4 Councillor, Chisa, 28 June 2014.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Group interview with Chisa villagers, 23 December, 2014.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Rihoy, Chirozva & Anstey, 'People are not Happy', p. 32.

to hunt illegally in the park after 2000. To many, it remained more lucrative to poach than to wait for meagre and irregular CAMPFIRE disbursements.¹⁰⁰⁶

The programme as implemented in these wards was criticised for enforcing unpopular natural resource conservation legislation. Village resource monitors were labelled state agents allegedly planted within communities to report those seen cutting down trees, cultivating along river streams, causing veld fires, poisoning fishing ponds and entering the park illegally.¹⁰⁰⁷ The establishment of Ndali Police Station close to the GNP, as earlier noted, convinced many that it was more for the protection of the Gonarezhou animals from poachers than for the safety of local communities.¹⁰⁰⁸

On the southern tip of the GNP was the poverty-stricken Chikwarakwara border village. It was also contiguous to the KNP across the Limpopo River in South Africa. The area, which suffered frequent raids from animals of the two PAs had a CAMPFIRE programme that was launched by the Beitbridge RDC in 1990.¹⁰⁰⁹ Participating households received the largest percentage of the revenue generated from the project. As was the case in other CAMPFIRE zones, money generated from the scheme was divided into household use and community projects such as grinding-mills and the renovation of schools and clinics. The first batch of Z\$60 000 (approximately US\$4 000) cash payment was made at a colourful function in 1991. Beneficiaries were encouraged to conserve wild animals in neighbouring parks as they had earned money from merely taking good care of their wildlife. At the same function, the District Administrator of Beitbridge implored the villagers to protect wildlife for their own benefit and for posterity.¹⁰¹⁰

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Group interview with Chisa villagers, 23 December 2014.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Paterson, 'Bottom Up Development in Decentralized Common Property Regimes', p. 4.

¹⁰¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 4-5.

While these communities appreciated the cash pay-outs, they still felt they should have been empowered to make decisions about the use and distribution of CAMPFIRE resources.¹⁰¹¹ Again, the feeling was that the revenue generated mostly failed to compensate them for the opportunities they lost. In these CAMPFIRE zones, local residents continued to be concerned about the prioritisation of conservation over poverty reduction and community development.¹⁰¹²

Linking up with the conservancies of the area

Conservancies were amalgamations of several privately owned ranches devoted to wildlife production and the promotion of environmental sustainability. They were founded on the principle of collective management of such resources to realise economies of scale. Fences were removed between properties of participating ranchers to allow for unrestricted movement of game.¹⁰¹³ The sanctuaries focused on consumptive game cropping, safari hunting and photographic tourism. They were associated with the Lowveld's agro-ecological region considered generally unsuitable for dry land cropping. Of note in south-eastern Zimbabwe were the Save Valley Conservancy (SVC), the Malilangwe Conservancy, the Chiredzi River Conservancy, the Bubiana Conservancy, the Navasha and Malipati Conservancies. Until about 2000, all these conservancies had a 35% foreign ownership component, while 65 % of the shares were owned by white Zimbabweans.¹⁰¹⁴

The idea of establishing conservancies was mooted in the 1960s when the focus then was on the production of meat and hides. In the 1970s, there was a re-focus to include safari hunting while in the 1980s; the tourism aspect was added to the bouquet. In the 1990s, conservancies expanded into

¹⁰¹¹ Ibid.

¹⁰¹² Group interview with villagers, Ward 5, Ndali, 23 December 2014.

¹⁰¹³ Muzvidziwa, 'Eco-tourism, Conservancies and Sustainable Development', p. 46.

¹⁰¹⁴ *Zimbabwe Independent*, 17 January 2014, 'Save Valley Conservancy to be Indigenised'. Navasha and Malipati were community owned.

game ranching partly in an effort to mitigate the devastating 1991/2 drought that had decimated livestock in the area.¹⁰¹⁵ The most visible of the identified conservancies in terms of community outreach programmes was the Malilangwe Private Wildlife Reserve. The five thousand two hundred and sixty hectare privately owned wilderness shares borders with the GNP and the SVC. It was initially run by a conglomerate of conservationists from within and outside Zimbabwe's borders called the Malilangwe Trust.¹⁰¹⁶ The non-profit making conservancy's revenue is channelled back into the sanctuary to further conservation, research and ecotourism efforts.¹⁰¹⁷ Malilangwe has without doubt taken a leading role in working with communities surrounding it, together with the GNP. Its outreach programmes have been directed at maintaining harmonious relations with communities bordering it.¹⁰¹⁸ The Trust is also said to have focused on "educating" local people on the value of wildlife¹⁰¹⁹, a contentious suggestion.

Guided by the pay-back philosophy, the Malilangwe Conservancy has over the years done much in its corporate-social responsibility mandate. It has allowed neighbouring communities to harvest tonnes of *zvingozi* (quelea birds) from the reserve on a regular basis. While the elimination of these pest birds could be interpreted more as a favour to the conservancy, the harvests have conversely made meaningful material contribution as food for the concerned communities.¹⁰²⁰ The Trust has been paying school fees and buying school uniforms for disadvantaged pupils in the area. It has also been supporting local schools with books, computers, soccer kits and musical instruments. It has also supported the construction of clinics and protected wells in the adjacent villages. Over the

¹⁰¹⁵ Mombeshora & Wolmer, 'Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa', p. 21.

¹⁰¹⁶ *The Mirror, Masvingo* [Zimbabwe], 22-29 November, 2012.

¹⁰¹⁷ The Malilangwe Trust Annual Report, 2001, p. 4.

¹⁰¹⁸ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 181.

¹⁰¹⁹ The Malilangwe Trust Development Through Conservation Annual Report, 1998, p. 8.

¹⁰²⁰ *Ibid.*

years, it has also donated blankets and clothing to the elderly in the neighbouring villages. The Trust has, furthermore, been generously donating meat at state functions in the district.¹⁰²¹

Additionally, the Trust has been sponsoring traditional *chokoto* and *chinyambela* dancing competitions for schools and community groups in the Sangwe, Sengwe and Matibi No. 2 communal areas.¹⁰²² In 1999, the Trust was instrumental in the conception and commercialisation of the local Hluvuko Theatre Group, a Southern African Development Community (SADC) supported project that trained local youths in environment-promotion theatre.¹⁰²³ The group came up with award-winning plays like *Kukweta*, a stage show that mimicked the Shangane and their relationship with the leopards of the GNP and *Kwamanzi*, another act that told the story of the importance of water to wildlife. The theatre group was on occasions hired to provide entertainment to guests at the Malilangwe lodges, thus, creating employment for the youth of the area. The Trust-sponsored plays were also used as avenues for the promotion of the Shangane culture.¹⁰²⁴

The SVC was recorded as the largest and richest private wildlife sanctuary in the world.¹⁰²⁵ At its inception, in 1991, it comprised twenty nine properties with a total of 3 387 km². It has since transformed land use in the Lowveld from cattle keeping to total wildlife operation on a significant scale.¹⁰²⁶ In extending its social responsibility, the Conservancy has also been supporting local schools and development projects in neighbouring communal areas.¹⁰²⁷ It has, however, been

¹⁰²¹ Ibid.

¹⁰²² Ibid.

¹⁰²³ The Malilangwe Trust Annual Report, 2002, p. 8.

¹⁰²⁴ The Malilangwe Trust Annual Report, 1999, p. 13.

¹⁰²⁵ *Zimbabwe Independent*, 17 January 2014, 'Save Valley Conservancy to be Indigenised'.

¹⁰²⁶ Mombeshora & Wolmer, 'Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa', p. 21.

¹⁰²⁷ W. Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 180.

noted that it has been in conflict with adjacent communities due to its generally exclusionary approach. This explains why part of it was forcibly occupied during the 2000 land invasion period.

Navasha and Malipati Safari hunting areas were run directly by local communities after independence. Navasha is located along Gonakudzingwa small scale farms and extends to Sango border post. Local people were removed from the area soon after independence to Masivamele No. 10 to give way to the establishment of the wildlife community run sanctuary.¹⁰²⁸ Local people from Ward 9 and 10 were given charge of the project. They granted hunting quotas to safari operators and were responsible for supervising the activities. In a move partly aimed at minimising human-wildlife conflict, professional hunters engaged were specifically directed to target animals straying into the villages. Villagers from the two wards received royalties from trophy hunting and the quotas at times went up to six animals per year. One lion, for example, could be worth US\$10 000 out of which the participating ward received 51% of that amount. Such money was quite substantial especially if the hunter was able to meet his full quota for the year.¹⁰²⁹ So, while the local people could not solely survive on proceeds from trophy hunting, they did realise some noticeable income in the form of cash disbursements and some tangible community projects supported by proceeds from the conservancies.

Testimony from the councillor of Ward 10 revealed that proceeds from Navasha were used to construct clinics and schools and to “fence off” the Navasha sanctuary. Four local schools were electrified from monies raised from the project. Some youth from the area were employed by safari operators. In a proposed partnership project meant to further benefit the local community, the EU was planning to construct a lodge in the Navasha Forest that would create employment for a

¹⁰²⁸ Interview with Headman Mpapa, Mpapa Village, Chikombedzi, 21 July 2014.

¹⁰²⁹ Interview with Ward 10 Councillor, Navasha Conservancy, 5 September 2014.

sizeable number of young people.¹⁰³⁰ The Malipati Community Conservancy, located south of Navasha has, however, not been as successful as Navasha in bringing concrete benefits to local residents due to the limited number of animals straying into the communal area.¹⁰³¹

It is noted that in attempts to gain political and social legitimacy, these conservancies, working with the GNP have been extending benefits to local communities through various outreach programmes. They have in particular been linking up with villagers through the CAMPFIRE programme. Conservancies such as the Save Valley have also gone further by allowing local communities to access ancestral graves now located in the sanctuary as part of reaching out to the people. They have also focused on developing wildlife supported ecotourism centred on the recognition of local cultures. Other areas of focus have been job creation, poverty alleviation and infrastructural development.¹⁰³² It was Wolmer's contention that the paradigm shift adopted by these conservancies was belatedly taken in an attempt to spruce up their images in the face of the land reform programme onslaught.¹⁰³³ His conclusion was that what the conservancies, together with the GNP, appear to have been missing was that neighbouring communities wanted the ownership of wildlife and the recovery of the fenced land taken away from their forefathers instead of some form of collaboration on their terms.¹⁰³⁴ The failure to recognise the point explains why conflict between conservancies and local people was not abated by the goodwill that outreach programmes intended to achieve.

Critics of conservancies have, therefore, condemned their outreach overtures as *tokenish* and perhaps, a little too late. They have labelled them as disguised attempts by the white racial group

¹⁰³⁰ Interview with Ward 10 Councillor, On the Transfrontier Bus Trip to Sengwe, 6 September 2014.

¹⁰³¹ Ibid.

¹⁰³² Muzvidziwa, 'Eco-tourism, Conservancies and Sustainable Development', p. 47.

¹⁰³³ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, pp. 180-182.

¹⁰³⁴ Ibid. p. 180.

to maintain dominance over wildlife resources and a ruse used to attract donor funding.¹⁰³⁵ Wolmer was convinced that these private conservancies were centres of conflict with neighbouring communities precisely for the above reasons. Local people viewed the electric fences protecting the conservancies and the GNP as impediments to accessing the wildlife of the areas. Wolmer *et al*, thus, noted and regretted the existence of the seemingly ‘empty’ game sanctuaries in the midst of rural poverty and contented that the overpopulated communities abutting the park were certainly justified in challenging the game control monopoly of the ranchers and the state.¹⁰³⁶

Furthermore, Mombeshora and Wolmer considered conservancies to be representatives of de-development, sources of economic conflict and a demonstration of white luxury amidst rural poverty. They were also viewed as an attempts by ranchers to privatise the wildlife of the region.¹⁰³⁷ The Ministry of Environment and Tourism concurred when it insisted that they were being used as a front to privatise of the country’s wildlife resources.¹⁰³⁸ The indigenous people of the area, thus, remained in the main sceptical and wary of the real benefits the conservancies claimed to be extending to communities. To many, they are just another trick to deny them access to lands that in the past belonged to them.¹⁰³⁹

Performance of the CAMPFIRE programme in south-eastern Zimbabwe

Evaluations of the CAMPFIRE programme in the early 1990s pointed towards positive results in the development of communities adjoining the GNP. The devolution of wildlife control from the state and partner agents to local communities as practised in areas such as Mahenye, Chisa Ward

¹⁰³⁵ Ibid. p. 181.

¹⁰³⁶ Wolmer, Chaumba, Scoones, ‘Wildlife Management and Land Reform in Southeastern Zimbabwe’, p. 3.

¹⁰³⁷ Mombeshora & Wolmer, ‘Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa’, p. 22.

¹⁰³⁸ Parliamentary Debates, Hansard, 14/02/96, Col. 3967-3971, Minister of Environment and Tourism, Chen Chimutengwende.

¹⁰³⁹ Interview with Edson Matosi, Chiredzi Town, 12 August 2014.

4 and 5 and Beitbridge implied indigenous participatory democracy, an important component in biodiversity conservation. It also meant direct cash benefits for such communities.¹⁰⁴⁰ Between 1989 and 2001, for example, the CAMPFIRE revenue at national level amounted to US\$19.8 million of which 49% went to communities.¹⁰⁴¹ Evidence gathered from the areas of study did point to some significant benefits filtering to the participant communities.¹⁰⁴²

The much celebrated devolution of powers to grassroots levels that was judged to have been the mainstay of the programme has lately been put under thorough scrutiny. Its critics have argued that the de-centralisation of authority to local villagers was impossible in a country where wildlife remained legally the property of the state.¹⁰⁴³ It meant that, in reality they could only benefit from wildlife indirectly but not own the animals. It was again observed that in its relations with village participants, the state maintained the big brother role of “manager, administrator, facilitator, ombudsman and general overseer of community resources.”¹⁰⁴⁴ This evidently negated the practice of real devolution in the management of the Gonarezhou animal sanctuary as local people were not accorded equal treatment in the management partnership.

It was, furthermore, suspected that the leadership at both national and district (RDC) levels was sceptical about the wildlife administrative competence of their village partners. It would appear such fears arose out of doubts about the capabilities of the local leadership to run the programme professionally.¹⁰⁴⁵ The belief was that the people’s indigenous knowledge, if worth anything, was all the same inconsistent with modern game management trends. It was then felt that the traditional

¹⁰⁴⁰ Frost & Bond, ‘The CAMPFIRE Programme in Zimbabwe’, p. 780.

¹⁰⁴¹ Ibid. p. 776.

¹⁰⁴² S. Chiutsi *et al*, ‘The Theory and Practice of Ecotourism in Southern Africa’, p. 18.

¹⁰⁴³ Mashinya, ‘Participation and Devolution in Zimbabwe’s CAMPFIRE Program’, p. 38.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Logan & Moseley, ‘The Political Ecology of Poverty Alleviation in Zimbabwe’s Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE)’, p. 11.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Paterson, ‘Bottom Up Development in Decentralized Common Property Regimes’, p. 1.

systems required the intervention of or replacement by modern wildlife support approaches. Such kind of thinking questioned the indigenous people's understanding of wild animals and totally disregarded or deliberately side-lined their past wildlife management practices. Participating villagers were, as a result, led or rather pulled along in the implementation of the programme as the Department of Parks and the RDCs delegated themselves supervisory roles. What they clearly failed to do was to establish supportive partnership structures that would facilitate the training of local participants to assume managerial responsibilities that would measure to their standards.¹⁰⁴⁶

There was, again, a strong perception advanced by some especially in Africa that the whole programme lacked indigeneity as it was Northern and Western in both origin and orientation. Some African scholars subsequently dismissed it for being driven by foreign agendas that were not in tune with the aspirations of local participant communities. Again, the line view attacked the programme's underlying philosophy that local people's tastes could only be satiated by foreign-generated ideas, handouts and donations.¹⁰⁴⁷ The programme was, thus, regarded as an imposition by the West on marginalised rural communities of weak national governments through "asymmetric power relations."¹⁰⁴⁸

The CAMPFIRE programme was also regarded as a ruse intended to promote agendas of external conservation actors using the local community empowerment excuse.¹⁰⁴⁹ It was, furthermore, perceived to be a project that was directed at controlling marginalised areas considered to have previously been inadequately integrated into the state.¹⁰⁵⁰ Because the programme was mostly

¹⁰⁴⁶ Metcalfe, 'Impacts of Transboundary Protected Areas on Local Communities in the Three Southern African Initiatives', p. 5.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Mashinya, 'Participation and Devolution in Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE Program', p. 39.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Frost & Bond, 'The CAMPFIRE Programme in Zimbabwe', p. 784.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Mashinya, 'Participation and Devolution in Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE Program', p. 39.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Vorlauffer, 'CAMPFIRE-The Political Ecology of Poverty Alleviation', p. 204.

supported by white land owners in the country now under siege, it was again, branded a façade they were using to improve their images, fight off the country's land reform programme and accordingly indirectly retain game control.¹⁰⁵¹ In addition, the critics of the programme questioned the sincerity of its sponsors who only yesterday were fervent supporters of the removal of indigenous peoples from the park-designated areas but now considered the same Shangane people as useful adjuncts to wildlife.¹⁰⁵²

Conservation scholars also noted that the over dependence of the programme on external funding betrayed its agenda of self-direction and self-sufficiency.¹⁰⁵³ This, in turn, weakened the local people's capacity to initiate new conservation and management programmes. External funding also gave the foreign sponsors the leeway to take on a supervisory and paternalistic role that effectively killed local initiative. It also inhibited the development of a strong indigenous leadership capable of making home-grown decisions.¹⁰⁵⁴ Besides, donor activities were mainly linked to conservation goals of preservation and biodiversity and only paid lip service to the development of community capacity building systems.¹⁰⁵⁵

The programme extended and limited benefits to only communities living next to wildlife, a situation that generated antagonism from those nearby and yet felt left out. Their argument was that they were equally affected by the creation of the GNP. The long term effect of the selective exclusion of such groups was that they sabotaged the programme where and when they could. Again, the gains made by the CAMPFIRE programme during the first decade were quickly eroded when Zimbabwe entered a period of economic and political meltdown after 2000. The programme

¹⁰⁵¹ Mashinya, 'Participation and Devolution in Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE Program', p. 39.

¹⁰⁵² Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 179.

¹⁰⁵³ Mashinya, 'Participation and Devolution in Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE Program', p. 76.

¹⁰⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 67.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Mombeshora & Wolmer, 'Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa', p. 22.

was, thereafter, portrayed as an archetypal example of a CBNRM programme in crisis due to its loss of steam.¹⁰⁵⁶ The waning enthusiasm for the project by the donor community was, again, a result of the negative publicity that the country received as a result of the controversial land re-distribution programme. The collapse of the rule of law scared off tourists. Revenue from trophy hunting and lodge receipts plummeted and the lifestyles of the residents of the CAMPFIRE wards were negatively affected.

The Lowveld region of southern Zimbabwe, just like the rest of the country also suffered from donor fatigue especially after the land occupation disturbances and the government's rhetorical onslaught on the west that followed. There was also official government neglect of the programme as the state re-focused its attention on the politically rewarding land redistribution programme.¹⁰⁵⁷ The programme also suffered from political interference as illustrated in the Mahenye case. Under the circumstances, donor scepticism crept in and most donors withdrew their financial support to the scheme, if not also for their safety. The degeneration of the programme after 2000 certainly pointed to the fact that ecotourism could not survive in the absence of technical and financial support from outside sponsors.¹⁰⁵⁸

Vorlaufer contended that the general feeling among the local people was that the overall benefits accruing to communities participating in the CAMPFIRE programme remained limited. The anticipated conservation gains were also generally overstated as in reality they were difficult to measure. On the whole, unemployment remained high because safari operators do not employ many workers and do not also recruit most of their specialist employees from the local

¹⁰⁵⁶ Turner, 'A Crisis in CBNRM?' p. 8.

¹⁰⁵⁷ With the rise of a strong MDC opposition party at the turn of the century, it became politically expedient for the government to concentrate on a programme that had the potential of resuscitating its waning political fortunes. The CAMPFIRE programme became a victim of the re-focus.

¹⁰⁵⁸ S. Chiutsi *et al*, 'The Theory and Practice of Ecotourism in Southern Africa', p. 18.

population.¹⁰⁵⁹ As earlier noted, the abuse of CAMPFIRE funds by the three RDCs running the programme; the Chiredzi, Chipinge and Beitbridge derailed it.

So, while it is acknowledged that the CAMPFIRE programme diversified land use in affected communal areas, its driving philosophy remained that of conservation and not development.¹⁰⁶⁰

Wolmer *et al* contended that the programme, overall, failed to transform the lives of participating rural communities and instead even widened the income gap between the rural subsistence farmers and those running the programme.¹⁰⁶¹ Accordingly, Wolmer concluded that many were disillusioned with the performance of the programme especially its failure to deliver on promises of transferring wildlife management authority to indigenous participant communities.¹⁰⁶² As a result, revenue accruing to the local people directed at offsetting the damage caused by the Gonarezhou game remained negligible.¹⁰⁶³ Consequently, poaching in the PA continued to be a more attractive option than waiting for paltry CAMPFIRE pay-outs, especially after 2000.¹⁰⁶⁴

Indeed, as espoused by Wolmer *et al*, the programme adopted a clearly non-distributive development model which in spite of its participatory rhetoric only served to promote the status quo in game ownership. In this, the CAMPFIRE programme was seen as a decoy planted to take off pressure from PAs that were under attack from disgruntled communities living on the fringes of parks. The programme was also judged to have been a disguised way of bringing commercial wildlife interests into communal areas in the name of public-private partnership.¹⁰⁶⁵ Critics of the

¹⁰⁵⁹ Vorlaufer, 'CAMPFIRE-The Political Ecology of Poverty Alleviation', pp. 198 & 205.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Wolmer, Chaumba, Scoones, 'Wildlife Management and Land Reform in Southeastern Zimbabwe', p. 7.

¹⁰⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶² Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 179.

¹⁰⁶³ Vorlaufer, 'CAMPFIRE-The Political Ecology of Poverty Alleviation', p. 184.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 180.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Wolmer, Chaumba, & Scoones, 'Wildlife Management and Land Reform in Southeastern Zimbabwe', p. 7.

programme, thus, labelled it some latter-day colonisation by elite animal conservationists¹⁰⁶⁶ and that most importantly, it had been manipulated by the state and its private sector partners to suppress the economic and social interests of affected rural communities.¹⁰⁶⁷ The programme was, therefore, judged to have failed to promote both sustainable development and lasting conservation benefits.¹⁰⁶⁸ This meant that by 2008, the park was continued to be under intensified attack from disgruntled poachers.

There has recently been growing literature arguing that the limit of community-based conservation has reached its zenith.¹⁰⁶⁹ The scholarship has been advocating for, once again, a return to a “more enforcing style of conservation” effectively a return to the conventional fortress conservation that it argues will save the dwindling animal species.¹⁰⁷⁰ It has in effect been calling for a back-to-the-barriers approach where fences have to be strengthened, once again.¹⁰⁷¹ To buttress the position, these revisionists have been advancing the argument that it does not always follow that rural people in Developing Countries are environmentally prudent and, so, committed to the conservation of nature.¹⁰⁷² They have been proffering the view that the assumption that rural peoples living next to parks were interested in the conservation of biodiversity was a misleading notion. The point of view instead submits that given the opportunity, such communities would rather exploit resources

¹⁰⁶⁶ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 182.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Turner, ‘A Crisis in CBNRM?’ p. 10.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Bond & Frost, ‘CAMPFIRE and Payment for Environmental Services’, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶⁹ See, *inter alia*, B. Buscher, ‘Conjunctions of Governance: The State and the Conservation-Development Nexus in Southern Africa’, *The Journal of Transboundary Environmental Studies*, 4, 2 (2005), pp. 1-15, J. Hutton & D. Roe, ‘Back to the Barriers? Changing Narratives in Wildlife Conservation’, Unpublished paper, CASS/PIS Regional Programme of Analysis on Communities of CBNRC in Southern Africa, Benoni, South Africa, 24-25 November 2003, J. F. Oates, *Myth and Reality in the Rain Forest: How Conservation Strategies are Failing in West Africa*, (London: University of California Press, 1999), J. C. Terborgh & C. Van Schaik, ‘Why the World Need Parks’, in J. C. Terborgh, C. Van Schaik, L. Davenport & M. Rao (eds), *Making Parks Work: Strategies for Preserving Tropical Nature*, (Washington DC: Island Press, 2002) & Turner, ‘A Crisis in CBNRM?’

¹⁰⁷⁰ Buscher, ‘Conjunctions of Governance’, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷¹ Turner, ‘A Crisis in CBNRM?’ p. 8.

¹⁰⁷² *Ibid.*

in parks today for their immediate needs than engage in futuristic elite wildlife projects such as the CAMPFIRE programme.¹⁰⁷³ The grouping has, again, been arguing that it was impossible to combine “conservation and development goals in one effort...and unrealistic to build development goals onto conservation programmes.”¹⁰⁷⁴ What is interesting from their line of argument is that they are just propagating a sanitised view in a re-packaged form. It is, however a perspective that require some further scrutiny, especially because its judgment of CBNRM programmes fail to acknowledge past indigenous knowledge and how it was deployed to balance nature in forests such as the Gonarezhou.

Conclusion

Independence expectations of land restitution suffered setbacks when the government of Zimbabwe stuck to the colonial tradition of managing its national parks. The hopes of the dwellers of south-eastern Zimbabwe of reclaiming ownership of the GNP or part of it were frustrated when the government declared it and other parks of the country no-go areas. Attempts were, however, made to ease the people’s pain by adopting the CAMPFIRE wildlife management programme whose mainstay was the engagement of communities living next to the park in the management of the park’s wildlife resource. Through the programme, affected communities did realise some benefits from the partnership arrangement but in the main, such benefits remained inadequate in compensating them for the broader loss of the Gonarezhou ancestral land.

The chapter, therefore, focused on the participation of indigenous communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe in the management of the contested wildlife resource of the GNP. It revealed how the

¹⁰⁷³ B. Buscher, ‘Conjunctions of Governance’, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Turner, ‘A Crisis in CBNRM?’ p. 9.

state's efforts to rope in local villagers in managing game in the PA met with mixed successes and failures. The chapter illustrated how the people's demands for total restitution of the land hit a brick wall when the government maintained the colonial position of retaining the parks of the country and in particular the GNP as a national and not local heritage. It demonstrated how attempts to extend wildlife benefits to communities living on the fringes of the PA were fairly successful in the formative years of the programme. The chapter, however, cast some doubt on the long term benefits brought about by the management partnership of the CAMPFIRE programme as practised in the Lowveld region of southern Zimbabwe especially after 2000 when the country went through a difficult economic period. The overall conclusion was that benefits accruing to communities participating in the CAMPFIRE programme remained paltry and, so, failed to fully compensate them for their land losses and pain endured during the years of exclusion from the park resources. In this, it has laid the foundation for the next chapter that focuses the local people's efforts to recover Lowveld lands during the country's land reform programme launched in 2000.

CHAPTER 6: ROLLING OUT THE FAST TRACK LAND REFORM PROGRAMME

Introduction

Zimbabwe earned the wrath of the West and local opposition parties when it embarked on a radical land reform programme at the beginning of 2000. To opponents of the programme, the politically-motivated and disorderly land invasions were more about race and greed. They branded the programme an endeavour to expropriate land from whites without compensation. To supporters of the programme it was justified action that sought to correct the wrongs of colonial land policies that had favoured the white race. Chapter 6 examines the dynamics of the land reform programme in south-eastern Zimbabwe. It attempts to answer an array of questions in relation to the execution of the programme in the country's Lowveld region: What was the Fast Track Land Reform Programme? Why was the programme launched in 2000 and not earlier? How did it unfold in South East Zimbabwe? Who got what, where and with what consequences? How far did it reconstitute colonial land losses of the Shangane communities? What was the political and economic impact of the programme? How did the programme affect the environment of the resettled area? In what way did it change the livelihoods of the people?

In light of the above questions, the chapter immerses itself in the various debates on the land reform programme in south-eastern Zimbabwe. This is done within the broader context of the national land occupations. The chapter interrogates the way land reform was undertaken in the Chiredzi and Mwenezi districts of the Lowveld between 2000 and 2008. It explores the fundamentals of the distribution process. It also examines the implications of the government's protection of the GNP and the Lowveld conservancies and explores how the offer of alternative resettlement land on neighbouring white commercial farms was received by the indigenous communities of the area.

The chapter singles out the Chisa people of Sangwe and examines the nature and effects of the community's defiant occupation of a northern section of the PA. In addition, the chapter assesses the overall impact of the programme on the livelihoods of the indigenous people of the southern Lowveld region of the country and on the landscape of the region. It reveals that the FTLRP was a contentious programme which introduced radical land alignments in the Lowveld region of Southern Zimbabwe. The chapter challenges Scoones *et al*'s romanticised picture of land reform in the region and instead discloses that the whole process was characterised by violence and irregularities and was also guided by political patronage. Because the chapter deals with a contemporary topic, it mainly relies on secondary literature and interviews conducted in the area. Such information is used to unravel the various debates on the distribution of land in southern Zimbabwe during the land period 2000 to 2008.

Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform Programme

Zimbabwe's wholesale land redistribution programme which began with the illegal occupation of white commercial farms in February 2000 attracted local and international attention that catapulted the country into journalistic and scholarly reports that on the one hand condemned the occupations and on the other praised the programme.¹⁰⁷⁵ The negative publicity was essentially apocalyptic.¹⁰⁷⁶ Some papers brought out a gloomy picture of chaotic scenes of machete-wielding invaders

¹⁰⁷⁵ B. Derman, 'After Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform: Preliminary Observations on the Near Future of Zimbabwe's Efforts to Resist Globalisation', Unpublished paper, Colloque International, At the Frontier of Land Issues, Montpellier, 2006, p. 1. Media stories opposed to the programme were mainly penned by Westerners and local private media houses such as the *Daily News* and *Zimbabwe Standard* while those supporting the programme mainly came from government sympathetic papers such as *The Herald* and *The Chronicle*.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Among Zimbabwean papers, the *Daily News* was the most vocal. See, among others, 'Opposition Parties Condemn Farm Invasions' (1 March 2000), 'Mugabe Urged to Stop Invasions' (15 March 2000), 'Tsvangirai Lashes at Government Over Farm Invasions' (27 March 2000), 'EU Supports Calls for Rule of Law, End of Invasions in Zimbabwe' (11 April 2000), 'Marauding War Vets Send White Farmers Packing' (17 April 2000), 'War Veterans Assault Farmer, Harass Workers' (16 June 2000) & 'White Farmers Abandon Homes as Invasions Intensify' (4 October 2000).

grabbing farms by force, allocating themselves plots, looting, destroying property, chopping down trees, clearing fields and indiscriminately slaughtering wildlife in the occupied farms.¹⁰⁷⁷

The programme, which was officially launched as the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) quickly earned itself various other names reflecting on its historical links and the way it was rolled out. It was alternatively referred to as the *Third Chimurenga*, indicating its perceived connection with the liberation war against colonial rule (*Second Chimurenga* of 1966-1979) and an earlier primary resistance war against colonial occupation (*First Chimurenga* of 1896-1897). The FTLRP was seen as marking the final phase of a series of *Zvimurenga* with the latest *Chimurenga* directed at addressing the land question once and for all.¹⁰⁷⁸ The land reform programme was also dubbed *Hondo Yeminda* (War for Land Recovery) or *Jambanja* (Forced Takeover of Land).¹⁰⁷⁹ It was fundamentally a radical agrarian revolution that was underpinned by the revolutionary rhetoric of the *Second Chimurenga*, but this time with land as its central theme.¹⁰⁸⁰ Land was presented by ZANU (PF) as the pillar of *Zvimurenga*. Alexander stressed the importance attached to land in the latest war:

Land is about identity as well as production and class formation; it is about aesthetic values and spiritual meaning, as well as being central to the construction of the institutions of the state; it fires political struggles and violence alongside the literary imagination; and it is the basis for both building and breaking a host of social relations. In all these guises, the meanings and value of land are neither fixed nor uncontested.¹⁰⁸¹

¹⁰⁷⁷ Spenceley, 'Tourism in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', p. 658.

¹⁰⁷⁸ *Zvimurenga* was the plural of *Chimurenga*. See, A. S. Mlambo, 'Land Grab or Taking Back Stolen Land: The Fast Track Land Reform Process in Zimbabwe in Historical Perspective', *History Compass*, 3 (2005), p. 1. The term *Third Chimurenga* was said to have been coined and popularised by the then Minister of Information, Jonathan Moyo. For more detail on the matter, see, T. Blessing-Miles, 'Patriotic History and Public Intellectuals Critical of Power', *Journal of Southern Africa Studies*, 34, 2 (2008), p. 386.

¹⁰⁷⁹ The term *Jambanja* became very popular. It then, reflected the mood of the time-the forced takeover of farms. In the eyes of those opposed to the programme, *Jambanja* was synonymous with state-sponsored lawlessness.

¹⁰⁸⁰ This involved organising night political meetings called *pungwes*, the creation of *bases* where political education was conducted, the singing of revolutionary songs and, generally whipping the peasants' emotions on land.

¹⁰⁸¹ J. Alexander, 'The Historiography of Land in Zimbabwe: Strengths, Silences, and Questions', *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies*, 8, 2 (2007), p. 183.

Land was, thus, conveniently put in the trajectory of an emerging Zimbabwean scholarship called patriotic history. It was a study that claimed that demand for land was the main cause of the *Second Chimurenga*. Wilfred Mhanda of the Zimbabwe Liberators Platform refuted the claim:

It has been said that the liberation war was waged for land...As participants of the liberation struggle, we wish to set the record straight about the original aims and objectives of the national liberation struggle. Our national liberation struggle was driven by political, economic, social and cultural demands and not by land, as has been alleged. Land redistribution was just one of the key economic demands and not the purpose of our struggle.¹⁰⁸²

Masipula Sithole buttressed Mhanda's argument when he contended that while land was important on the wish list of the *Second Chimurenga*, it was certainly not the universal goal as good life in independent Zimbabwe did not mean just land ownership. He accused ZANU (PF) politicians of simplifying the *Chimurenga* narrative by fronting the land question. To him, land was just expediently used in the *Third Chimurenga* as a political tool to ward off opposition from the MDC and civic society.¹⁰⁸³

The FTLRP, perceived by its critics to have been at odds with earlier orderly resettlement programmes was condemned mainly by Western states and the opposition in the country as violent, chaotic, incoherent and unsystematic. It was blamed for bringing about unprecedented political and economic turmoil in the country.¹⁰⁸⁴ The programme was vilified for its supposed ruthlessness and blatant violation of the principle of the sanctity of private property.¹⁰⁸⁵ Planners were accused of dumping people in places with no basic infrastructure.¹⁰⁸⁶ The programme was, furthermore,

¹⁰⁸² *The Financial Gazette*, 9 to 15 August 2001, 'An Ex-Freedom Fighter's Perspective on Land Question'.

¹⁰⁸³ *The Financial Gazette*, 20 to 26 April 2000, '20 Years into Uhuru: Is Zimbabwe Ready for Change?'

¹⁰⁸⁴ C. M. Chavunduka & D. M. Bromley, 'Considering the Multiple Purposes of Land in Zimbabwe's Economic Recovery', *Land Use Policy*, 30 (2013), p. 673, B. H. Kinsey, 'Zimbabwe's Land Reform Program: Underinvestment in Post-Conflict Transformation', *World Development*, 32, 10 (2004), p. 1669 & C. Mabheba, 'Visible Hectares, Vanishing Livelihoods: A Case of the Fast Track Land Reform and Resettlement Programme in Southern Matebeleland-Zimbabwe', PhD Thesis, University of Fort Hare, 2010, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Mlambo, 'Land Grab or Taking Back Stolen Land', p. 2.

¹⁰⁸⁶ *Zimbabwe Independent*, 1-7 December 2000, 'Resettled Farmers Abandon Land'.

blamed for bringing about the collapse of the rule of law in the country and for turning land into a tool of patronage, nepotism and cronyism.¹⁰⁸⁷

Tendai Biti, the MDC's shadow Secretary for Lands and Agriculture labelled it a ZANU (PF) ploy directed at hoodwinking the electorate into voting for the party in the then impending 2002 Presidential election.¹⁰⁸⁸ His President, Morgan Tsvangirai castigated it for the poor planning behind it, charging: "It is an act of sentencing people to perpetual subsistence because the land is not surveyed and there are no roads, clinics and other basic infrastructure."¹⁰⁸⁹ *The Zimbabwe Independent* added its weight when in one of its editorials it lamented what it alleged to have been a hasty implementation of the programme. It noted the government's failure to carry out scientific analysis on the programme and that the whole agenda behind it was political expediency.¹⁰⁹⁰ Robert Mugabe, the country's president was maligned as a heartless villain whose action was bound to destroy the country's international image.

On the other hand, the FTLRP was hailed as a bold step taken to address past land inequalities. Mugabe extolled it for completing a crucial phase in the *Zvimurenga* Revolution triad, declaring:

Without doubt, our heroes are happy that a crucial part of this new phase of our struggle has been completed. The land has been freed and today all our heroes lie on, Their spirits are unbound, free to roam the land they left shackled, thanks again to the *Third Chimurenga*.¹⁰⁹¹

¹⁰⁸⁷ Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, pp. 236-367 & Raftopoulos, 'The Crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008', in Raftopoulos & Mlambo (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p. 217. Also see articles on land in *Daily News*, 2 May 2000 & *Daily News*, 2 August 2001.

¹⁰⁸⁸ *Daily News*, 11 August 2000, 'Biti Dismisses Government's Fast Track Land Reform'. Also see, S. Dombo, 'Daily Struggles: Private Print Media, the State and Democratic Governance in Zimbabwe in the Case of the African Daily News (1956-1964) and the Daily News (1999-2003)', PhD Thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2014, pp. 180-186 for polarised reporting of the FTLRP by the private and public media.

¹⁰⁸⁹ *Daily News*, 18 August 2000, 'Tsvangirai Condemns Fast-Track Resettlement'.

¹⁰⁹⁰ *Zimbabwe Independent*, 11-17 August 2000, 'Fast Track Land Resettlement a Cocktail for Disaster'.

¹⁰⁹¹ Address by President R. G. Mugabe on Heroes Day commemorations, *The Herald*, 9 August 2005.

To Mugabe, the land takeover was a ‘conquest of conquest’, a marker of Zimbabwe’s sovereignty and the last phase of the decolonisation process.¹⁰⁹² Indeed, Mugabe was praised for taking a bold step in spearheading the finalisation of the *Zvimurenga* strand.¹⁰⁹³

In one of its editorials, *The Herald* (Zimbabwe) rejected what the Western media called a collapsing Zimbabwean state as a result of the FTLRP.¹⁰⁹⁴ In the same vein, the government disputed that the programme had ushered in an ecological and moral catastrophe in the country as was being advanced by those opposed to the programme.¹⁰⁹⁵ In support, a 2010 publication by Scoones *etal* challenged what the authors called repeated myths of a chaotic land reform programme and averred, instead, that these myths were inventions of journalistic authorship.¹⁰⁹⁶ The authors observed that while events in Zimbabwe since 2000 had been coloured by superficial media reporting, the Zimbabwean land story was far more complex than the generalisations by especially the Western media. They then singled out five of what they called such myths: that Zimbabwe’s land reform programme was a failure, that beneficiaries of the FTLRP were the politically well connected, that there was no investment in newly resettled areas, that *Hondo Yeminda* had brought about a shambolic agricultural system and that the rural economy had collapsed as a result of *Jambanja*.¹⁰⁹⁷ Their conviction was that these myths were more informed by ideological persuasions of those opposed to the programme than facts on the ground. In the

¹⁰⁹² S. J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, ‘Making Sense of Mugabeism in Local and Global Politics: So Blair, keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe’, *Third World Quarterly*, 30, 6 (2009), p. 1140.

¹⁰⁹³ Mlambo, ‘Land Grab or Taking Back Stolen Land’, p. 2.

¹⁰⁹⁴ *The Herald*, 21 April, 2000, ‘Things Not Falling Apart in Zimbabwe’.

¹⁰⁹⁵ *Zimbabwe Independent*, 21-27 July 2000, ‘Government Draws Up \$1,3 b Budget for Land Reform’.

¹⁰⁹⁶ I. Scoones, N. Marongwe, B. Mavedzenge, J. Mahenehene, F. Murimbarimba & C. Sukume, *Zimbabwe’s Land Reform, Myths and Reality*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2010), pp. 1 & 7.

¹⁰⁹⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 1, 7 & 236-240.

view of the authors, while the land reform programme had its own share of problems, failures and abuses, its story was much more positive.¹⁰⁹⁸

While most authors of the land reform programme agreed that land redistribution in the country was a late necessity, many bitterly disagreed with the *modus operandi* of the distribution.¹⁰⁹⁹ And, while Mamdani praised Mugabe's move as championing mass justice for those who had been denied such fairness by the colonial system, he was criticised for calling the land reform movement a democratic revolution.¹¹⁰⁰ In particular, Scarnecchia accused Mamdani of going overboard in praising Mugabe's rhetoric onslaught on imperialist victimisation.¹¹⁰¹ The bottom line was that no amount of restitution could justify the use of violence against other people.

Alois Mlambo contended that the simplification of the FTLRP debate to good and evil glossed over what was a complex issue whose understanding called for a dig into Zimbabwe's past racial land distribution practices.¹¹⁰² To him, what was a moral land distribution programme to some was Mugabe's Land Grab to others and, while those opposed to the programme denounced it outrightly, nationalist commentators hailed it as a justified action directed at correcting colonial inequalities carried out by the British colonial system and inherited by the new Zimbabwean government in 1980.¹¹⁰³ Mlambo's conclusion was that what was surprising was not that *Hondo Yeminda* took place but that it came late in 2000 given the pole position of land on the grievances

¹⁰⁹⁸ Ibid. pp. 2 & 8.

¹⁰⁹⁹ T. Blessing-Tendi, 'Patriotic History and Public Intellectuals Critical of Power', p. 393. Such scholars included, *inter alia*, Alexander and Ranger.

¹¹⁰⁰ M. Mamdani, 'Lessons of Zimbabwe', *Concerned Africa Scholars*, 82 (2009), pp. 1-13 & S. J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Making Sense of Mugabeism in Local and Global Politics', p. 1143.

¹¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰² Mlambo, 'Land Grab or Taking Back Stolen Land', pp. 1 & 2.

¹¹⁰³ Ibid.

of the *Second Chimurenga*.¹¹⁰⁴ *Jambanja* could, therefore, be best understood in the context of the country's contested land history.

The origins of the FTLRP

Zimbabwe's FTLRP was directed at addressing past land ownership imbalances arising out of the enactment of discriminatory pieces of legislation crafted during the colonial era.¹¹⁰⁵ Thus, at independence in 1980, the bulk of the country's over eight thousand commercial farms (42% of the country's land or about fifteen and a half million hectares) were owned by only about five thousand whites. The farms were not only located in the most fertile regions of the country but were also divided into large units characterised by multiple ownership. Such a position was in stark contrast to the African population of about six million that was overcrowded in largely unproductive marginal agricultural lands.¹¹⁰⁶ The FTLRP was precisely launched to overturn the century old dual pattern of land ownership that had favoured the country's small white population.

The state had, since 1980, initiated a number of purportedly well planned and fairly well resourced resettlement schemes that had put emphasis on decongesting rural areas, increasing agricultural production and promoting economic stability and growth.¹¹⁰⁷ The schemes sought to minimise disruption of productive farming on white commercial farms; a desire confirmed by the appointment of Dennis Norman, a former President of the Rhodesian National Farmers Union as

¹¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 3.

¹¹⁰⁵ Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 27, No. 26, Col. 2593, 31 October, 2000. Also see, *The Herald*, 31 March 2000.

¹¹⁰⁶ Mlambo, 'Land Grab or Taking Back Stolen Land', p. 7, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 27, No. 26, Col. 2593, 31 October, 2000 & L. Sachikonye, 'The Land is the Economy: Revisiting the Land Question', *African Security Review*, 14, 3 (2005).

¹¹⁰⁷ M. Masiwa, 'Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe: Disparity Between Policy Design and Implementation', Unpublished paper, Institute of Development Studies, University of Zimbabwe, May 2004, p. 2.

the first Minister of Agriculture in independent Zimbabwe.¹¹⁰⁸ White farmers were, therefore, treated with tenderness in order to safeguard enhanced agricultural production.

Zimbabwe's post-independence land redistribution programme had been planned to go through a number of phases. The first phase ran from 1980 to 1997. The second was planned for 1997 to December 2004 but was then overtaken by the FTLRP in 2000 which reached a crescendo in 2008. The early phase was distinguishable by its noticeable peaceful, orderly and transparent character. Resettlement schemes were properly planned and supported by infrastructure such as roads, boreholes, schools and clinics and inputs such as fertiliser.¹¹⁰⁹ The methodical approach was partly directed at winning international acclaim but also a pragmatic application of the principle of reconciliation that Mugabe had adopted at independence.¹¹¹⁰ Most white farmers appeared to have taken the government's goodwill for a weakness and, hence, their refusal to release considerable prime land to the government for redistribution.

The government's efforts to redistribute land during the first two decades of independence appear to have been slow and inadequate, given the number of people who were actually resettled against the set target. While the state had planned to resettle one hundred and sixty two thousand households by 1987, it had managed to relocate only fifty two thousand on two and a half million hectares by 1989. The number had only grown marginally to seventy one thousand by 1996.¹¹¹¹ The land so acquired for resettlement was, again, mainly sub-standard as most of it was contiguous

¹¹⁰⁸ L. Tshuma, *A Matter of (In) Justice: Law, State and the Agrarian Question in Zimbabwe*, (Harare: SAPES Books, 1997), p. 52.

¹¹⁰⁹ L. M. Sachikonye, 'The Promised Land: From Expropriation to Reconciliation and Jambanja', in B. Raftopoulos & T. Savage (eds), *Zimbabwe Injustice and Political Reconciliation* (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004), p. 8.

¹¹¹⁰ Tshuma, *A Matter of (In) Justice*, p. 55.

¹¹¹¹ Report of the Presidential Land Review Committee Under the Chairmanship of Dr Charles Utete, Volume 1: Main Report, 2003, W. Willems, 'Peasant Demonstrators, Violent Invaders: Representations of Land in the Zimbabwe Press', *World Development*, 32, 10 (2004), p. 1771 & *The Herald*, 21 June 2000, 'Land Can Never Be Used as a Political Gimmick' & *The Herald* 21 June 2000, 'Peasant Farmers Still Condemned to Native Reserves'.

to communal areas.¹¹¹² The landless peasant population was understandably disappointed by the quality of land offered to them and the slow pace of its acquisition and distribution.¹¹¹³

Land allotment had moved at a snail's pace in the first twenty years of independence due to a constellation of factors. In the first place, land acquisition during the first decade of independence was restricted by the Lancaster House Agreement's willing-buyer, willing-seller land transfer approach. The *proviso* stipulated that government could only acquire land offered on the open market, compete for it with other buyers and pay the full price for it.¹¹¹⁴ Under the scenario white farmers were generally unwilling to dispose of the prime land they were in possession of. Furthermore, in a bid to frustrate government efforts of acquiring land, they deliberately pegged the prices of land at commercial rates that were way above what the government could offer.¹¹¹⁵

There was also a stand-off between the Zimbabwean and British governments over the latter's refusal to honour an earlier undertaking to mobilise funds towards land purchase. What annoyed the Zimbabwean government most was the change of goal posts by the former colonial power, this time, insisting on the submission of proof that only the landless poor would benefit from the funds raised.¹¹¹⁶ The position, at odds with an earlier stand, was confirmed in a 1997 correspondence sent to the government of Zimbabwe by Ms Claire Short of the Labour government:

I should make it clear that we do not accept that Britain has a special responsibility to meet the costs of land purchase in Zimbabwe. We are a new Government from diverse backgrounds without links with the former colonial interests. My own origins are Irish and as you know we were colonised and not colonisers.¹¹¹⁷

¹¹¹² Scoones, *et al*, *Zimbabwe's Land Reform, Myths and Reality*, p. 15.

¹¹¹³ Masiwa, 'Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe', p. 3.

¹¹¹⁴ Lancaster House Agreement, 21 December, 1979. Also see, *The Herald*, 6 April 2000, 'Land Question. The Sins of History are Catching Up' & *The Herald* 6 April 2000, 'Needy to be Resettled on Some Leased Land'.

¹¹¹⁵ Kinsey, 'Zimbabwe's Land Reform Program', pp. 1670-1671.

¹¹¹⁶ Sachikonye, 'The Promised Land', p. 8.

¹¹¹⁷ Report of the Presidential Land Review Committee Under the Chairmanship of Dr Charles Utete, p. 21.

The government's suspicion was that Britain wanted to perpetuate the Lancaster House Agreement beyond its lifespan and, hence, the hurdles it was now throwing along the way.¹¹¹⁸ On its part, the Zimbabwean government capitalised on the misunderstanding and used it as an excuse to ratchet up pressure on its former coloniser. The government became more convinced that accelerated land takeover was a pragmatic and moral response to Britain's intransigence on land redistribution.

The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) of the 1990s also retarded the speed of land distribution as the Breton Woods Institutions (International Monetary Fund and World Bank) insisted on the abandonment of a radical land reform approach.¹¹¹⁹ In addition, natural factors such as the droughts of 1982-4 and 1991-2 also slowed down land acquisition and redistribution as the state was forced to divert resources towards food purchasing to mitigate famine.¹¹²⁰

Towards the close of the 1990s, the government came under increasing pressure from the electorate, to deliver on various independence promises, including land. This triggered a series of civil defiance protests and political challenges that culminated in the formation of a strong opposition political party in 1999, the MDC.¹¹²¹ The changed political climate propelled the government to act with haste in distributing land, lest the opposition capitalised on the government's failure on the matter.

Attempts by the government to be seen to be taking some action had begun in 1990 when it introduced a New National Land Policy that focused on accelerating land distribution. Embodied in the policy was Amendment No. 16 of the Lancaster House Agreement that brought in a

¹¹¹⁸ R. Palmer, 'Land Reform in Zimbabwe, 1980-90', *African Affairs*, 89, 335 (1990), pp. 163-164 & ZANU-PF Election Manifesto, March 2008, pp. 39-41. The Lancaster House Agreement had a ten year lifespan.

¹¹¹⁹ Willems, 'Peasant Demonstrators, Violent Invaders', p. 1772.

¹¹²⁰ Palmer, 'Land Reform in Zimbabwe, 1980-90', pp. 163-164.

¹¹²¹ Rihoy, Chirozva & Anstey, 'People are not Happy', pp. 9-10.

provision for compulsory acquisition of land and payment of compensation at a later reasonable date instead of the previous prompt and adequate compensation. The amendment was followed by the 1992 Land Acquisition Act which ironically was immediately shelved and only retrieved in 1997 when the government, under pressure from civic society designated one thousand four hundred and seventy one white farms for compulsory acquisition.¹¹²² So, notwithstanding the new policy thrust, the zeal to enforce land re-distribution appeared to have been fading for most of the 1990s partly because of financial limitations but mainly because of lack of political will.¹¹²³ Added to that, the abandonment of socialism and the adoption of ESAP had witnessed the emergence of a new elite class of blacks who were not shy in using their political influence to acquire land ahead of the landless peasants.¹¹²⁴ The development had unsurprisingly changed the direction of land reform as the ruling party became part of the land distribution problem.¹¹²⁵

Noted during the decade of the 1990s was the slowdown in land talk and redistribution, a position that Sachikonye found perplexing given the earlier impetus to acquire land and the expiry, in 1990, of the restrictive clauses of the Lancaster House Constitution.¹¹²⁶ Such a position, again, persuaded Masiwa to conclude that the post-1990 policy thrust had only been strong on rhetoric but weak on the drive to push through a balanced, holistic and accountable programme.¹¹²⁷ In the meantime, frustrated landless peasants who attempted to enforce unauthorised occupations of white farms

¹¹²² Land Acquisition Act, 1992 & Report of the Presidential Land Review Committee Under the Chairmanship of Dr Charles Utete, p. 20.

¹¹²³ Mlambo, 'Land Grab or Taking Back Stolen Land', p. 10.

¹¹²⁴ Masiwa, 'Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe', p. 6.

¹¹²⁵ *Daily News*, 19 July 1999, 'Top Officials Grabbing Best Farms'.

¹¹²⁶ Sachikonye, 'The Promised Land', pp. 7-8.

¹¹²⁷ Masiwa, 'Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe', p. 6.

were labelled squatters and swiftly and ruthlessly dealt with by the police and army.¹¹²⁸ As a result, they remained highly agitated.

Faced by a strong opposition poised to unseat it and a disobedient civil society purportedly working in collusion with the opposition, the ruling ZANU (PF) party adopted a more aggressive approach to land acquisition to save face. The position essentially put it on a collision course with white commercial farmers who had remained uncooperative in offering land to the state. In certainly an act of desperation, the government hurriedly dump-dusted the 1992 Land Acquisition Act and proceeded to use it to designate one thousand four hundred and seventy one white farms in November 1997. In a further act of desperation to still win the backing of the international community, the government hastily convened a Land Reform and Resettlement Donor Conference in September 1998 to raise forty two billion Zimbabwean dollars for the resettlement of one hundred thousand families. From the conference, the government disappointingly got a paltry seven million Zimbabwean dollars in pledges, which were not even honoured.¹¹²⁹ The government's reading was that the international community had ganged up to frustrate its land reform efforts. It then boldly decided to take the *Jambanja* route and, damn the consequences.

***Jambanja* land reform**

While there had been sporadic and low profile farm invasions since independence, the occupation of over one thousand white farms in 2000 was more pronounced. *Jambanja* was, indeed, a turning point in the trajectory of the land history of the country as it introduced unprecedented land

¹¹²⁸ E. Chigumira, 'My Land, My Resource: Assessment of the Impact of the Fast Track Land Reform Program on the Natural Environment, Kadoma, Zimbabwe', Unpublished paper, Livelihoods after Land Reform in Zimbabwe Working Paper 14, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, 2010, p. 2.

¹¹²⁹ Report of the Presidential Land Review Committee Under the Chairmanship of Dr Charles Utete, pp. 23-26.

changes.¹¹³⁰ The *Third Chimurenga* was supported by a revolutionary discourse that emphasised the idea of picking up the unfinished land fight from where the liberation struggle left it off. It was anchored on appeals to nationalism, patriotism and indigeneity and an encouragement of people to return to the lands of their ancestors.¹¹³¹ Furthermore, the FTLRP was supported by strong state propaganda which was coloured by land jingles such as *Rambai Makashinga* (Continue to Persevere), *Chave Chimurenga* (It's now Armed Struggle), *Hondo YomuZimbabwe*, *Hondo Yeminda* (Zimbabwe's War for Recovery of Land) which were repeatedly played on national radio and state television *ad nauseum*.¹¹³²

While farm invasions began in February 2000, the FTLRP programme was only officially launched on 15 July 2000 after eight hundred and four commercial farms had been gazetted for compulsory acquisition.¹¹³³ Within two weeks of the official launch, another batch of three thousand and forty one farms were also designated for compulsory take over.¹¹³⁴ Following that, the government was able to resettle up to one hundred and seventy thousand households in a space of two years, a feat it had failed to accomplish in the first twenty years of independence.¹¹³⁵ Accelerated farm occupations gave peasants and War Veterans sudden prominence in the land politics as they took a leading role in the invasions.¹¹³⁶

¹¹³⁰ Sporadic farm invasions of the pre-2000 period can be obtained from, among others, Mlambo, 'Land Grab or Taking Back Stolen Land', pp. 10-11, Tshuma, *A Matter of (In) Justice*, pp. 62-64 & Report of the Presidential Land Review Committee Under the Chairmanship of Dr Charles Utete, p. 21.

¹¹³¹ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 190.

¹¹³² The idea was to use the jingles to whip the emotions of people.

¹¹³³ See, *The Herald*, 2 June 2000. 'Notice to Acquire 804 Farms Issued'.

¹¹³⁴ Scoones, *et al*, *Zimbabwe's Land Reform, Myths and Reality*, pp. 23-24.

¹¹³⁵ Scoones, *et al*, 'Livelihoods After Land Reform in Zimbabwe', p. 2. The government adopted two resettlement models during the FTLRP. The A1 model was targeted at resettling rural communities using the village system. Each household was given about five hectares and shared communal grazing. The A2 model was geared at promoting commercial small scale farming with individual households allocated up to fifty hectares. On both schemes, the idea was to empower previously disadvantaged peasants by giving them access to productive land.

¹¹³⁶ War Veterans were a powerful political grouping of former liberation fighters of the *Second Chimurenga*. They were now coalesced under a recently formed War Veterans Association, led by the 'fearless' and charismatic Chenjerai

The rejection of the proposed draft constitution in February 2000 and the waning popularity of the ZANU (PF) party were probably the two immediate factors that propelled the government to resolutely move ahead with accelerated land acquisition.¹¹³⁷ The government took without doubt a bold step of unilaterally amending the constitution in April 2000 to effectively protect all those who had occupied white owned farms, in protest, since February 2000. The move was to radically change the direction of land distribution in the country.¹¹³⁸ Following the amendment were a series of other legislative acts passed to facilitate the speedy acquisition of land: the 1992 Land Acquisition Act was amended in May 2000 to allow payment only for land improvements, the Rural Occupiers (Protection from Eviction) Act of 2001 protected new farmers from wilful eviction and the Traditional Leaders Act of 2001 belatedly recognised the key role of chiefs in land redistribution.¹¹³⁹ By these amendments, the ZANU (PF) government was now strategically using land to rally the support of the landless peasants, War Veterans and chiefs, three key actors in the land reform trajectory.

The FTLRP has been viewed in binary terms in scholarly discussions, both attempting to answer the central question: Was *Jambanja* spontaneous or organised? The populist nationalist viewpoint contended that *Hondo Yeminda* was essentially a spontaneous popular agrarian movement initiated by landless peasants to address land historical ills, a bottom-up social protest movement.¹¹⁴⁰ The

Hunzvi. Their recent recognition, after almost seventeen years in oblivion, had come through a Z\$50 000-00 (approximately US\$3 000) unbudgeted pay-out, which they had received in 1997 after putting pressure on the government. They showed their gratitude to the state through spearheading farm occupations. Their farm invasions suited well with the government's revived militant nationalism.

¹¹³⁷ Willems, 'Peasant Demonstrators, Violent Invaders', p. 1767 & J. Alexander, 'Squatters, Veterans and the State in Zimbabwe', A. Hammer, B. Raftopoulos & S. Jensen (eds), *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003). p. 99. A plebiscite conducted in February 2000 on the proposed new constitution had rejected the draft constitution. The results were embarrassing to the government which had taken it for granted that the vote will be a yes.

¹¹³⁸ Chigumira, 'My Land, My Resource', p. 2.

¹¹³⁹ Masiwa, 'Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe', p. 21.

¹¹⁴⁰ The position was largely proffered by the state and state media throughout the land reform period. See, Raftopoulos, 'The Zimbabwean Crisis and Challenges for the Left', p. 203.

perspective conveniently referred to land occupations as harmless peasant demonstrations against racial land inequality. It argued that farm invasions were reflex reactions to the rejection of the February referendum that had sought to reverse colonial land disparities and speed up land distribution to the landless peasants.¹¹⁴¹ The state submitted that peasants were only assisted by War Veterans because the constituency was equally frustrated by the slow pace of land redistribution.¹¹⁴² The government, therefore, denied ever taking a leading role in *Jambanja*, arguing instead it only came in at the 11th hour to support the peasants with the legal and technical framework. And, while the state accepted that the entire programme was political, it insisted that it was mainly an imperative peasant revolution.

The contrasting line of argument proffered that *Jambanja* was a well concocted state programme that fronted peasants and War Veterans for political expediency.¹¹⁴³ The view submitted that the opportunistic programme was set up and manoeuvred by ZANU (PF) in a case of the state creating disorder to give itself an upper hand in manipulating and maximising returns in the ensuing chaos.¹¹⁴⁴ The grouping, furthermore, argued that *Hondo Yeminda* was a skilfully created state tactic aimed at sprucing up the waning political fortunes of the ruling party and winning back its rural supporters who were clearly slipping away.¹¹⁴⁵ Dombo contended that land probably became

¹¹⁴¹ Willems, 'Peasant Demonstrators, Violent Invaders', p. 1777. Also see articles in, *The Herald*: 'War Veterans Invade Farms Countrywide' (29 February 2000), 'Cooperation From All Stakeholders Needed in Resolving the Land Issue' (16 May 2000), 'Villagers Support Farm Invasions' (17 March 2000), 'We Support ZANU-PF on the Land Issue-Former ZIPRA Members' (25 April 2000), 'Anglican Church Back Land Reform Programme' (15 April 2000) & 'Ex-Zambian Minister Backs Land Reform' (21 June 2000).

¹¹⁴² I. Scoones, 'Zimbabwe's Land Reform: New Political Dynamics in the Countryside', *Review of African Political Economy*, 2014, p. 3.

¹¹⁴³ See, *Daily News*, 'Ex-fighters Defy High Court Order' (20 March 2000) & *Daily News*, 'Cabinet to Discuss Land Crisis, Election' (2 May 2000).

¹¹⁴⁴ J. Chaumba, I. Scoones, & W. Wolmer, W. 'From Jambanja to Planning: The Reassertion of Technocracy in Land Reform in Southeastern Zimbabwe', Unpublished paper, Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa Research Paper 2, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, March, p. 17.

¹¹⁴⁵ See, among others, Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, p. 236 & Agenda for Real Transformation (ART), Movement for Democratic Change, 2013 Policy Handbook, p. 44.

the only remaining asset at the disposal of the ruling political elite that it re-packaged and sold to the rural constituency as a new product. He, furthermore, offered that farm invasions appear to have been sanctioned from above by a panicky ruling party.¹¹⁴⁶ The speed with which the government moved in to legitimise the occupations certainly confirms the state's complicity in engineering the whole programme.

What could certainly be concluded from the above then is that land occupations were both spontaneous and organised and that they were a combination of political orchestration and spontaneous opportunism. It was evident that while some were peaceful, not all were “uniformly violent.”¹¹⁴⁷ The dynamics of farm occupations were essentially depended on and determined by circumstances applying to specific areas being occupied. Overall, force was used to take land from white commercial farmers with far-reaching consequences.

Farm occupations were a product of the efforts of various players who were motivated by the desire to change the skewed land tenure system. Again, while there were contrasting arguments on the nature of the planning and execution of the programme in different parts of the country, what was not disputable was that *Jambanja* set in motion an unprecedented process of radical land reform. The subsequent sub-sections of this chapter interrogate the roles of the different actors in masterminding, directing and influencing the course and results of the programme.

The FTLRP in south-eastern Zimbabwe

As indicated in Chapter 3, large numbers of mainly Shangane communities were evicted from land that was transformed into the GNP. They were forcibly resettled on marginal areas surrounding

¹¹⁴⁶ Dombo, ‘Daily Struggles’, p. 185.

¹¹⁴⁷ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 198.

the park from the 1930s. Many others were, during the colonial period, gradually ejected from the same and adjacent lands that were turned into white commercial ranches and sugar plantations of Triangle, Hippo Valley and Mkwesine.¹¹⁴⁸ After independence, some of these ranches were converted into conservancies which were, again, given first class protection by the state as they became no-go areas to indigenous communities. Forced removals from ancestral lands had negatively affected the local people's livelihoods and created bitterness throughout the colonial period. The same feelings persisted in independent Zimbabwe.

Again, as presented in Chapter 5, the inhabitants of the area were disappointed during the early years of independence when the bulk of their ancestral land remained in the hands of a few white ranchers while areas like the GNP and the conservancies of the Lowveld remained highly protected zones.¹¹⁴⁹ During the early years of independence, only two notable resettlements, the Chizvirizvi and the Nyangambe were established in the entire Chiredzi District. What irked the local people most was that there was plenty of land for possible resettlement in Chiredzi and Mwenezi districts controlled by white commercial farmers but people remained overcrowded in the adjacent communal areas.¹¹⁵⁰ One villager bemoaned government failure to take over such lands:

A lot of our people did not have land. They were crowded in the reserves that had been created by the colonial regime. Our people were kicked out of Lone Star and Mapanza ranches. These were given to individual white farmers. I worked for Ray Sparrow of the Lone Star ranch for some time. Many more had been removed from Gonarezhou earlier on. How did they expect us to produce anything in these overcrowded TTLs?¹¹⁵¹

Frustrated by the state's seeming inaction in speeding up resettling them on their old lands, the Shangane had now and then forced themselves on white farms and conservancies closest to their

¹¹⁴⁸ Mlambo & Pangeti, *The Political Economy of the Sugar Industry in Zimbabwe*, p. 7.

¹¹⁴⁹ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 215.

¹¹⁵⁰ Ibid. pp. 191-192.

¹¹⁵¹ Interview with Joshua Dzviriri, Mupinga, 17 April 2014.

villages, in effect, self restituting land that previously belonged to them.¹¹⁵² Between 1997 and 1999, for example, restive villagers from Chief Gudo forcibly occupied Levanga and Angus ranches in the SVC and Faversham and Ngwane Extension ranches near Chiredzi.¹¹⁵³ Chief Gudo's people had contested these conservancies since their establishment, arguing that the Levanga, Angus and Mukwasi lands had been their ancestral sites since time immemorial.

While land occupations in south-eastern Zimbabwe started in April 2000, they rapidly picked up momentum after the June 2000 election and by the end of that year, the entire area had been engulfed by farm invasions with large tracts of farms taken over.¹¹⁵⁴ Chaumba *et al* delineated the geographical space affected as:

Almost without exception all the large-scale commercial farms.... These were principally cattle and game ranches and included properties in well-known Save Valley Conservancy and the Malilangwe Conservation Trust...the state owned Nuanetsi Ranch and a portion of Gonarezhou National Park were also occupied, as was a smallholder irrigation scheme in Sangwe Communal Area itself. The Anglo-American and Tongaat Hulett owned irrigated sugar estates at Hippo Valley and Triangle near Chiredzi were largely avoided.¹¹⁵⁵

Ranches targeted by land invaders were Bangala, Buffalo Range, Nuanetsi, Lone Star, Fair Range and Chipimbi. These, like the GNP were also old homelands of the indigenous Shangane communities.¹¹⁵⁶ White ranchers were driven out as the farms were forcibly occupied by their old Shangane residents. Other occupants, of Karanga ethnicity, came from Chivi, Zaka and Bikita Districts.¹¹⁵⁷ Some also came from the nearby towns of Chiredzi and Triangle. With the exception

¹¹⁵² W. Wolmer & C. Ashley, 'Wildlife Resources Management in Southern Africa: Participation, Partnerships, Ecoregions & Redistribution', *IDS Bulletin*, 34, 3 (2003), pp. 38-39.

¹¹⁵³ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 194.

¹¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 194.

¹¹⁵⁵ J. Chaumba, I. Scoones & W. Wolmer, 'New Politics, New Livelihoods: Changes in the Zimbabwean Lowveld Since the Farm Occupations of 2000', Unpublished paper, Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa Research Paper 3, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, 2003, p. 5.

¹¹⁵⁶ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 196.

¹¹⁵⁷ Interview with Musisinyani Chauke, Mapanza, 5 October 2015.

of the small area forcibly occupied by the Chisa people, the GNP was largely left untouched.¹¹⁵⁸ The *Second Chimurenga* structures of *pungwes*, *mujibas* and *chimbwidos* which had the effect of whipping evocation of war memories were resuscitated in the occupied areas. Some of the affected white farmers under siege used their influence to invite international intervention.¹¹⁵⁹

Land occupation in the Lowveld, as elsewhere in the country was entangled in the controversial debate of what it entailed: who the drivers of the programme were, who the beneficiaries were and the impact of the occupations. For south-eastern Zimbabwe, Chaumba *et al* denied that the land occupation process was anarchic and instead submitted that the state had quickly stepped in to establish technocratic planning that, effectively, arrested disorder and promoted modernity in the new farms. The authors, furthermore, claimed that the ostensible disorder and supposed chaos of the farm occupations were in actual fact a different kind of order which came through the intervention of various supportive state structures.¹¹⁶⁰

In the entire geographical space under focus, peasant communities participating in what the state termed land demonstrations were mobilised by District War Veterans. The takeover of white commercial farms and state land (in the case of part of the GNP) by the War Veterans and peasants was typically marked by the setting of pegs, the ring-barking of trees, the physical occupation of farm houses and the construction of village-like accommodation.¹¹⁶¹ The entire landscape of the occupied areas was highly politicised with political signposts announcing the takeover posted throughout the terrain.¹¹⁶² To Wolmer, these collective acts were symbolic attempts at erasing the

¹¹⁵⁸ The occupation of a portion of the northern section of GNP by the Chisa people will be a subject of discussion later in the chapter.

¹¹⁵⁹ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 195.

¹¹⁶⁰ Chaumba, Scoones & Wolmer, 'From Jambanja to Planning', pp. 2-3.

¹¹⁶¹ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, pp. 198-199.

¹¹⁶² Interview with Musisinyani Chauke, Mapanza, 5 October 2015.

signature of the white occupants in the landscape and inscribing the black man's mark in its place.¹¹⁶³

Youth Brigades were roped in as vanguards of the land reform programme. They were assigned to teach other youths the “unbiased history of Zimbabwe.”¹¹⁶⁴ Training camps were established in the Chiredzi North Constituency to provide youngsters in the age group fifteen to thirty with education on the land question.¹¹⁶⁵ These youths were additionally given intensive training in the handling of weapons and in military drills and then deployed to man roadblocks where they forced people to produce ZANU (PF) cards, source meat and food from commercial farmers and campaign “vigorously and sometimes violently for ZANU (PF).”¹¹⁶⁶ Order and discipline at the new farms were enforced by the War Veterans and the youth militia and it was Scoones *et al's* contention that they then established some order even though the authors also admitted that their actions were far from being democratic and liberal.¹¹⁶⁷

Once the occupation had been confirmed, officials from the Ministry of Lands proceeded to issue out offer letters in acts considered to be superimposing state planning on lands already allocated by War Veterans.¹¹⁶⁸ The War Veterans' interference with the planning work of technocrats often led to tensions between them and government technocrats.¹¹⁶⁹ In most cases, however, government officers were forced to shape their technical planning to the political dictates of local War Veterans, if only to save their jobs in the volatile political climate that pertained then. In the main, the roles of the officers became merely those of ratifying and simply formalising what had

¹¹⁶³ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 199.

¹¹⁶⁴ *The Herald*, 28 January 2002.

¹¹⁶⁵ Chaumba, Scoones & Wolmer, 'New Politics, New Livelihoods', p. 18.

¹¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶⁷ Scoones, *et al*, *Zimbabwe's Land Reform, Myths and Reality*, p. 192.

¹¹⁶⁸ The original 'planning' having been done by War Veterans structures.

¹¹⁶⁹ Chaumba, Scoones & Wolmer, 'From Jambanja to Planning', p. 14.

already been planned by the War Veterans.¹¹⁷⁰ War Veterans, however, fervently denied ever interfering with the work of technical planners, arguing instead that their role was simply to carry pegs and guide Lands Officers on the geography of the area to be pegged¹¹⁷¹ which the officers could, at any rate, read more accurately from their cartography maps.

The nitty-gritty of getting land

Beneficiaries of land parcelling were a mix of people who included peasant farmers, traditional leaders, weekend farmers from the nearby towns of Chiredzi and Triangle, security service employees, civil servants, poachers, opportunists, politicians, businessmen, former farm workers and even some from the vilified MDC.¹¹⁷² The majority of them were the younger generation as the older people were reluctant to start new lives in the resettlement areas.¹¹⁷³ The better educated and the politically well-connected had an upper hand in getting the best land with infrastructure and it turned out that most of these were not the deserving landless peasants.¹¹⁷⁴

The apparent partisan process gave credence to the general perception that ZANU (PF) members got land ahead of everybody else.¹¹⁷⁵ While the ideal qualification for land allocation would have been one's technical agricultural skills, patronage was in most cases used as the main criterion. A land applicant was, *inter alia*, expected to be able to show total support for the ruling party. Moyo, however, disputed the above contending instead that many from the opposition also benefitted

¹¹⁷⁰ The information was revealed in interviews with government Lands Officers in Masvingo in August 2015.

¹¹⁷¹ Chaumba, Scoones & Wolmer, 'From Jambanja to Planning', p. 14.

¹¹⁷² Scoones, *etal*, *Zimbabwe's Land Reform, Myths and Reality*, pp. 53-54.

¹¹⁷³ Several people of the older generation interviewed in Sangwe Communal Area expressed apprehensions in starting new homes in the resettlement areas where tenure was not even guaranteed.

¹¹⁷⁴ Interview with Musisinyani Chauke, Mapanza, 5 October 2015.

¹¹⁷⁵ P. B. Matondi & M. Dekker, 'Land Rights and Tenure Security in Zimbabwe's Post Fast Track Land Reform Programme', Unpublished paper, A Synthesis Report for Land Project ID, 2011, p. 7. The position proffered by the ruling ZANU (PF) Party was that the MDC was a British sponsored outfit. It was, therefore, demonised and denied opportunities in the country. Its supporters were even directed to get land from their Britain sponsors.

from land allocation as it was mostly difficult to always determine one's political orientation given the malleable nature of people's political affiliations. The 2005 and 2008 election results in the constituencies of the region revealed that many in these resettled areas had actually voted overwhelmingly for the opposition, a clear sign that the composition of the electorate here was not homogeneously ZANU (PF).¹¹⁷⁶

As earlier discussed, the distribution of land was the prerogative of War Veterans. The traditional leaders were largely side-lined. While local chiefs, like their counterparts elsewhere in the country, had since 1999 been pampered with goodies by the state to buy their allegiance, this did not seem to have translated to real power over land control.¹¹⁷⁷ So, while during the FTLRP they were assigned responsibilities of reclaiming ancestral lands, they seemed to have lacked the real power to do so given the new powerful roles assumed by the country's War Veterans.¹¹⁷⁸ Such a scenario persuaded Alexander to question the real role of chiefs in the whole land reform process.¹¹⁷⁹ There were instances where War Veterans attempted to impose their preferred traditional leaders in the newly resettled areas and, at times, even accused some of supporting the MDC. The paramount chief of Sangwe was at one time thrown out of a District Lands Committee meeting for his perceived sympathy with the MDC. It turned out that there had been bad blood between him and the political leadership of the new villages who had instigated a demonstration against him.¹¹⁸⁰

The above incident was only but a mirror of many other intense contests that characterised life at the new settlements. There were often conflicts between men and women, the younger and older

¹¹⁷⁶ S. Moyo, 'Three Decades of Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe', *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 38, 3 (2011), p. 505.

¹¹⁷⁷ Traditional Leaders Act of 1999. For the revived powers of chiefs also see, Makahamadze, Grand & Tavuyanago, 'The Role of Traditional Leaders in Fostering Democracy, Justice and Human Rights in Zimbabwe', pp. 40-44.

¹¹⁷⁸ Chaumba, Scoones & Wolmer, 'New Politics, New Livelihoods', p. 21.

¹¹⁷⁹ Alexander, 'The Historiography of Land in Zimbabwe', p. 193.

¹¹⁸⁰ *Daily News*, 18 July 2001, 'War Vets Besiege District Administrator's Office'.

generations and traditional leaders and state technocrats.¹¹⁸¹ There were also disputes over the control of porous boundaries, access to inherited farm resources and, often, clashes over competing farmers' differential capacities to lure labour and access working capital from various sources.¹¹⁸² Leadership clashes occurred among War Veterans, government officials, traditional leaders, spirit mediums and peasants themselves. Rival chiefs also often fought over the control of the best land. Examples of such quarrels were those between Headmen Gezani and Headman Chinana over the control of Turf Ranch and between Headmen Chilonga and Mpapa over the ownership of Edenvale Ranch. The duel between the last two headmen in particular had by the time of the 2008 elections degenerated into open conflict with each accusing the other of belonging to the opposition MDC.¹¹⁸³ The often conflicting roles of the different actors were a reflection of the nature of the political space they were operating in, the diverse interests they were representing and the differing views held by the different players.

New settlers met with many challenges spanning from uncertainty on the direction of the whole programme to the delay by the state in offering land tenure to the new settlers. In addition, the situation of the new farmers remained precarious as land rights were retained by the state which had the prerogative of denying access to or revoking occupancy at any given time.¹¹⁸⁴ Such a situation made it difficult for the settlers to use the newly acquired land as collateral to access credit lines.¹¹⁸⁵ Again, the process of issuing out land occupation permits was long and frustrating and often held back by tedious bureaucracy and corruption at administrative levels.¹¹⁸⁶ Many

¹¹⁸¹ The information was revealed in several interviews conducted in the Fair Range resettlement area in October 2015.

¹¹⁸² Moyo, 'Three Decades of Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe', p. 511. Also see, C. Richardson, *The Collapse of Zimbabwe in the Wake of 2000-2003 Land Reform*, (New York: Mellen Press, 2005), p. 86.

¹¹⁸³ Scoones, *et al*, *Zimbabwe's Land Reform, Myths and Reality*, p. 197. Belonging to the opposition in Zimbabwe then by a traditional leadership was considered an anathema and a heavily punishable offence.

¹¹⁸⁴ Matondi & Dekker, 'Land Rights and Tenure Security in Zimbabwe's Post Fast Track Land Reform Programme', p. 26.

¹¹⁸⁵ Moyo, 'Three Decades of Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe', p. 508.

¹¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*.

settlers were forced to hold on to their old communal homes as a fall-back position. The reasons were clearly spelt out by one Sangwe villager:

We were excited when we got plots in the Mapanza resettlement area. The plots were bigger than we had in our rural areas. There were however a number of challenges. The new places did not have schools for our children, clinics and even shopping centres. We had to travel long distances back to our old homes to access these. Again, it was said now and again that we could be removed from these lands at any time. Some said once the MDC took over the country, the whole process would be reversed. We could not risk leaving our old homes totally and so most of us maintained two homes. It was not easy my friend as we had to run around from one home to the other during the farming season.¹¹⁸⁷

Furthermore, there were conflicts with wild animals, hardships associated with clearing virgin lands using rudimentary tools and coping with inadequate infrastructure.¹¹⁸⁸

While the SVC was spared from occupation, a number of smaller conservancies close to Sangwe were occupied with some cooperation from the white farmers themselves who ‘voluntarily’ surrendered the lands. The new arrangement was that the new black farmers would continue with wildlife utilisation on the Makuleke model.¹¹⁸⁹ Such offers reflected a shift of negotiating power with local communities now assuming an upper hand over conservancy owners. Levanga Conservancy, one of such ranches had remained a contested space since 1986. The Gudo people considered it a place of cultural and historical significance as one interviewed villager reminisced:

This had always been our land. Our people were evicted from the land when it was turned into a conservancy. Our ancestors were buried there. Our sacred shrines were located right inside the conservancy. We used to hunt, fish and graze our cattle in there. We have taken over the land. It is our mother land.¹¹⁹⁰

¹¹⁸⁷ Interview with an anonymous resettled farmer, Fair Range, 5 October 2015.

¹¹⁸⁸ These challenges were given in a wide range of interviews conducted with Fair Range settlers in October 2015.

¹¹⁸⁹ The Makuleke community of the KNP which had lost its land during the height of colonial rule was able to recover it under a restitution programme that assisted them run the area as a wildlife community project.

¹¹⁹⁰ Interview with Sam Gunguvo, Mutapurwa, Gudo, 16 April 2014.

It was not surprising, therefore, that when the *Third Chimurenga* began, the position of the aggrieved Gudo villagers had shifted from the desire to negotiate access to their old lands to one of an absolute claim of the land.¹¹⁹¹

The debate around the sugar estates of Triangle, Hippo Valley and Mkwesine was on whether they should be totally taken over or retained for strategic economic reasons.¹¹⁹² In the end, Triangle's twenty one thousand five hundred and fifty three hectares and Hippo Valley's nineteen thousand nine hundred and seventeen hectares were largely spared as only out grower private plots located on the outskirts of the estates were issued out to new farmers under the A2 farming model.¹¹⁹³ Up to three thousand eight hundred and seventy one hectares of Mkwesine Estate out of a total of four thousand eight hundred and eighty hectares were, however, allocated to A2 farmers under the FTLRP.¹¹⁹⁴ In general, farm occupants embraced their new acquisitions with great excitement although they acknowledged the existence of some challenges as illustrated by the case below:

We are happy to have our own plots of land. This was virgin land. It was land that we had fought for all along. Our children also got their own pieces of land. The problem was that this remained a dry area. Crops did not always do well here. Our crops were also eaten by wild animals. We don't reap much although we were happy to be on our ancestral land.¹¹⁹⁵

Many more celebrated in the same manner.¹¹⁹⁶

The Chisa land invaders

The high profile occupation of a sixteen thousand hectare piece of land on the northern corner of the GNP by the Chisa community at the height of land occupations had its own controversies.

¹¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹¹⁹² As stated in chapter 3, the Shangane under Chief Tsvovani's had, after the Second World War been removed from this area to allow for the establishment of the sugar plantations.

¹¹⁹³ <http://www.hullets.co.za/au/intoduction.asp>.

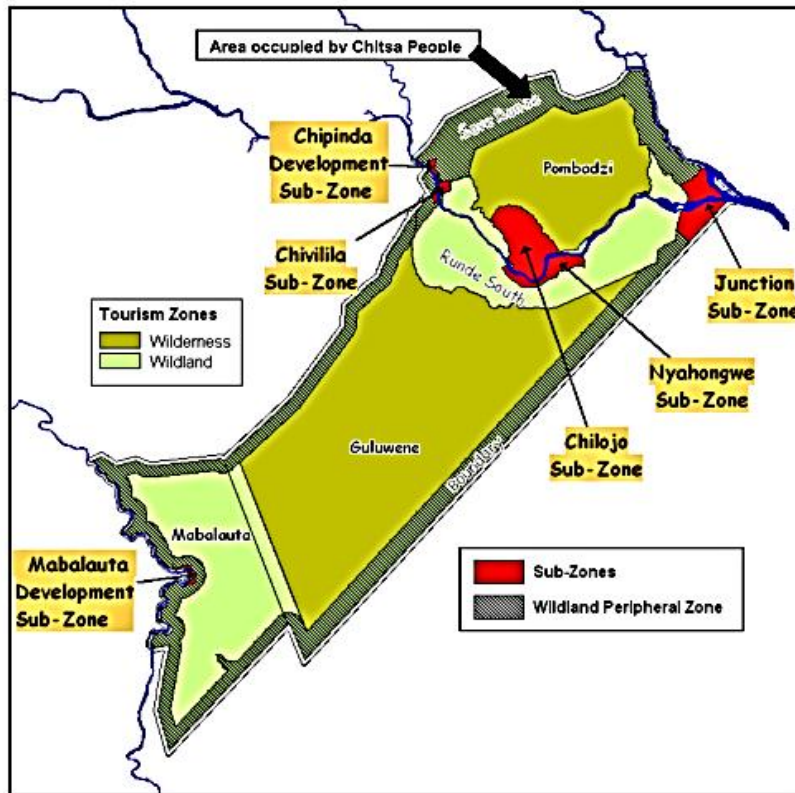
¹¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁹⁵ Interview with Musisinyani Chauke, Mapanza, 5 October 2015.

¹¹⁹⁶ Interview with Honest Sithole, settler, Mkwesine, 15 April 2014.

While the occupied area was just a small section of the PA, its invasion was symbolically significant as it was seen as a bold land claim statement by the community.

Map 6.1: Location of the Chisa invaded area



Source: Gonarezhou National Park General Management Plan 2011-2021, p. viii.

The forced occupation involved some seven hundred and fifty indigenous families with an estimated total population of five thousand three hundred and sixty five people mainly from Wards 4 and 5 of the Sangwe Communal Area.¹¹⁹⁷ Map 6.1 shows the disputed area that was forcibly occupied by the Chisa.¹¹⁹⁸ The case of the Chisa people was one of an aggrieved community, a people that had lost both their land and chieftainship during the height of colonial rule for alleged

¹¹⁹⁷ Spenceley, 'Tourism in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', p. 658 & Gandiwa, Gandiwa & Maboko, 'Living with Wildlife and Associated Conflicts in a Contested Area Within the Northern Gonarezhou Park, Zimbabwe', p. 253.

¹¹⁹⁸ The name Chitsa, instead of Chisa, continues to be erroneously used in Zimbabwe even by Park officials.

insubordination.¹¹⁹⁹ A District Commissioner's memorandum on the subject confirmed the punishment:

According to our old books here, Chisa chieftainship was in existence from 1906 to sometime between 1945 and 1960 when most chieftainships were either downgraded or completely abolished. So in the case of Chisa, he had a big crown which was then downgraded.¹²⁰⁰

Chisa's area was proclaimed a game reserve in 1934. Shortly after, it was de-proclaimed in 1940 to accommodate tsetse fly hunting in the Sabi-Lundi area. It was, again, designated a game reserve in 1950 before being once again de-proclaimed to allow for further anti- tsetse-fly operations.¹²⁰¹

As stated in chapter 3, Chisa's people were moved from the Sabi-Lundi junction in 1957 to Chingoji before being moved again to the Seven Jack area within the park. In 1962, they were finally evicted from the game-designated area altogether without compensation and resettled in the drier Sangwe TTL on the margin of the GNP. They were assured of a return to the area after the elimination of tsetse-flies.¹²⁰² The portion of land from where they were evicted was leased out to Ray Sparrow, a white commercial farmer who re-named it Lone Star Ranch after converting it to a cattle ranch.¹²⁰³ The place was, together with the rest of the Gonarezhou land formally gazetted a national park in 1975 and the corridor that had been created for tsetse control was controversially incorporated into the park.¹²⁰⁴ The national park position was maintained by the Zimbabwean government in 1980 much to the disappointment of the local people.

As indicated in the previous chapter, the local people were at independence disenchanted when they failed to get back the ancestral land. In the 1980s and 1990s, they engaged in sporadic battles

¹¹⁹⁹ Mombeshora & Le Bel, 'People-Park Conflicts', p. 2608.

¹²⁰⁰ NAZ: CHK/14, Folio 10, undated.

¹²⁰¹ Interview with Enias Masiya, Guluji Ward 22, 28 June 2014.

¹²⁰² Ibid.

¹²⁰³ Interview with Joshua Dzviriri, Mupinga, 17 April 2015.

¹²⁰⁴ Interview with Enias Masiya, Guluji Ward 22, 28 June 2014.

with the Parks Department when they illegally drove their cattle into the park and conducted unlawful hunting in the sanctuary.¹²⁰⁵ As earlier noted, poaching had escalated in the post-independence era as the local people protested against continued exclusion from the park resources. When the FTLRP began in 2000, Headman Chisa made capital of the febrile atmosphere to lay claim to the Gonarezhou land. Encouraged by developments in Fair Range Ranch, Chisa's people took over a northern section of the PA in May 2000. The justification was that since this was state-controlled land, its takeover would be easier than restituting privately owned land. The land so taken (see Map 6.1) was a twenty kilometre strip running along the north-western end of the park. The area, separated from the rest of the park by the Chilunja Hills was clearly differentiated from the GNP on older maps making it easy for settlers to take advantage of the ambiguity of the park boundary and play it up against the Parks Department.¹²⁰⁶

The actual occupation that was termed symbolic demonstrations by politicians involved physically bringing down the fence, invading the park and building huts right inside the PA.¹²⁰⁷ It was initially conducted by a few villagers led by War Veterans who camped by the edge of the park in tents purportedly supplied by the army.¹²⁰⁸ Headman Chisa had formed a convenient alliance with local sympathetic War Veterans, the local councillor and the Provincial Governor and the MP for Chiredzi North in planning and executing the occupation. In particular, the Governor of Masvingo Province pressured for the official demarcation of the GNP for Shangane resettlement.¹²⁰⁹ In an evasive answer on the extent of the invasion of the park, the Governor replied that the people had

¹²⁰⁵ Interview with villagers, Gotosa, Chisa, 16 April 2014.

¹²⁰⁶ Spenceley, 'Tourism in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', p. 658.

¹²⁰⁷ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 214.

¹²⁰⁸ Wolmer, Chaumba & Scoones, 'Wildlife Management and Land Reform in Southeastern Zimbabwe', p. 15.

¹²⁰⁹ *Zimbabwe Independent*, 11-17 May 2001, 'Gonarezhou Demarcated for Resettlement'.

mainly taken land which was adjacent to the park area. Lands Department officers disputed the fact and instead confirmed the takeover through parcelling out plots in the park area.¹²¹⁰

The invasion was strongly opposed by the Parks Department which argued that such a move set a wrong precedent by undermining the Parks Act and was also a direct affront to the GLTP project.¹²¹¹ It was precisely the reason why towards the end of 2000, the Department of Parks forcibly removed most invaders leaving only a few maintaining a symbolic presence in the base camp.¹²¹² Those evicted kept guard just outside the park as they re-strategised. Upon appealing to Vice President Msika, they were allowed back and the Lands Department ordered to peg the land for proper resettlement. In a clear sign of lack of coordination of government activities, the move was done without the express endorsement of the parent Ministry of Environment and Tourism and the concurrence of the Department of Parks and Wildlife Management.¹²¹³ In a show of saving face or perhaps displaying lack of accurate information, the Minister of Environment, Francis Nhema, underplayed the extent of the occupation when he stated that only a few cattle had strayed into the park and “there are [were] no people physically within the park at all.”¹²¹⁴ The truth of the matter was that there were people who had physically occupied the area.

The formalisation of the invasion only came in July 2001 after the silencing and side-lining of the Parks Department. Plots were pegged by the Ministry of Lands and the allocation directed by the Governor. Ten villages were demarcated and the beneficiaries issued with official permits to stay, keep livestock and cultivate the black rich alluvial soils of the area.¹²¹⁵ A further eight kilometre

¹²¹⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹¹ *The Herald*, 1 June 2001. The Transfrontier Park will be a subject of discussion in the next chapter.

¹²¹² Chaumba, Scoones & Wolmer, ‘New Politics, New Livelihoods’, p. 8.

¹²¹³ Mombeshora & Le Bel, ‘People-Park Conflicts’, 2610.

¹²¹⁴ *Zimbabwe Independent*, 11-17 May 2001, ‘Gonarezhou Demarcated for Resettlement’.

¹²¹⁵ Spenceley, ‘Tourism in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park’, p. 658.

piece of land was delineated beyond the grazing area as a wildlife zone so created to raise revenue for the villagers under the modified CAMPFIRE programme.¹²¹⁶

Furthermore, the Chisa people claimed another piece of land adjoining the wildlife zone called Section 27 which was a former veterinary corridor. Up to fifty six families were subsequently allocated fifty hectare A2 plots on that land and urged to venture into commercial wildlife tourism. The beneficiaries embraced the offer as a golden opportunity to muscle in on a potentially lucrative industry under the twin flags of land reform and indigenisation.¹²¹⁷ Most of the beneficiaries happened not to have been local peasants but politically well-connected elite members of the Chiredzi community, mostly men.¹²¹⁸

During the 2001/2 season of occupation, the settlers' crops and huts were destroyed by marauding elephants that were not used to sharing the habitat with humans and were most certainly protesting the invasion of their territory.¹²¹⁹ One particular rogue elephant was noted for tormenting the new settlers. His temper and aggression was attributed to the anger of Shangane ancestors over the settlers' failure to follow protocol on their return to the land.¹²²⁰ Local people were, however, convinced that the elephant was possessed by the white men's evil spirit (*mtimu wavalungu*).¹²²¹ The Parks people refused to neither 'reprimand' nor 'discipline' him sarcastically arguing that the settlers should learn to co-exist with their new game neighbours, as they had done in the past.¹²²²

¹²¹⁶ Wolmer, Chaumba & Scoones, 'Wildlife Management and Land Reform in Southeastern Zimbabwe', p. 16.

¹²¹⁷ Ibid. pp. 16-18.

¹²¹⁸ These included, among others, councillors, security personnel and even Department of National Parks staff who had decided to also join the 'gravy train'.

¹²¹⁹ Spenceley, 'Tourism in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', p. 658.

¹²²⁰ Interview with Chisa villagers, 23 December 2014.

¹²²¹ Ibid.

¹²²² Ibid.

What was surely true, however, was that the elephant was irked by the ‘illegal occupation’ of its territory by the park invaders and, so, simply defending it on behalf of other animals of the park. In reality, the attack was only but a manifestation of the deeper problem of human-wildlife conflict that undoubtedly escalated with the occupation of part of the park by the Chisa community: crops were destroyed, livestock and humans attacked by lions and hyenas and huts destroyed by marauding wild animals.¹²²³ The combination of attacks from wild animals and the hardships associated with settling in new lands forced some to drift back to the communal homes which they had maintained lest they were not granted tenure on the occupied land.

The contest for the control of the PA did not end with the pegging of plots. A 2003 Presidential Land Review Commission unequivocally recommended that all communities occupying national parks such as the GNP be removed and the protective game fences restored forthwith.¹²²⁴ Its reasoning was that the Gonarezhou land restitution as proposed by the Shangane community was no longer feasible.¹²²⁵ A follow up Cabinet order directing the illegal settlers to move out, issued in 2004 was openly defied as the Chisa people adamantly stayed put.¹²²⁶ They were convinced that the government would not dare kick them out as such action would be politically costly in a make or break election scheduled for 2005.

In the ensuing contest, the government found itself in a quandary. Denying the indigenous Shangane a return to their ancestral land was considered tantamount to discriminating them when other communities in many parts of the country were getting back their forefathers’ lands. Again, the use of force to remove the said squatters would certainly appear to be contradicting the

¹²²³ Ibid. Also see article by Gandiwa, Gandiwa & Maboko, ‘Living with Wildlife and Associated Conflicts in a Contested Area Within the Northern Gonarezhou Park, Zimbabwe’, pp. 252-260.

¹²²⁴ Report of the Presidential Land Review Committee Under the Chairmanship of Dr Charles Utete, p. 7.

¹²²⁵ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 216.

¹²²⁶ Mombeshora & Le Bel, ‘People-Park Conflicts’, p. 2602.

government's stance on protecting *Jambanja* land occupiers. On the other hand recognising the Chisa historical claims meant re-visiting and possibly amending the Parks and Wildlife Act. The last option, though sound had the potential of triggering off country-wide land claims by communities in similar situations, something the government feared it would find difficult to contain.¹²²⁷ Allowing Chisa's people occupancy of a state PA was also bound to undo most of the work done, hitherto, to protect the flora and fauna of the park. The government had apparently already misfired by hastily issuing out occupancy permits to the settlers. However, in its wisdom the state decided to engage the Chisa people.

A Chisa Task Force was constituted in 2006 that comprised the traditional leadership, representatives from the community, conservation groups, the Ministry of Local Government, the Parks Department and the local political leadership. The Committee was, *inter alia*, mandated to verify boundaries of the contested area and come up with alternative land options for indigenous settlers already in the park and those on the periphery of the PA.¹²²⁸ The Task Team's recommendations were that the Chisa people be moved *en masse* to Masangula, Nyangambe, Ngwane Ranch and Mkwesine Estate.¹²²⁹ Headmen Chisa opposed relocation to any of the suggested places arguing that these were not his ancestral lands and that a place like Nyangambe was known to be dry and barren. He, furthermore, argued that the guerrillas of the *Second Chimurenga* had particularly promised them the land they had now occupied.¹²³⁰ Moreover, his people had already strategically placed themselves well to reap rewards from the envisaged GLTP project and, so, were not going to throw away that opportunity.¹²³¹ Chief Chisa argued that his

¹²²⁷ Spenceley, 'Tourism in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', p. 659.

¹²²⁸ Mombeshora & Le Bel, 'People-Park Conflicts', p. 2615.

¹²²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 2616.

¹²³⁰ The position was articulated by many in the field of study. Also see, Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 401.

¹²³¹ Interview with villagers, Gotosa, Chisa, 17 April 2014.

people were happy with what they had gained so far and, so, strongly opposed relocation on grounds that it would dislocate their newly constituted livelihoods.

Moreover, the Headman argued that the guerrillas had co-existed with the same wild animals during the war of liberation and that his people's situation was no different.¹²³² Chisa was, here, conveniently linking the *Second Chimurenga* to the *Third Chimurenga* that his people were putting a mark on. The suggested removal and relocation of his people from the GNP, however, continued to be a contentious subject beyond 2008.¹²³³ An article in *The Herald* of 13 November 2009 reported of the impending eviction of fifty Chisa families that had illegally settled themselves on the GNP land since 2000. At the same time, the government was said to be looking for alternative land to resettle nearly one thousand Chisa families who were reported to have been illegally living in the park since the height of the FTLRP.¹²³⁴ It was clear that issues of tenure on the Gonarezhou land continued to worry the new occupants given the vacillation of government policy over the people's occupation status. The concern was affirmed in an interview with a Chisa land occupier:

The government did not clearly announce its position with regard to our occupation of Gonarezhou National Park. At one time, it seemed to be on our side and at other times, we felt abandoned and vulnerable. Whenever we heard sounds of a helicopter flying past our villages, we became greatly concerned that it was coming to chase us away. We were however determined to stay put, for this was our ancestral land. Nobody was going to push us out just like that.¹²³⁵

The occupation of part of the GNP was, indeed, an act of restoring the dignity of the people through reclaiming the ancestral lands.¹²³⁶ The partial return to Shangane homelands was something that the people were determined to defend at all costs. They were happy to re-unite with the *mikwembu*

¹²³² Ibid.

¹²³³ See, among others, *The Herald*: 5 September 2011 & *The Herald*: 13 September 2011.

¹²³⁴ *The Herald*, 13 November, 2009, 'Masvingo Families Evicted From Land'.

¹²³⁵ Interview with anonymous villager, Chisa, 16 April 2014.

¹²³⁶ Mombeshora & Le Bel, 'People-Park Conflicts', pp. 2610 & 2612.

(spirit mediums) of the forest. In addition, it was a return to the people's rain-making shrines and sacred ritual sites. Home-coming marked a reconnection with the fading cultures that had, in the past, given them an identity. These were traditions such as *hoko* (male initiation rites) and *komba* (female initiation) that they were keen to revive.

Sengwe land occupiers

In the southern part of the GNP were the Sengwe people, who also longed to return to their Mapokole forests of Gonakudzingwa. A testimony of a villager from the area, cited in Wolmer clearly expressed the people's frustration at being barred from doing so:

We were not given the go-ahead by government to go and occupy the game park [unlike the commercial farms]-we are hungry for that. We do not want the farms but our ancestors' place. We need to stick to our side. If given the go-ahead we would occupy our original place. Plenty of people are longing for that.¹²³⁷

Though not allowed back on the Gonakudzingwa soil, the Sengwe community continued to push for the recovery of the lost land. They were inspired by the partial success of their Chisa relatives. In 2007, up to one hundred and fifty Sengwe villagers occupied the southern tip of the PA. When ordered to leave, they stubbornly refused vowing to defend the claim to the ancestral lands.¹²³⁸

Like their Chisa kith and kin, the Sengwe park invaders who were also joined by relatives from as far as Chitanga in Matibi No. 1 Communal area were insisting that their ancestors had lived on this part of the park since *kale kale* (long back) and that they were merely emulating their Chisa relatives. The warden of Mabalauta reported that soon after their occupation of the southern tip of

¹²³⁷ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 215.

¹²³⁸ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 401.

the GNP, they faced stiff resistance from animals of the park.¹²³⁹ Mavhunga's interview with the warden on the subject was telling:

In Mabalauta, the Acting Warden informed me that these people had come from Chief Chitanga to reclaim their ancestral land, but the lions and leopards had eaten many of their livestock. After all, was this also not their ancestral land? The human invaders beat a hasty retreat back to their villages, to save their stock, which cannot claim indigeneity to the park because the ancestors of tsetse-fly had prevented it.¹²⁴⁰

While the indigeneity of lions and leopards was not disputable, it was the sarcasm with which it was expressed that spoke of the attitude of the Parks people—they simply did not welcome humans in the animal sanctuary.

Life under *Jambanja*

It was Moyo and Yeros's conviction, quoted in Alexander that the FTLRP was fundamentally a progressive programme. They argued that concerns of alleged state violence were all part of an illegitimate neo-liberal crusade directed at discrediting the programme.¹²⁴¹ Moyo, in particular, proffered that a close examination of the programme's redistributive mantra pointed to its positive contribution to improved lifestyles of poor peasants.¹²⁴² Following such line of argument, it could be inferred that peasants of south-eastern Zimbabwe benefitted by taking over farm houses, barns, workshops, machinery, boreholes, sheds, irrigation equipment and machinery such as generators and tractors from evicted white farmers. Some of the buildings taken were used as makeshift schools, churches and community halls. What was, however evident from the field of study was

¹²³⁹ Ibid. pp. 401-402.

¹²⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 402

¹²⁴¹ Alexander, 'The Historiography of Land in Zimbabwe', p. 192.

¹²⁴² Moyo, 'Three Decades of Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe', p. 494.

that only political heavyweights and a few politically well-connected peasants benefitted from taking control of the infrastructure and equipment at most farms.¹²⁴³

It could also be noted that the FTLRP in southern Zimbabwe replaced large-scale commercial farms with small-scale indigenous plots, a feat that previous land reform programmes had failed to achieve. For the aggrieved Shangane, the occupation of the ancestral lands and re-connection with the lineage history after years of squatting away from the homeland was real cause for celebration. In a related land restitution matter Mujere expressed the communities' gains more aptly when he stated that:

...whilst for the technocrats the land distribution programme is [was] about taking land from the minority white farmers and giving it to the landless black majority, the traditional authorities did not quite see the programme in the same way. Instead, they view[ed] it as an opportunity to reclaim their ancestral lands, graves, mountains and sacred places and also to establish their *nyika* (land) boundaries which had been greatly altered during the colonial period.¹²⁴⁴

Indeed, re-connecting with ancestors was self-fulfilling as some had attributed misfortunes such as recurrent droughts to detachment from *Chikwembu*, the protector. It was precisely the reason why the first action taken by indigenous communities upon re-occupying the ancestral lands was to appease the *mikwembu* (ancestral spirits).¹²⁴⁵

While for the Shona and Ndebele settlers the land occupation programme was viewed as a marker of sovereignty, for the Shangane it was additionally a restitution claim, an act of returning home.¹²⁴⁶ It was exactly the reason why Wolmer concluded that, for some Shangane, there was

¹²⁴³ The position was given in interviews conducted in Fair Range resettlement scheme in October 2015.

¹²⁴⁴ J. Mujere, 'Land, Graves and Belonging: Land Reform and the Politics of Belonging in Newly Resettled Farms in Gutu, 2000-2009', Unpublished paper, Livelihoods After Land Reform in Zimbabwe Working Paper 9, Livelihoods after Land Reform Project, PLAAS, South Africa, 2010.

¹²⁴⁵ Interviews conducted in the Sangwe Communal Area in January and February 2015 brought out the view.

¹²⁴⁶ Chaumba, Scoones & Wolmer, 'New Politics, New Livelihoods', p. 13.

the feeling of invasion of their lands by outsiders.¹²⁴⁷ Consequently, some local traditional leaders and politicians are alleged to even have called for the exclusive occupation of the area by the Shangane.¹²⁴⁸ Such kind of thinking was certainly in line with the ruling ZANU (PF) party's re-packaged ideology of "citizenship and belonging, constituted around the centrality of the land question."¹²⁴⁹ It was an invented viewpoint that constructed the notion of outsiders.

Indeed, for the Shangane, the return to the ancestral lands evoked childhood memories of hunting, gathering and fishing in the *gumbini* (riverine areas) of the ancestral lands.¹²⁵⁰ Again, home-coming was, in Wolmer's view, also about writing the local people back into their ancestral landscape.¹²⁵¹ While for youngsters with limited eviction experiences the focus was on acquiring land for subsistence, those of the older generations strove to acquire land for both survival and as restitution for earlier losses. Many land beneficiaries, therefore, celebrated the improvement of their lives as a result of land acquisitions.¹²⁵²

There were, however, some who felt the government could have done better by providing them with modern support systems to enable them to produce at commercial levels. The position was expressed in an oral testimony given by a Chisa resettled villager:

We were grateful to be allowed to get back part of our ancestral land. The government, however, failed to acknowledge the fact that this remained a dry area. Rains were erratic and production was affected annually. What we wanted in this modern day and age were irrigation support systems. We wanted to even venture into the production of sugar cane like Hippo Valley and Triangle Estates. The government should also have provided us

¹²⁴⁷ W. Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 200.

¹²⁴⁸ *Daily News*, 18 July 2001, 'Baloyi at Odds with Lands Committee'.

¹²⁴⁹ Raftopoulos, 'The Crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008', in Raftopoulos & Mlambo (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p. 213.

¹²⁵⁰ Interview with Samuel Khumbani, 4 August 2014.

¹²⁵¹ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 216.

¹²⁵² See, *The Herald*, 31 March 2000, *The Herald* 18 April 2000, *The Herald* 7 June 2000, *The Herald* 15 June 2000 & *The Herald* 21 June 2000.

with financial support to enable us to buy equipment. Our production remained at subsistence level.¹²⁵³

The position was certainly in line with the advocacy for a paradigm shift from the original emphasis of just redressing racial land tenure to the optimal development and utilisation of the land by the new owners for national development. The thrust of the resettlement programme should have been on transforming these farmers into commercial producers, instead.

Women were land beneficiaries in their own rights in the Sangwe and Sengwe Communal areas as the FTLRP deliberately extended land ownership to this previously disadvantaged group. In spite of the deliberate efforts targeted at empowering women, the land uptake by the female gender still remained lower than that of men. Of the estimated three hundred thousand people resettled by 2005 nationally, only 20% were women.¹²⁵⁴ As a result, Jacobs was persuaded to conclude that married women, by and large, remained excluded from fully benefitting from the programme.¹²⁵⁵ And, in Bhatasara's view, *Jambanja* failed to recognise women as an independent social category with different land needs. This undoubtedly diminished the empowerment opportunities of the women, widened gender inequalities and ultimately failed to alleviate the poverty of women.¹²⁵⁶

On the other hand, there were those who alleged that the *Third Chimurenga* had a damaging impact on the economy of south-eastern Zimbabwe in particular and the entire country in general.¹²⁵⁷ In

¹²⁵³ Interview with resettled farmer (anonymous), Chisa, 17 May 2015.

¹²⁵⁴ S. Bhatasara, 'Women, Land & Poverty in Zimbabwe: Deconstructing the Impacts of the Fast Track Land Reform Program', *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 13, 1 (2011), p. 320.

¹²⁵⁵ S. Jacobs, 'Land Reform: Still a Global Worth Pursuing for Rural Women?' Unpublished paper, Paper to Development Studies Association, 10th-12th September, 2001, pp. 2 & 5.

¹²⁵⁶ Bhatasara, 'Women, Land and Poverty in Zimbabwe', p. 316. Also see, R. B. Gaidzanwa, 'Women and Land in Zimbabwe', Unpublished paper, Paper Presented at the Conference: Why Women Matter in Agriculture, Sweden, 4-8 April, 2011, pp. 7-8.

¹²⁵⁷ Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, pp. 236-237 & Raftopoulos, 'The Crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008', in Raftopoulos & Mlambo (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p. 217. Also see, *Daily News*, 16 March 2000, 'Government Using Land Issue to Divert Attention from Economic Crisis' & *Daily News*, 18 April 2000, 'Government Side-Stepping Real Issues'.

the first place, those who subscribed to the thinking questioned the logic of resettling people in a dry area without providing them with irrigation support systems. The same thinking challenged government's rationale of establishing A1 and A2 farms in a region which was best suited for ranching, if it was not all a political gimmick.¹²⁵⁸

Another noted negative effect of the controversial farm occupations in the area was increased wildlife poaching that was confirmed by the opening of new butcheries near the SVC to sell illegally acquired game meat.¹²⁵⁹ The newly resettled farmers took advantage of their proximity to the PA and conservancies to hunt. Statistics from the area revealed that large numbers of different species of animals were killed annually by snares in the GNP. These included protected species such as wild dogs, rhinos, cheetahs, elephants and leopards. In 2009, over 80% of recorded wild dog mortality was due to snaring.¹²⁶⁰ Again, in the three year period leading to 2010, the NPWMA reported removing two thousand and fifty one snares in the park and that one thousand five hundred and thirty two cattle were impounded for straying into the park.¹²⁶¹ The poachers capitalised on the general hesitancy of law enforcement agents to act against well connected politicians who were breaking the law by clandestinely poaching in the park. The state also became an accomplice as it, on occasions, slaughtered game from the park to provide meat at national functions. Such a measure was taken to mitigate the shortage of beef, itself, a result of the disruption of livestock production in the Lowveld by *Jambanja* land takeovers.¹²⁶²

There was an increase in cattle rustling, the cutting of fences, chopping down of trees for firewood and starting of veld fires to facilitate easy hunting in the newly resettled areas. Human-wildlife

¹²⁵⁸ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, pp. 201-209.

¹²⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 197.

¹²⁶⁰ [http://zimbabwewilddogs.wildlifedirect.org/category/poaching/ Zimbabwe](http://zimbabwewilddogs.wildlifedirect.org/category/poaching/Zimbabwe) (accessed on 10/6/14).

¹²⁶¹ <http://www.rhinos.org/en/articles/printview.asp?1111> (accessed on 30/7/17).

¹²⁶² Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 402.

conflict escalated due to human settlement in the park-invaded area.¹²⁶³ The disturbances associated with land reform also led to the depletion of game in the resettled area and the adjacent national park. Safari hunting in the Chisa and Chipinge areas suffered a knock especially during ‘Zimbabwe’s Crisis’ period.¹²⁶⁴

Engulfed by the euphoria of the FTLRP, conservation issues were side-lined as large scale resettlement of people in the area dramatically altered the physical landscape. What had been a heavily forested cattle and game area was turned into near bare land within a short space of time. This included the state-owned Nuanetsi Ranch and part of the GNP. Trees were cut down in large quantities as was evidenced by piles of firewood sold along the Ngundu-Tanganda highway. These were mainly sold to urbanites of Chiredzi and Triangle to alleviate the erratic supply of power energy.¹²⁶⁵ Water holes were poisoned and fires deliberately started in order to drive wild animals to where they were easy to bay.¹²⁶⁶ Attempts to mitigate environmental destruction initiated by the Ministry of Environment were hampered by the general lawlessness that characterised the period 2000 to 2008.

Land occupations also led to reduced flows of tourists into the Lowveld region.¹²⁶⁷ The year 2000 was particularly a bad one due to the launch of the land reform programme. The park was forced to operate in survival mode.¹²⁶⁸ Room occupancy at lodges in the GNP and Malilangwe

¹²⁶³ Interview with Hasani Baloyi, GNP, 5 September 2014.

¹²⁶⁴ Report of Proceedings of the Workshop, 31 May 2005, p. 16.

¹²⁶⁵ Interview with roadside fire wood vendor ‘Busyman’, Fair Range, 16 May 2015.

¹²⁶⁶ ‘Poachers poison Water at Five Parks’, www.newzimbabwe.com (accessed on 4/11/15).

¹²⁶⁷ W. Chasi, ‘Agricultural Knowledge System’, Unpublished paper, AIAS Memo, Harare, pp. 14-15.

¹²⁶⁸ Malilangwe Trust Annual Report, 2001, p. 1.

Conservancy plummeted due to the negative publicity that branded Zimbabwe an unsafe tourist destination.¹²⁶⁹ The situation got worse, thereafter, as the ‘Zimbabwe Crisis’ deepened.

The distribution of land to both A1 and A2 farmers often lacked transparency. As earlier stated, those with strong political connections and sound financial resources got themselves large pieces of land of up to seven hundred hectares ahead of everyone.¹²⁷⁰ Moyo re-affirmed the position when he asserted that the uneven land re-distribution not only led to those with strong political connections receiving larger pieces of land but that it, in turn, influenced the differentiated access of the different groups to farming services and infrastructure.¹²⁷¹ In the end, the inequitable distribution of land created differences among the resettled farmers as a new class of agrarian black farmers emerged that was distinguishable by its new land status and not by race.¹²⁷² Such a development undoubtedly shifted the nature and texture of the struggle as blacks were pitted against each other.

Overall, the FTLRP ushered in unprecedented changes to the agrarian landscape of south-eastern Zimbabwe by radically altering the region’s agricultural structure. The programme established a transformed capitalist agrarian sector dominated by small to medium scale black producers. It was Scoones *et al* and Zikhali’s contention that the new farmers who were introduced onto the land engaged in new forms of farming, utilised new markets, established new social structures and carried out a variety of new livelihoods which were purported to be better than those of the pre-

¹²⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁷⁰ Chavunduka & Bromley, ‘Considering the Multiple Purposes of Land in Zimbabwe’s Economic Recovery’, p. 673.

¹²⁷¹ Moyo, ‘Three Decades of Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe’, p. 493.

¹²⁷² Scoones, *et al*, ‘Livelihoods After Land Reform in Zimbabwe’, p. 3.

2000 period and those of their communal counterparts.¹²⁷³ In support, Moyo was convinced that the redistributive mantra of the FTLRP generated progressive positive changes in the agrarian structure that resulted in enhanced lifestyles of poor peasants.¹²⁷⁴ Such positive changes were, however, not visibly noticeable among the newly resettled farmers of southern Zimbabwe as many of them perennially complained of low yields due to attacks on crops by wildlife. Besides, many still depended on their old fields in the old villages where the wildlife menace was absent. Many remained on the government's food relief lists. Under such circumstances, it became difficult to quantify the said positive changes and the improved lifestyles that Moyo, Zikhali and Scoones *et al* referred to. What was noticeable was the physical re-distribution of land which regrettably did not translate to increased production in the resettled areas of south-eastern Zimbabwe.

Conclusion

Chapter 6 examined the rolling out of the FTLRP in Zimbabwe. It particularly discussed the pros and cons of the programme in relation to south-eastern Zimbabwe. It revealed that *Hondo Yeminda* was a complex, radical and controversial programme whose net effect was to change the commercial agricultural sector in south-eastern Zimbabwe by creating small to medium scale black owned plots on repossessed land. The chapter interrogated how the programme was organised in south-eastern Zimbabwe and concluded that the land reform story here was more nuanced and much more complex than often known. It challenged the picture of an ostensibly orderly programme proffered by Scoones *et al* and instead revealed that by and large, the physical takeover of white commercial land was generally accompanied by violence and the actual

¹²⁷³ Scoones, *et al*, *Zimbabwe's Land Reform, Myths and Reality*, p. 233 & P. Zikhali, 'Fast Track Land Reform and Agricultural Productivity in Zimbabwe', Unpublished paper, Working Paper in Economics No. 322, School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg, 2008, p. 1.

¹²⁷⁴ Moyo, 'Three Decades of Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe', p. 493.

distribution of the land appeared to have been mainly guided by one's political affiliation. The chapter, thus, debunked the myth that the land reform programme in south-eastern Zimbabwe was a largely progress programme.

The chapter, furthermore, revealed that while the indigenous Shangane communities of the area would have wanted to gain more of their former lands from the GNP, only the Chisa managed to occupy a small section of the park, against all odds. The Gudo people also managed to recover small parts of their ancestral lands from the conservancies of the area, a significant gain on their part. What came out clearly, however, was that total restitution of ancestral lands in the PAs of the Lowveld was no longer feasible given the state's protection of such areas for tourism purposes.

The chapter has also revealed how the local Shangane were able to connect with ancestral shrines. It also showed how the people gained more and better virgin land which in the absence of extended support from banks and the Ministry of Agriculture did not, however, make them better producers than their neighbours in the old communal areas. In addition, the chapter exposed the nature and levels of conflicts among the new settlers and indicated how all these were reflections of the non-homogeneous texture of the farm occupations and occupants. The chapter finally examined the impact of *Jambanja* on the landscape and bared the negative effects of the programme on both the economy and environment of the area.

CHAPTER 7: THE GREAT LIMPOPO TRANSFRONTIER PARK, THE ZIMBABWE SECTOR

Introduction

Chapter 7 examines the implications of the planned relocation of communities falling within the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP) zone, and in particular, investigates its impact during the period 2000 to 2008. The chapter focuses on the lived experiences of indigenous communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe who were caught up in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP) project. The chapter examines the debates advanced for the creation of the park in Southern Africa. It explores both the pronounced and covert interests and roles of the various players involved in the Transfrontier Park project. The chapter reviews the real and imagined utility of the park to communities within and adjacent to it. It also highlights the local people's expectations on the promised benefits from the Transfrontier Park. The chapter quizzes the extent of the local people's involvement in the planning and implementation of the project, given their apprehensions of it. It also re-visits the eviction discourse, now re-packaged as voluntary movement. The Sengwe-Tshipise community located on the southern tip of the GNP and falling within the Transfrontier Park zone is cited as a case study to illustrate the experiences of affected Zimbabwean residents.

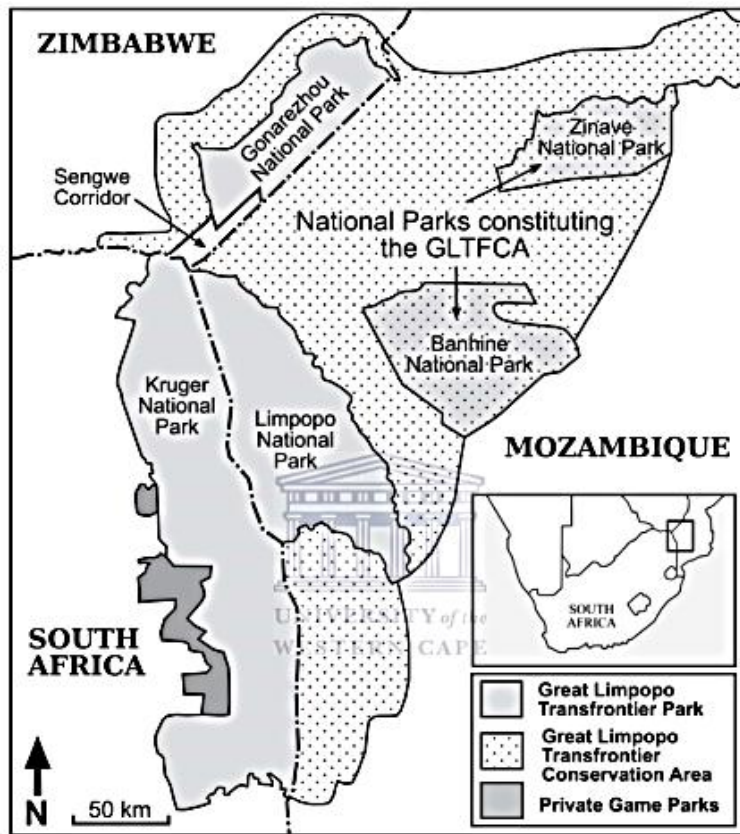
Early attempts at forming a transfrontier park in southern Africa

The GLTP was created by three Southern African states of Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe on 9 December 2002.¹²⁷⁵ The Transfrontier Park straddles the borders of the three

¹²⁷⁵ *Peace Parks Foundation*, 'Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', www.peaceparks.org/tfca.php?pid=19&mid=1005 (accessed on 17/5/15). Also see, The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Area, *Your Chance to Prosper*, undated. p. 1 & E. Lunstrum, 'Reconstructing History, Grounding Claims to Space: History, Memory and Displacement in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', *South African Geographical Journal*, 92, 2 (2010), p. 129, Kruger National Park, Park Management Plan, October, 2006, p. 20 & Gonarezhou National Park, General Management Plan 2011-2021.

participating countries and joins together the LNP of Mozambique, the KNP of South Africa and the GNP of Zimbabwe. Map 7.1 shows the areas that constitute the GLTP and the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area (GLTFCA).

Map 7.1: Location of the GLTP, GLTFCA and the Sengwe Corridor



Source: Whande, ‘Framing Biodiversity Conservation Discourses in South Africa’, p.18.

The SADC Protocol on Conservation of Wildlife defines a transfrontier park as an “area or component of a large ecological region that straddles the boundaries of two or more countries, encompassing one or more protected areas as well as multiple resource use areas.”¹²⁷⁶ It is a type

¹²⁷⁶ Peace Parks Foundation, www.peaceparks.org (accessed on 13/8/14).

of park whose thrust is on cross-border cooperation in the management of wildlife. The same kind of park is said to be guided by a development paradigm that engages local peoples in its management and in harvesting the fruits of its establishment.¹²⁷⁷

The GLTP was meant to cover a surface area of 35 700 km².¹²⁷⁸ It was to be gradually expanded to an even bigger project, the GLTFCA which, again, is indicated in Map 7.1. The conservation area which would take up a surface area of about 100 000 km² would bring together the region's renowned game parks, safari hunting areas, private conservancies and communal areas.¹²⁷⁹ Of its total area, 66 000 km² would be in Mozambique and would incorporate *Coutada* 16 (now LNP), Zinave and Banhine NPs and Massingir and Curumana communal areas. In South Africa, it would be made up of the KNP and the Makuleke/Pafuri Region with a surface area of 22 000 km² while in Zimbabwe, the conservation zone would integrate the GNP, Malipati Safari Area, Manjinji Pan Sanctuary, conservancies around the GNP and the Sengwe-Tshipise Corridor constituting a total area of 12 000 km².¹²⁸⁰ Both the GLTP and the GLTFCA would incorporate places that were then occupied by indigenous people who would have to be removed. In Zimbabwe, the most affected were the Sengwe and Tshipise residents located on the southern end of the GNP.

The idea of establishing a transfrontier park in the region can be traced back to the early period of colonial rule with the earliest recorded proposal surprisingly coming from Cecil Barnard (*Vhekenya*) an infamous ivory seeker whose hunting episodes had created havoc in the area that later became the GLTP. In a letter addressed to the NC of Chibi, Peter Forestall in 1914, *Vhekenya*

¹²⁷⁷ Milgroom & Spierenburg, 'Induced Volition', pp. 436-437 & Spenceley, 'Tourism in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', p. 652.

¹²⁷⁸ Malilangwe Trust Annual Report, 2001, p. 18.

¹²⁷⁹ 'Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', www.golimpopop.com/parks/transfrontier-parks/great-limpopo-transfrontier-park (accessed on 14/6/14).

¹²⁸⁰ Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou Transfrontier Park Agreement, 10 November 2000 & Kruger National Park, Park Management Plan, October 2006, p. 20.

had proposed the creation of an animal paradise connecting the area that was later to become the GNP to the KNP. Barnard argued that such a grand scheme had the potential of attracting large numbers of tourists into the region.¹²⁸¹ The suggestion was, however, shot down by Forestall, demeaning it as a poacher idea not worth consideration. He instead accused Barnard of hypocrisy for destroying animals in the same area he was now championing for game preservation.¹²⁸² To the NC, there was no better deceit. In addition, the idea was also rejected on account that Forestall would not be able to provide adequate protection to the anticipated glut of tourists into the area. His reply, dated June 1914 and cited in Bulpin's book clearly spelt out the position:

I quite agree with you, that the part of the world which you are in would make an excellent game reserve, but I don't think our authorities will move in this direction...I don't agree with you that we should make roads through your animal paradise and connect it up with the game reserve of the Northern Transvaal and invite tourists to see the game. As you say, there would be thousands of visitors and we would require a guard for every visitor.¹²⁸³

It is worth noting that at global level, the history of transfrontier parks date back to about the same time. In 1924, the Krakow Protocol of Poland and Czechoslovakia (Slovakia) was signed, giving birth to three joint parks in 1932.¹²⁸⁴ The pioneer transfrontier parks were created to solve political border disputes through wildlife cooperation and, hence, the name peace parks.¹²⁸⁵ In light of the above, *Vhekenya's* park proposal was not an isolated case and certainly not a misplaced one.

¹²⁸¹ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 97.

¹²⁸² As earlier explained, Crooks's Corner was the name given to a site along the Limpopo River where Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe shared a common border. During *Vhekenya's* 'reign' in the surrounding forests, the place was turned into a centre of all kinds of illicit activities conducted by especially whites who had come into the area seeking fortunes. See Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, for a detailed account.

¹²⁸³ Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p. 96-97.

¹²⁸⁴ Chaderopa, 'Cross Border Cooperation in Transboundary Conservation', p. 50.

¹²⁸⁵ It was believed that transfrontier peace parks promoted peaceful co-existence of states and that they served as means of conflict resolution through their trans-boundary scope. See, K. Barquet, P. Lujala & J. K. Rod, 'Transboundary Conservation and Militarised Inter-State Disputes', *Political Geography*, 42 (2014), p. 2.

After the snub of *Vhekenya*'s transfrontier park idea, it went dormant for some time only to be revisited in the 1920s when General Jan Smuts, the leader of the opposition in South Africa, came up, once again, with the idea of establishing a "great road" of fauna and flora into Central Africa. The plan was to create a belt of game country connecting the KNP with Southern Rhodesia's yet to be southern Game Park.¹²⁸⁶ At about the same time, a similar motion was proposed by A. O. D. Mogg, of the South African Wildlife Protection Society to link up the KNP with Southern Rhodesia.¹²⁸⁷ The proposal was followed up with vigour by the South African government after the amalgamation of the Sabi and Shingwidzi Game Reserves to form the larger KNP in 1927. General J. B. M. Hertzog, the Union's Prime Minister and Minister of Native Affairs also extended an invitation to PEA to set up a similar game park adjoining the KNP and stretching from the Crocodile River in the south to the confluence of the Limpopo and Pafuri Rivers in the north. The request was repeated over the coming years, at convenient times.¹²⁸⁸

Opinions over the transfrontier project between the South African Union and Southern Rhodesia often differed. Southern Rhodesia was in essence wary that South African overtures were a disguise to turn the country into a "casino state" of the Union.¹²⁸⁹ It was, especially so, given that up until Southern Rhodesia's attainment of self-governance in 1923, South Africa had been nursing hopes of annexing the country as its fifth province.¹²⁹⁰ Furthermore, the Veterinary Department of Southern Rhodesia was concerned that the project would lead to the spread of

¹²⁸⁶ *The Rhodesian Herald*, 13 August, 1937, 'Development of Game Reserves in the Colony'.

¹²⁸⁷ NAZ: S1194/1608/1/1, National Public Relations Advisory Board, Minutes of a Meeting Held in the Conference Room of the Statistical Department, Milton Building, Salisbury, 14th January 1947.

¹²⁸⁸ Mavhunga & Spierenburg, 'Transfrontier Talk, Cordon Politics', pp. 715-716 & 724.

¹²⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p. 728.

¹²⁹⁰ South Africa was then constituted by four provinces; the Cape, Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal. Southern Rhodesia would become the fifth, if incorporated. A referendum conducted in the country in 1923 put finality to the issue when the majority (of white voters) opted for self-governance.

diseases such as foot and mouth and, so, put to risk thousands of cattle north of Chipinda Pools.¹²⁹¹

The Department was supported by the ANC of Nuanetsi who also expressed fears over the negative impact of such trans-border cooperation to the country's beef industry.¹²⁹² In addition, the view of some Rhodesians, which was not without logic, was that South African's moves were a ploy to extend the KNP into neighbouring countries and in the process shed-off its excess game.¹²⁹³

Notwithstanding Southern Rhodesia's often reluctance to cooperate on the matter, further effort at wildlife management partnership was extended by the South African Union in 1933. This time, Southern Rhodesia through its Minister of Commerce, Transport and Public Works, R. P. Gilchrist, was more prepared to embrace the request on the ground that it would support expanded tourism.

The Minister stated:

The idea is that the sights of Rhodesia, which are already famed, should be approached through the greatest game sanctuary in the world [KNP]...It is possible to disclose...that the game sanctuary of Rhodesia may be a continuation of the great Union Reserve, Kruger Park, and that in addition the Portuguese will proclaim a sanctuary along the Rhodesian reserve.¹²⁹⁴

Gilchrist's position was in sync with that of the then President of the Society for Fauna Protection, the Honourable Earl of Onslow that the creation of a park linking the KNP and the proposed GNP would allow free movement of and, temporary migration of game from one park to another. This would give animals a choice to stay where they felt least molested.¹²⁹⁵ Such an arrangement would also make it easy for animals of both countries to cross the border during the dry season when

¹²⁹¹ NAZ: S4061, 'Address Given by Mr. L. B. Smith, Deputy Minister of Agriculture on Tsetse-Fly Operations', Wild Life Society of Rhodesia, Newsletter No. 27, August 1967 & NAZ: S4061, Report by S. E. Aitken-Cade, Wild Life Society of Southern Rhodesia, Newsletter No. 12, 15th June 1964.

¹²⁹² NAZ: S914/12, Game Reserves in Southern Rhodesia 1933-5: The Assistant NC Nuanetsi, J. Bawden to Supt. of Natives, Fort Victoria.

¹²⁹³ NAZ: 4061, Report, Wild Life Protection Society of Southern Rhodesia, Newsletter No. 9, May 1963. At the time, the Union was already overstocked with elephants that were reported to be damaging the habitat of the KNP.

¹²⁹⁴ *Sunday Mail*, 26 November 1933.

¹²⁹⁵ NAZ: S914/12/1B, Minister of Commerce, Transport and Public Works to the Right Honble, 1/12/33.

pastures were limited in either of the parks. Gilchrist affirmed that the inter-breeding of game from the parks was certainly a sound conservation measure from a generic point of view.¹²⁹⁶

A follow up meeting between Gilchrist and D. Reitz, the South African Minister of Lands held at the junction of Limpopo and Pafuri Rivers strengthened the resolve of the two countries to see the project through. Reitz was convinced that a cross-border park in the region was both tenable and feasible and promised to do everything possible to ensure it became a reality.¹²⁹⁷ Reitz's efforts were endorsed by the South African Society for the Prevention of the Wild Fauna of the Empire.¹²⁹⁸ It was also then that the idea of removing the Makuleke people from inside the KNP was mooted; a move that would allow the opening up of a corridor linking the park with Rhodesia's GNP and at the same time create a long and bitter struggle by the community to recover the lost land.¹²⁹⁹

In the same year, 1933, Southern Rhodesia sought the cooperation of the Portuguese Government on trans-boundary cooperation when it proposed the creation of a triangle of land between the Limpopo and Pafuri Rivers linking conservation areas of the three countries.¹³⁰⁰ The bigger idea was that of linking up the KNP with the east coast of Tanganyika through a continuous transfrontier game corridor.¹³⁰¹ This was certainly an ambitious project which was, however, consistent with Rhodes' earlier imperial Cape to Cairo dream.

While the idea of a transfrontier park was in principle bought by the Southern Rhodesian government by 1933, it was temporarily shelved for fear that it would create a highway for tsetse-

¹²⁹⁶ Ibid. Also see, *Sunday Mail*, 26 November, 1933.

¹²⁹⁷ NAZ: S914/12/1B, Deneys Reitz, Ministry of Lands, Pretoria to the Acting Secretary, Commerce and Transport, 15th October 1934.

¹²⁹⁸ Mavhunga & Spierenburg, 'Transfrontier Talk, Cordon Politics', p. 729.

¹²⁹⁹ Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p. 98 & W. Wolmer, 'Transboundary Conservation: The Politics of Ecological Integrity in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29, 1 (2003), p. 269.

¹³⁰⁰ Mavhunga & Spierenburg, 'Transfrontier Talk, Cordon Politics', pp. 727-728.

¹³⁰¹ *The Rhodesian Herald*, 13 August, 1937.

flies, a prospect the government was cautious about.¹³⁰² On the South African side, Steven-Hamilton, the warden of the KNP continued to nurture the idea of extending the influence of the park across the Limpopo and, into the Mozambican *coutadas* (hunting enclaves) for the convenience of wild animals. He, however, felt his efforts were being frustrated by the ranching interests of Southern Rhodesia which prioritised domestic stock over game.¹³⁰³

From 1934 and following the official declaration of the Gonarezhou veld as a game reserve, more effort was expended towards the full realisation of the proposed Transfrontier Park. South Africa requested Southern Rhodesia to offer eight hundred and nine thousand three hundred and seventy one hectares of land between the Sabi and Limpopo Rivers and between the PEA border and the western edges of Nuanetsi for the project.¹³⁰⁴ Southern Rhodesia responded by spelling out its commitment to transfrontier cooperation. In particular it celebrated the anticipated link between the KNP and the GNP.¹³⁰⁵ Between 1936 and 1937 A. O. G. Mogg, of the South African Wildlife Protection Society continued to put pressure on the governments of the three countries for the realisation of the proposed park.¹³⁰⁶ Again, in 1938 a Mozambican ecologist, Gomes de Sousa also pushed for the fruition of the animal reserve arguing that it had the potential of becoming one of the greatest in the world.¹³⁰⁷ Southern Rhodesia's continued interest in the project was further confirmed by the 1947 Report of the National Parks that emphasised the importance of continued

¹³⁰² Ibid.

¹³⁰³ Mavhunga & Spierenburg, 'Transfrontier Talk, Cordon Politics', p. 720.

¹³⁰⁴ Mavhunga, 'The Mobile Workshop', p. 250.

¹³⁰⁵ NAZ: S914/12/1B, Acting Secretary Commerce and Transport to Col. Deneys Reitz, Minister of Lands, Pretoria.

¹³⁰⁶ Mavhunga & Spierenburg, 'Transfrontier Talk, Cordon Politics', p. 729.

¹³⁰⁷ Bhatasara, Nyamwanza & Kujinga, 'Trasfrontier Parks and Development in Southern Africa', p. 630.

dialogue with the KNP.¹³⁰⁸ Such efforts were intermittently held back by the country's focus on tsetse-fly eradication in the 1950s and 1960s which took precedence over the park scheme.¹³⁰⁹

In the 1970s, the transfrontier park idea was, once again, revived with more energy by another Mozambican biologist who was fully supported by the South African National Parks Board.¹³¹⁰

The Board appointed a commission to conduct a feasibility study of a merger of the parks of the three countries. The recommendations of the commission were put into effect at the beginning of the 21st century when the GLTP came to fruition. Glaringly absent from the transfrontier debate was the fate of resident communities who were to be affected by the scheme, a theme that is the central concern of this chapter.

The birth of the GLTP

The move towards the establishment of the tri-national park gained traction from the middle of the 1990s. There were two notable developments that favoured the momentum. The first was the end of the civil war in Mozambique and the second, the rapid dismantling of apartheid in South Africa. Both took place between 1990 and 1994.¹³¹¹ So, for the first time in decades Southern Africa enjoyed unprecedented peace, a condition that gave impetus to the establishment of a peace

¹³⁰⁸ Report of the National Parks Advisory Board, 31/12/49.

¹³⁰⁹ Large numbers of animals, up to seven hundred thousand were, by 1962, exterminated in a bid to contain the tsetse-fly scourge in the region. See, NAZ: S4061, 'Report', Wild Life Society of Southern Rhodesia, Newsletter No. 9, May 1963, NAZ: S4061, 'Address Given by Mr. L. B. Smith, Deputy Minister of Agriculture on Tsetse-Fly Operations', Wild Life Society of Rhodesia, Newsletter No. 27, August 1967, *The Sunday Mail*, 1 March 1964, 'Slaughter of Game Again', *The Sunday Mail*, 1 March 1964, 'Game Slaughter Fear' & *The Sunday Mail*, 22 March 1964, 'Gona Re Zhou Must Not Die'.

¹³¹⁰ Wolmer, 'Transboundary Conservation', p. 269.

¹³¹¹ Long-time prisoner and nationalist leader of the African National Congress of South Africa, the late Nelson Mandela was released from twenty seven years of incarceration in 1990 and soon initiated a political process, together with Frederick W. de Klerk, the then President of the South African Union leading the country to majority rule in 1994. See, C. Bocchino, 'Landmines and Conservation in Southern Africa: Peace Parks in the Aftermath of Armed Conflict', *African Security Review*, 16, 2 (2010), p. 83 for further information on the matter.

park.¹³¹² A concerted push for the realisation of the mega-park largely came from a South African business mogul and keen conservation advocate, Anton Rupert. He was instrumental in the formation of the Peace Parks Foundation in 1997 which, thereafter, worked tirelessly in mobilising funds for the successful realisation of the Transfrontier Park project.¹³¹³

Among the outstanding sponsors was the World Bank Global Environmental Facility, an institution established in 1992 at the Rio Environmental Summit to support international projects with an environmental thrust. Its show of support for the GLTP came through an initial release of US\$5 million to Mozambique for feasibility studies and US\$68 million for biodiversity conservation in south-eastern Zimbabwe.¹³¹⁴ Zimbabwean funds were earmarked for:

...the protection of adequate range for mobile wildlife; protection of vegetation from destruction by fire and other impacts created by humans; protection of water resources; re-establishment of migration corridors; protection of wildlife from illegal killing; and minimisation of conflict between wildlife and agriculture or other land uses outside the park.¹³¹⁵

A further US\$2 million was set aside to support communal wildlife conservation projects on the fringes of the GNP. Of note was the condition attached to the fund that it be directed by wildlife considerations and not human needs.¹³¹⁶ Such selective conditions created friction between the communities of the area and the conservation agenda, a situation that did not augur well for both.

Other funders were The United States government, the USAID, an Italian Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) called CESVI, the EU, the African Wildlife Foundation, the German

¹³¹² E. Lunstrum, 'Articulated Sovereignty: Extending Mozambican State Power through the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', *Political Geography*, 36 (2013), p. 3.

¹³¹³ Buscher & Dietz, 'Conjunctions of Governance' p. 7.

¹³¹⁴ 'Zimbabwe Parks to Get US\$68 Million', The World Bank Group Press Release 2/6/1998, No. 98/1791/AFR. Also see, 'World Bank. 2004. Zimbabwe-Park Rehabilitation and Conservation Project', Washington DC: World Bank.<http://www.documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2004/03/3168659.park-rehabilitation-conservation-project> (accessed on 8/01/16).

¹³¹⁵ Ibid.

¹³¹⁶ Ibid. Also see, Wolmer, 'Transboundary Conservation', p. 271.

Development Agency, the Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation, the World Conservation Union, the Africa Resources Trust and the Southern Alliance for Indigenous Resources.¹³¹⁷ The NPWMA was the key driver of the project at the local level though its role was clearly subordinate to that of external sponsors. The enthusiastic interests of the funders were viewed as attempts to indirectly extend their influence in the region, using wildlife management as an excuse.¹³¹⁸

The height of the negotiation for the park scheme came between 1998 and 1999 when working committees were set up to deal the project's finer details. Ministers of Environment from the three countries were directed to spearhead the planning. They formed a Joint Management Board with the specific responsibility of monitoring the project and regularly appraising the principals (Heads of States) on the progress of the project. The Joint Management Board came up with a seemingly rushed park draft that largely ignored the input of a key stakeholder, the local people, in the initial planning process. Such was the situation in spite of the existence of a local Working Group Committee, created to articulate the concerns of local communities. In the absence of full consultation, the Committee only served to rubber-stamp decisions made by higher government offices. It was, clearly, another example of a top-down approach to development.

The project was bolstered by a 1999 SADC Heads of State Protocol on Wildlife Conservation that affirmed its total support of shared wildlife conservation initiatives and the establishment of transfrontier conservation zones in the region.¹³¹⁹ Thereafter, the three countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding in October 1999 which spelt out that ecosystems transcended

¹³¹⁷ Bhatasara, Nyamwanza & Kujinga, 'Transfrontier Parks and Development in Southern Africa', p. 633.

¹³¹⁸ M. Sibanda, 'The Urban and Rural Spaces: Consequences of Nature Conservation and the Rural to Urban Migration: A Case of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area, Zimbabwe Sector', *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology*, 1, 1-2 (2010), p. 24.

¹³¹⁹ Hanks, 'Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) in Southern Africa', p. 137.

national boundaries and underscored the need for trans-border cooperation in natural resource conservation.¹³²⁰ The countries signed a follow-up agreement, the *Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou Transfrontier Park Agreement* in November 2000 to concretise the Memorandum of Understanding.¹³²¹ The name Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park came into use in 2001, following a further panel-beating of the earlier agreement.¹³²² The project came to fruition with the ceremonial signing of the Agreement on 9 December 2002 at the Mozambican town of Xai-Xai.¹³²³

The objectives of the GLTP were captured in Article 3 of the *Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou Transfrontier Park Agreement* as follows:¹³²⁴

- to foster transnational collaboration and cooperation among the Parties in implementing ecosystem management through the establishment, development and management of the Transfrontier Park;
- to promote alliances in the management of biological natural resources by encouraging social, economic and other partnerships among the Parties, Private Sector, Local Communities and NGOs;
- to enhance ecosystem integrity and natural ecological processes by harmonising environmental management procedures across international boundaries and striving to remove artificial barriers impeding the natural movement of animals;

¹³²⁰ *The Herald*, 25 October, 1999, 'Joint Conservation area Created'.

¹³²¹ Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou Transfrontier Park Agreement, 10 November 2000.

¹³²² Spenceley, 'Tourism in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', p. 649.

¹³²³ Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, Ministerial Committee Meeting, 12 July, 2002. Also see, Kruger National Park, Park Management Plan, October, 2006, p. 20.

¹³²⁴ Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou Transfrontier Park Agreement, 10 November 2000.

- to develop frameworks and strategies whereby local communities can participate in, and tangibly benefit from, the management and sustainable use of natural resources that occur within the Transfrontier Park;
- to facilitate the establishment and maintenance of a sub-regional economic base by way of appropriate development frameworks, strategies and work plans; and
- to develop trans-border ecotourism as a means for fostering regional socio-economic development.

Celebrating the establishment of the park

The build-up to the launch of the GLTP was spiced by considerable hype to justify it. Nelson Mandela, the late President of South Africa gave it a universal profile when he stated:

I know of no political movement, no philosophy, no ideology, which does not agree with the peace parks concept as we see it going into fruition today. It is a concept that can be embraced by all. In a world beset by conflicts and division, peace is one of the cornerstones of the future. Peace parks are a building block in this process, not only in our region, but potentially in the entire world.¹³²⁵

Thabo Mbeki, the then President of the South African Republic affirmed the political significance of the project to the region:

Our common ancestors...must be smiling because through this park (GLTP), we have begun a process of dismantling the artificial and arbitrary borders that separated the same national and cultural groups, the same clans and families... We seek to redress the legacy of the colonial regional landscape that fragmented ecosystems and separated families and communities... This demonstrates the potential of this park in *uniting our people* as well as contributing to the *development of areas around the park* (my emphasis).¹³²⁶

Mbeki added a human touch:

¹³²⁵ Peace Parks Foundation, www.peaceparks.org (accessed on 10/7/15).

¹³²⁶ Address by T. Mbeki, the President of the Republic of South Africa at the official opening of the Giriyaondo border point, 16 August, 2006, <http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/speeches/2006/mbeki0816.htm> (accessed on 10/7/15).

The global recognition of our regional SADC (Southern Africa Development Community) conservation efforts would be rendered meaningless if these TFPP [Transfrontier Peace Parks Project] *fail to improve the lives of our people* (again, my emphasis), as well as inspire confidence in our peoples about their tomorrow.¹³²⁷

As if not to be outdone, the South African Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Mohammed Valli Moosa echoed:

Southern African boundaries have begun to fall as we and our neighbours embrace the world's most ambitious conservation project, the creation of Africa's 'super park'. This is the stuff dreams are made of. We are the fortunate generation of South Africans who have witnessed dreams turn to reality... The creation of the great Gaza-Kruger-Trans-Frontier Park is the single most significant and ambitious conservation project in the world today. *It promises to bring a better life to some of the poorest citizens of Southern Africa* (italics added for emphasis), and is also a real, living and demonstrable manifestation of the African Renaissance...¹³²⁸

Of note in the above quotations was the celebratory mood. Nelson Mandela emphasised the promotion of regional peace through cross-border cooperation. Such thinking was best understood in the broader discourse of political alliances forged at SADC level since its formation in the mid-1980s, then as the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference.¹³²⁹ He saw in cross-boundary conservation a building block to improving inter-state and regional cooperation and the realisation of a bigger dream of a united Africa.¹³³⁰ The fact that the region had recently successfully transformed itself from conflict (RENAMO war and apartheid) to peace was cause to be hopeful.¹³³¹ Park forests which had served as havens of RENAMO rebels during Mozambique's

¹³²⁷ Ministry of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Address by the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, at the Opening of the Mata Mata Access Facility to the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/president/sp/2007/sp10121119.htm> (accessed on 10/7/15).

¹³²⁸ South African Environmental Affairs and Tourism Minister M. V. Moosa's speech at the handover of elephants to Mozambique, KNP, http://www.environment.gov.za/NewsMedia/Speeches/2001oct4/GKG_04102001.htm (accessed on 10/7/15).

¹³²⁹ L. A. Swatuk, 'Peace Parks in Southern Africa', Unpublished paper, Environmental Change and Security Project Report 11, 2005, p. 3.

¹³³⁰ The dream was championed by Colonel Muammar Gaddafi of Libya and enthusiastically supported by a sizeable number of African leaders, including Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. See, Barquet, Lujala & Rod, 'Transboundary Conservation and Militarised Inter-State Disputes', pp. 2-3.

¹³³¹ Bhatasara, Nyamwanza & Kujinga, 'Transfrontier Parks and Development in Southern Africa', p. 633.

civil war and hiding places for *Umkonto Wesizwe* cadres during South Africa's war of liberation were now transformed into hubs of healing old wounds through the joint conservation of nature.¹³³²

Mandela's position was reinforced by Mbeki's rather premature celebration of the impending dismantling of colonial artificial borders that had not only barred human interaction within the region but also curtailed animal movement. To Mbeki, the park project represented a great liberating crusade, an anti-colonial development strategy with the potential of promoting regional growth.¹³³³ His thinking and that of many others in his school acknowledged that African political boundaries were drawn with little regard for the environmental consequences and that they very often cut off migration routes of animals and certainly impeded human movement.¹³³⁴ It is worth noting that politicians were, in the instance, deploying anti-colonial rhetoric to champion the establishment of the park. The strategy seemed to work as borders were generally unpopular for being colonial creations and for inhibiting border communities from crossing them freely to conduct survival activities. Given the above, few people grieved over their planned dismantling. What was ironic, however, was that it took this long to correct the error and that the process only came to be triggered by wildlife considerations.

Furthermore, Mbeki strongly believed that other than uniting the people of Southern Africa, the GLTP had the potential of uplifting the living standards of communities falling within the park zone. To him, and to those who subscribed to his thinking, failure to do so would be a great let down to such communities. Moosa's characterisation of the park as a channel of empowering and

¹³³² Swatuk, 'Peace Parks in Southern Africa', p. 4. *Umkonto Wesizwe* was the military wing of the African National Congress of South Africa. During the struggle for independence, the army operated from bases in Mozambique, hence, the use of the forests.

¹³³³ Lunstrum, 'Reconstructing History, Grounding Claims to Space', p. 134.

¹³³⁴ South African Ministry of Environmental Affairs and Tourism <http://www.environment.gov.za> (accessed on 11/7/15).

bettering the lives of the poor of Southern Africa was certainly hasty as will be illustrated in the case of the Sengwe-Tshipise border community in relation to the GLTP.

Mbeki and Mandela's arguments connected well with the peace park concept. Both were in agreement with Wolmer's contention that proponents of transfrontier parks generally perceived them as instruments of cross-border cultural harmonisation and that they played an important role in re-establishing political historical links of communities divided by colonialism.¹³³⁵ The major score of such parks was that they championed an African wildlife sanctuary without borders, a significant move away from the colonial mantra of fortress conservation.¹³³⁶ Furthermore, transfrontier parks were perceived as having a high potential of fostering peace in the region through their encouragement of inter-state cooperation in the management of shared borderland resources.¹³³⁷ In this, the transfrontier park concept appeared to resonate with Mbeki's grand project of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, a scheme that proposed for a rejuvenated African development paradigm.¹³³⁸

It was, however, not jubilation for all. Zimbabwe in particular was concerned with the big brother role assumed by South Africa. It was especially worried by the seemingly bulldozing attitude of its southern neighbour in the geo-politics of the region. Zimbabwe's suspicion was that South Africa was, this time around, indirectly but cunningly trying to create more space for its surplus elephant population through extending the KNP into neighbouring countries.¹³³⁹ The country also

¹³³⁵ Wolmer, 'Transboundary Conservation', pp. 264-265.

¹³³⁶ Hanks, 'Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) in Southern Africa', p. 139.

¹³³⁷ Bhatasara, Nyamwanza & Kujinga, 'Transfrontier Parks and Development in Southern Africa', p. 633.

¹³³⁸ S. L. A. Ferreira, 'Communities and Transfrontier Parks in the Southern African Development Community: The Case of Limpopo National Park, Mozambique', *South African Geographical Journal*, 88, 2 (2006), p. 166.

¹³³⁹ Buscher & Dietz, 'Conjunctions of Governance', p. 10. The other option for SANParks was to cull the animals, a position restricted by the 1995 CITES moratorium on elephant culling. Again, such a move was bound to attract condemnation from animal lovers.

felt hurried into endorsing the project and, in Wolmer's judgement, the Zimbabwean government even appeared to have had a limited understanding of what it was committing itself to.¹³⁴⁰ It, probably explains why of the three participating states Zimbabwe seemed to have been the most unenthusiastic and certainly the least committed.¹³⁴¹ Again, the country's controversial land reform programme did not fit well in the peace park trajectory.¹³⁴²

Zimbabwe's uneasiness also arose from the country's fear of the erosion of its sovereignty, a treasured asset during a decade when the country was under siege from the international community for embarking on the contested land reform programme.¹³⁴³ Sovereignty, which had become one of the few remaining markers of the country's identity had to be, thus, guarded jealously. Of note was that Zimbabwe's trepidation was in spite of the existence of an underlining statement in the preamble of the park agreement that guaranteed sovereign equality and territorial integrity of all the participating states.¹³⁴⁴

In addition, for Zimbabwe, anything that involved foreigners during the crisis decade was viewed with suspicion. The country was particularly worried about the involvement of the Peace Parks Foundation and its donor partners. Its feeling was that the foreign drive would erode the powers of the participating states in making independent decisions on the wildlife of the region. Again, some in government believed that the consultative arrangement on park management compromised the independence of the state(s) in making autonomous decisions on the shared wildlife.¹³⁴⁵

¹³⁴⁰ Wolmer, 'Transboundary Conservation', p. 268.

¹³⁴¹ R. Duffy, 'Peace Parks: The Paradox of Globalisation', *Geopolitics*, 6, 2 (2001), p. 19.

¹³⁴² While the signing ceremony was taking place, part of the GNP earmarked for the GLTP was being invaded by the Chisa community under the FTLRP.

¹³⁴³ Wolmer, *From the Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 175.

¹³⁴⁴ Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou Transfrontier Park Agreement, 10 November 2000. See, Preamble & Article 5 of the Agreement.

¹³⁴⁵ Lunstrum, 'Articulated Sovereignty', pp. 3-5. Given Zimbabwe's precarious position at the time, it had taken a lot of bravado for the country to even sign the GLTP agreement.

The Department of Parks was also concerned that the opening up of borders would increase criminality in the transfrontier region and lead to increased plunder of game in the GNP especially from Mozambicans some of whom were still armed years after the RENAMO war.¹³⁴⁶ The movement's poaching record in the area was well documented and, so, such fears were not without reason. Again, some farmers in southern Zimbabwe, including the new black ranchers were also worried about the possible spread of cattle diseases such as foot and mouth and bovine tuberculosis from the two neighbouring countries.¹³⁴⁷

South Africa had its own fears though they seemed outweighed by the celebration. The opening up of the border was bound to increase criminal activities in South Africa as more people, desperate for employment, would move south from neighbouring countries. South Africa was also wary that a country such as Mozambique, dogged by a history of war was bound to pose security concerns for it.¹³⁴⁸ It also dreaded that the *makwerekwere* from Zimbabwe and Mozambique, as the low-skilled migrant labourers were colloquially called would take away jobs from South Africans.¹³⁴⁹ The above thinking, in essence, questioned the advantages of cooperating with struggling neighbours who would contaminate South Africans. Such resentment was a clear demonstration of the extent to which the artificial borders had entrenched the 'them and us' attitude. It was apparent that the same people (the Shangane/ Tsonga) now considered themselves as separate due

¹³⁴⁶ Interview with anonymous Game Ranger Chipinda Pools, 2 February 2014.

¹³⁴⁷ Mozambique's health system was the weakest and, so, most vulnerable to these diseases. South Africa's buffalo, warthog and impala were known to be carriers of the foot and mouth disease. These were diseases that had been eliminated in Zimbabwe in the 1950s. There was fear of their resurgence. For further insight on such diseases, see, *inter alia*, Buscher & Dietz, 'Conjunctions of Governance', p. 10, P. Chaminuka, R. A. Groeneveld & E. C. Van Ierland, 'Reconciling Interests Concerning Wildlife and Livestock near Conservation Areas: A Model for Analysing Alternative Land Uses', *Ecological Economics*, 98 (2014), p. 29, E. Marabini & K. Dutlow, Report on Disease Surveillance in Cattle in Sengwe Communal Land, 12-18 September 2003 & Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, Ministerial Committee Meeting, 12 July, 2002.

¹³⁴⁸ Duffy, 'Peace Parks', p. 20.

¹³⁴⁹ Chaderopa, 'Cross Border Cooperation in Transboundary Conservation-Development Initiatives in Southern Africa', p. 57.

to colonial experiences.¹³⁵⁰ The GLTP was trying to correct that anomaly through promoting cross-border cultural cooperation.

The politics of (re)moving people

The creation of the Transfrontier Park was bound to lead to the movement of communities who now found themselves located in the park zone. The founding document of the GLTP explicitly stated its intention of removing all human barriers that may impede the successful establishment of the animal paradise.¹³⁵¹ The reason was because it was motivated more by the desire to build a larger home for wildlife than to advance the lives of indigenous people resident within the Transfrontier Park zone, contrary to its stated objectives. The attitude of park advocates, though not openly proclaimed, was that the presence of people in the park zone was an obstacle to the broader scope of regional wildlife conservation. The clear statement was that communities in park-designated areas were at the bottom of the park planners' concerns. As a result, Mapuranga was compelled to conclude that the relocation of such communities was pressed more by the need to meet park demands than the improvement of the people's lives.¹³⁵²

While the World Bank's position (main funder) was for the creation of a park that allowed humans and game to co-exist, people were soon (re)moved or threatened with removal, allegedly to protect them from attacks by aggressive wild animals.¹³⁵³ Some are said to have decided to move out of their own volition, given the new restrictive resident conditions they were now subjected to. Such park *proviso* included controlled movement, the prohibition of crop cultivation, the banning of

¹³⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 58.

¹³⁵¹ Milgroom & Spierenburg, 'Induced Volition', p. 438.

¹³⁵² S. Mapuranga, 'Injustice in the Name of Peace: The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', Unpublished paper, 2010, p. 2.

¹³⁵³ There was increased human-wildlife conflict following the release of elephants from the KNP to the LNP.

fishing and the proscription of subsistence hunting.¹³⁵⁴ Government officials, however, maintained that relocation was voluntary and that the principle of co-existence was in all cases still the guiding paradigm. In reality, the movements were induced by the untenable situation that now pertained. Turner was, as a result, persuaded to conclude that such an evasive approach raised scepticism on the sincerity of participating governments to institute fair ground rules and consequently raised the question of their commitment to the welfare of such communities.¹³⁵⁵

Removals ignited the colonial mantra of separating people and wildlife and granting the latter preferential treatment.¹³⁵⁶ Fences were now removed for the convenience of animal movements and only erected where the same animals were to be protected, from humans.¹³⁵⁷ Mozambique was the first to experience movements from the park-designated area. When *Coutada* 16 was hurriedly proclaimed the LNP in November 2001 there were still scores of people whose destiny was yet to be determined. Following the declaration, up to six thousand people along the Shingwidzi River and near Massingir Dam were to be immediately (re)moved.¹³⁵⁸ The people from the ten affected villages were to be ‘voluntarily’ resettled somewhere outside the park while their land was to be turned into protected homes of wildlife and places of tourists’ enjoyment.¹³⁵⁹

The official position was enunciated, without remorse by a LNP official:

We knew that there were people from the beginning but somehow we thought that given our experiences in other parks people would be able to stay inside without a problem. However, shortly after, Kruger decided not to manage their fences and animals started coming in. The human-wildlife conflict began to be complicated and we realised that the best option was to resettle people.¹³⁶⁰

¹³⁵⁴ Ferreira, ‘Communities and Transfrontier Parks in the Southern African Development Community’, p. 171.

¹³⁵⁵ Turner, ‘A Crisis in CBNRM?’ p. 11.

¹³⁵⁶ Milgroom & Spierenburg, ‘Induced Volition’, p. 436.

¹³⁵⁷ Sibanda, ‘The Urban and Rural Spaces’, p. 25.

¹³⁵⁸ The figure was out of the estimated resident population of thirty thousand. See, Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, Ministerial Meeting, 12 July 2002.

¹³⁵⁹ Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, Ministerial Meeting, 12 July 2002.

¹³⁶⁰ Cited in Milgroom & Spierenburg, ‘Induced Volition’, p. 439.

That the Kruger Park failed to manage its fences was a most disingenuous excuse as the official arrangement was to bring down fences between the KNP and the LNP and, so, allow unrestricted movement of animals between the two parks. The release of thirty elephants from the KNP to the LNP in October 2001 was a highly publicised event that was celebrated by both South Africa and Mozambique.¹³⁶¹ That animals from the KNP raided a former human settlement and created the problems enunciated could not, therefore, have come as a surprise to the Mozambican officials who happened to have been part to the problem.

The establishment of the GLTP undoubtedly increased human-wildlife conflict in Mozambique as people's homesteads were now located right inside the declared park. Such conflict included damage to crops and attacks from human-eater animals such as lions. Unrestricted movement became a privilege of wild animals, a clear case of putting animals before people. Many involuntarily moved out from 2003 onwards because of the restrictive residence conditions and the increasing threats of attacks from animal.¹³⁶² The movements were generously funded by donor institutions whose interests were, clearly, to advance the cause of wildlife by expeditiously assisting the removal of humans from the Transfrontier Park zone.

On the Zimbabwean side, the delineation of the Sengwe-Tshipise Corridor as a park zone was a precursor to the relocation of people resident in the area, a subject of later discussion in the chapter. The Chisa people who had invaded a northern portion of the GNP at the height of the FTLRP also faced possible similar eviction. The area they had occupied had been earmarked for the

¹³⁶¹ Environmental Affairs and Tourism Minister M. V. Moosa's speech at the handover of elephants to Mozambique, KNP, http://www.environment.gov.za/NewsMedia/Speeches/2001oct4/GKG_04102001.htm (accessed on 10/7/15).

¹³⁶² Milgroom & Spierenburg, 'Induced Volition', p. 435.

development of an Intensive Protection Zone for black rhinos and, so, its occupation was considered an affront to the Transfrontier Park project.¹³⁶³

The looming relocation of Zimbabwean communities in the transfrontier zone evoked memories of earlier unpleasant removals which were often brutal. The frustration of the communities was lucidly expressed by a Sengwe elderly man who was a victim of earlier evictions:

We understand our relatives in Mozambique have begun being re-located from the Limpopo National Park. You may not understand how this feels unless you experience it. This is not the first time we are faced with possible eviction. *Vatsama vaka vahirhurhisa* (they keep on moving us). We were moved out of Gonarezhou. We were moved during the war of liberation by the Rhodesian government when they planted their land mines. We suffered a lot when we were moved into *Keeps* [Protected Villages]. Now we hear that we are going to be moved once again, to go and start a new life. You can see I am very old [he was visibly in his 80s]. When are they going to give us some rest?¹³⁶⁴

Many in his category had suffered from similar eviction experiences. The entire area was a site of recorded forced colonial removals whose memories and pain were still too fresh in people's minds. During the RENAMO war of the 1980s and 1990s, many border communities of the area were also forced off their homes.¹³⁶⁵ The war was also responsible for the massive destruction of wildlife in the GNP. The re-stocking of the area with game depleted by poaching during the RENAMO war was used as a justification for displacing thousands of people from the park corridors, a clear case of prioritising animals ahead of humans.¹³⁶⁶

The evictions and threats raised a number of questions. In the first place was the question how justifiable was it to remove humans in order to replace them with animals? The follow up question was on the impact of such removals on the rights of targeted communities to the land tenure. A

¹³⁶³ Mombeshora & Le Bel, 'People-Park Conflicts', p. 2610.

¹³⁶⁴ Interview with an anonymous elderly male villager, Malipati, 6 September 2014.

¹³⁶⁵ Interview with Research Assistants Molly Baloyi, Liberty Chauke, Lucas Maregere, Dumisani Mbalati & Rosemary Moyo, Great Zimbabwe University, 20 September 2014.

¹³⁶⁶ Lunstrum, 'Reconstructing History, Grounding Claims to Space', p. 133.

related question was on policy contradiction in government whereby, people within the transfrontier zone were to be forcibly removed from their lands at a time when many others were benefitting from land allocation under the FTLRP. The Transfrontier Park project, through its proposed displacement of communities was, therefore, seen as retrogressive as it ran counter to the land reform programme underway in the country.

It appears that the proposed removals failed to take on board the local people's concerns. Of interest was that at an all stakeholders' meeting held on 26 November 2002, the resettlement of communities targeted for displacement was treated as just a side issue.¹³⁶⁷ Such action betrayed the official position that the plight of the affected communities was government priority. It was obvious that the planned evictions were guided by national instead of local considerations, another clear case of the state dictating the menu to be served to local communities. The impending removals were also a reflection of competing national and local interests with national interests taking precedence. It was also a case of the state choosing to conveniently forget the painful past eviction experiences of local people.¹³⁶⁸ The history of south-eastern Zimbabwe that was considered disruptive to the park project was expediently forgotten as the area was presented with a new historical paradigm that now rationalised the landscape of the area as wildlife land that had to be free from human occupation.¹³⁶⁹ It was in a way a return to the fortress mantra in a re-packaged form as, this time, the movements were said to be voluntary.

Another paradigm shift on park politics was that instead of viewing indigenous communities as anathema to the park institution and objects to be removed, there were suggestions from some

¹³⁶⁷ Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, Progress Report, 26 November 2002.

¹³⁶⁸ Lunstrum, 'Reconstructing History, Grounding Claims to Space', p. 132.

¹³⁶⁹ Ibid.

quarters that they now be “conceptualised as a useful cultural adjunct to the wilderness” concept, in the form of objects of tourism.¹³⁷⁰ Tourists were now coming to “see the natives” and photograph or video-tape them.¹³⁷¹ For those subscribing to the persuasion, the focus was now on marketing the so-called primitive traditional version of Shangane identity instead of emphasising on their history in a globalised village.¹³⁷² The folly with such an approach was that it chose to deliberately underplay the rich cultural, political and economic history of the people and instead conveniently aligned Shangane history to ecotourism.

The Sengwe-Tshipise community

The case of the Sengwe-Tshipise community, in the context of the GLTP, makes an interesting study. Map 7.1 shows the area, which is also referred to as a corridor. It was created to directly join the KNP with the GNP, a linkage necessary to ultimately connect the three parks constituting the GLTP. The corridor occupied Wards 13 (Pahlela and Masukwe), 14 (Gwaivi) and 15 (Muhlekwaneni Ngwenyeni, Chishinya and Maose) of the Chiredzi Rural District Council and Wards 1 and 2 of Tshipise under the Beitbridge Rural District Council. The population breakdown of the areas was 83% Shangane, 13% Venda and others such as Ndebele, Shona and Pfumbi (4%).¹³⁷³

At the planning stage, the corridor was to be constituted by a strip of land along the Limpopo River of about five to eight kilometres in width and twenty five kilometres in length giving a total area

¹³⁷⁰ Wolmer, ‘Transboundary Conservation’, p. 274.

¹³⁷¹ H. Goodwin, ‘Local Community Involvement in Tourism around National Parks: Opportunities and Constrains’, *Current Issues in Tourism*, 5, 3-4 (2010), pp. 354-355.

¹³⁷² Wolmer, ‘Transboundary Conservation’, p. 274.

¹³⁷³ Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, Strategic Planning Workshop for the Sengwe Corridor, Held at Malilangwe, Hakamela Camp, 16-18 September, 2002. As was earlier said, the Ndebele and Shona people had been moved into the area by the colonial government from the Filabusi and Victoria District in the 1950s and 1960s.

of 170 km².¹³⁷⁴ Its creation was to initially lead to the displacement of seven hundred and forty families representing about four thousand six hundred and forty people. In its broader form, it was to affect up to twenty thousand people in a proposed enlarged area of 393 km² of the Sengwe-Tshipise Communal Lands.¹³⁷⁵ The strip was to be jointly administered by the two responsible rural district councils (representing the community) and the NPWMA.

Initially the three Sengwe communities targeted for eviction were the Xilotlela, Chikwarakwara and the Mpande.¹³⁷⁶ An interesting case was that of the Xilotlela people of Ward 15, a community which had resisted eviction from its homeland during the height of colonial rule. Up to seventeen families with approximately ninety four people were affected. It was suggested that they be moved to Dumisa their old place of abode which the authorities unashamedly admitted was now really overcrowded.¹³⁷⁷ Other suggestions were that they be moved to Rutenga, some one hundred kilometres away.¹³⁷⁸ The community interpreted the planned relocation as an attempt to dump them for their alleged involvement in uncontrolled cross-border activities that included cattle rustling and smuggling of goods into neighbouring Mozambique but, also, for poaching in the nearby GNP.¹³⁷⁹ To the state, the border area was without doubt a centre of illicit activities and,

¹³⁷⁴ Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, Strategic Planning Workshop for the Sengwe Corridor, Held at Malilangwe, Hakamela Camp, 16-18 September, 2002. Later proposals were that the corridor's width be between fifteen and twenty five kilometres implying the displacement of more people.

¹³⁷⁵ *Mail and Guardian*, 24/11/2000. Also see, M. Sibanda, 'Rhythms of Power and International Engineering in Conservation', *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 17, 2 (2015), p. 88.

¹³⁷⁶ Sengwe-Tshipise Wilderness Corridor Local Development Plan, Report of the First Stakeholders Workshop, Hakamela Camp, Malilangwe, Chiredzi, 6-7 December 2005, p. 7.

¹³⁷⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 6, 14 & 15.

¹³⁷⁸ C. Chirozva, B. B. Mukamuri & J. Manjengwa, 'Using Scenario Planning for Stakeholder Engagement in Livelihood Futures in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area', *Development Southern Africa*, 30, 6 (2013), p. 778.

¹³⁷⁹ Sengwe-Tshipise Wilderness Corridor Local Development Plan, Report of the First Stakeholders Workshop, Hakamela Camp, Malilangwe, Chiredzi, 6-7 December 2005, pp. 8-10.

so, their removal from the border area was considered useful from a security point of view. The opportunity to remove them was now presented by the Transfrontier Park.

The Xilotlela community resisted such relocation for a number of reasons. In the first place, they were bitter over what they considered to be glaring government neglect. The area still had no basic infrastructure such as a business centre, schools, roads, grinding-mills, dams, dip tanks and clinics, twenty years into independence. Local people were, as during the colonial period, still forced to cross the border into Mozambique to obtain such services.¹³⁸⁰

Table 7.1: Land mine casualties, 2000 to 2004

Landmine Casualties	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<i>Cattle</i>	7	5	5	3	1
<i>Goats</i>	0	2	1	0	1
<i>Sheep</i>	0	0	0	1	0
<i>Donkeys</i>	3	2	3	0	1
<i>Zimbabweans</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Mozambicans</i>	0	0	0	4	0

Source: Sengwe-Tchipise Wilderness Corridor Local Development Plan, Chiredzi, 6-7, December 2005.

In another sign of neglect, the community continued to suffer human and stock casualties from landmines planted thirty years before during the height of the war of liberation. Table 7.1 lists the number of human and animal casualties between 2000 and 2004. In addition, the community unlike

¹³⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 8.

others located next to the GNP had received limited proceeds from the CAMPFIRE project since its inception.¹³⁸¹ To the Xilotlela residents, the belated attempts to make amends by promising better infrastructure in newly resettled lands away from their homeland was dismissed as mere posturing and an attempt to please the funders. Furthermore, the people were sceptical about the promised relocation benefits given that they were being made at a time when the country was going through a difficult economic patch. It was obvious that the government was not in a position to mobilise enough resources now, something it had failed to do over the past twenty years when economic conditions were more favourable. The community was further irked by the fact that the de-mining of the entire border area was now prioritised in preparation for its occupation by the new animal settlers. To them, such a move was a clear demonstration of the preferential treatment that game animals were receiving from the state and its donor friends.

The first statement announcing the coming of the park was in form of the erection of a wildlife-proof veterinary fence on the northern edge of the corridor strip to prevent direct human-wildlife contact and the supposed spread of diseases between wildlife and the people's stock. Such a fence, like earlier colonial barriers of the same nature was greatly resented by the communities. Some vandalised it in protest as tension escalated.¹³⁸² People's movements across the borders were, furthermore, regulated by permits, another act seen as curtailing their movements.

Connected with the creation of the Sengwe-Tshipise Corridor was the rhetoric that suggested full community consultation and voluntary participation in the project. *The Gonarezhou National Park Management Plan* singled out communities living next to the GNP as the most important partners

¹³⁸¹ Ibid. p. 14.

¹³⁸² Ibid. p. 12.

in the development of the GLTP project.¹³⁸³ Park planning was said to have fully captured the local people's concerns through extensive consultations. The local community was also said to have acquiesced to the park's establishment in a show of collaborative partnership.¹³⁸⁴ The same planners asserted that the park would bring about tangible benefits to a community bedevilled by perennial challenges of low food production, limited employment opportunities and general poverty. The solution, in the view of the Transfrontier Park advocates was to embrace the project with its alleged strong development thrust.

The philosophy of community engagement was premised on the assumption that the communities they were dealing with were homogeneous entities with uniform needs. Such a supposition glossed over the complex and multi-faceted nature of any community.¹³⁸⁵ In this regard, Robert Chambers, cited in Link *et al* was absolutely right when he stated that:

Poor people are rarely met [really consulted]; when they are met, they often do not speak; when they do speak, they are often cautious and deferential; and what they say is often either not listened to, or brushed aside, or interpreted in a bad light.¹³⁸⁶

That some local consultations on the implementation of the GLTP project had taken place is not disputable but that they were exhaustive and captured the people's major concerns is challengeable. The community complained of not being adequately conferred with during the build up to and the implementation of the project. Administrative committees working on various aspects of the project were accused of holding irregular elitist meetings. There were charges that most of them were held in either South Africa or Mozambique. Again, the community complained

¹³⁸³ Gonarezhou National Park, General Management Plan 2011-2021, p. 174.

¹³⁸⁴ Sustainable Development and Natural Resources Management in Southern Zimbabwe, Proceeding of the Seminar on the Development of Collaborative Management for the Sengwe Corridor, Chiredzi, 20-21 March 2003.

¹³⁸⁵ H. Link, T. McNally, A. Sayre, R. Schmidt & R. J. Swap, 'The Definition of Community: A Student Perspective', *Partnerships: A Journal of Service Learning and Civic Engagement*, 2, 2 (2011), p. 1.

¹³⁸⁶ Link *et al*, 'The Definition of Community', p. 3.

about poor feedback from such meetings.¹³⁸⁷ Park proponents maintained, however, that consultations had been wide and all-inclusive at local, national and inter-governmental levels.¹³⁸⁸

So, in practice community engagement that placed the entire Sengwe-Tshipise people at the forefront of the project as explicated by Chambers was in this case missing. There was glaring minimum community engagement as most of the planning remained technocratic and top-down. The community was simply playing a subordinate role in the entire project.¹³⁸⁹ As was the case with similar schemes elsewhere, the agenda, plan and programme were simply given to them and not initiated by them. The result was lack of ownership of the project by the local people leading to the lukewarm support for the GLTP scheme.¹³⁹⁰

It was the park planners' view, however, that the GLTP project would generally enhance the lifestyles of the Sengwe-Tshipise people. It was argued that the communities would be empowered through Community Trust Schemes.¹³⁹¹ It was, furthermore, argued that employment would be generated through activities such as fence construction and clearance of roads. It was also suggested that opportunities would be created for faster cross-border trading after the establishment of a crossing point at nearby Chitulipasi. In addition, it was asserted that there would be increased cultural enrichment between Tsonga (Shangane) relatives across the borders. It was also claimed that the anticipated increased flow of tourists between the GNP and the KNP would bring in substantial revenue to Zimbabwe which would cascade to the communities as tourists

¹³⁸⁷ Gonarezhou National Park, General Management Plan 2011-2021, p. 177.

¹³⁸⁸ 'Sustainable Development and Natural Resources Management in Southern Zimbabwe, Tourism and Regional Development Initiatives-GLTFCA Zimbabwe', Unpublished paper, April 2005, p. 3.

¹³⁸⁹ Chirozva, Mukamuri & Manjengwa, 'Using Scenario Planning for Stakeholder Engagement in Livelihood Futures in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area', p. 772.

¹³⁹⁰ C. Mavhunga & W. Dresser, 'On the Local Community: The Language of Disengagement', *Conservation and Society*, 5, 1 (2007), p. 44.

¹³⁹¹ Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, Strategic Planning Workshop for the Sengwe Corridor, Held at Malilangwe, Hakamela Camp, 16-18 September, 2002.

would spend money on local crafts and, thus, promote local industry and in turn improve the people's lives.¹³⁹² It was, furthermore, argued that the park would attract investment in modern community infrastructure such as roads, boreholes, schools and health centres and also improve community-private sector partnerships.¹³⁹³ It was, again, proffered that the park would assist local people come up with safari hunting projects and develop in them skills in wildlife ranching and managing ecotourism projects.¹³⁹⁴

That the Transfrontier Park was the solution to the local people's persistent problems was doubtful. The high unemployment in the area and the economic woes the people were experiencing were too deep to be addressed by seemingly simple solutions. An earlier attempt under the much celebrated CAMPFIRE programme to achieve the same had failed to meaningfully transform the local people's lives for the better.¹³⁹⁵ Instead, and in response to the dire situation in south-eastern Zimbabwe many young men and women left the country in large numbers after 2000 to seek employment in South Africa.¹³⁹⁶ There was no doubt that remittances from South Africa had become the mainstay of the survival of many families from these vulnerable border areas of Sengwe and Tshipise after 2000. They undeniably became more important than the suggested dependence on wildlife. The importance of migrant transmittals was illustrated through the modern houses built by many migrant workers in their home areas and the South African registered cars they brought home especially during public holidays. Many households regularly received *madhelivhari* (parcels of foodstuffs and clothes) brought by *vanamalaicha* (delivery vans) from

¹³⁹² Sustainable Development and Natural Resources Management in Southern Zimbabwe, Proceeding of the Seminar on the Development of Collaborative Management for the Sengwe Corridor, Chiredzi, 20-21 March 2003.

¹³⁹³ Proceedings of the Inaugural Meeting of the Regional GLTFP/TFCA Steering Committee, Convened by Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, Chiredzi, 24-25 March, 2004.

¹³⁹⁴ Malilangwe Trust Annual Report, 2001, p. 18.

¹³⁹⁵ Wolmer, 'Transboundary Conservation', p. 273.

¹³⁹⁶ Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park Strategic Workshop, 12-18 September, 2002, p. 12.

their children and relatives.¹³⁹⁷ The Sengwe-Tshipise community was, once again, doubtful about the potential of the transfrontier project to improve their lives. The feeling was that they were never a priority in the Transfrontier Park scheme in the first place.¹³⁹⁸

In testimonies given by residents of Wards 13 and 14 of the transfrontier zone many villagers expressed fears about the Transfrontier Park project which they incidentally professed vague familiarity with. The little they claimed they knew was that it intended to remove them from their land. Some claimed they were even unsure of the anticipated benefits from the project, thus, raising the question of its legitimacy.¹³⁹⁹ Two of such interviews will suffice in illustrating the people's limited understanding and frustration with the project:

We know nothing about the Transfrontier Park project. We just hear them talking about it and that it will develop our area but we have not yet witnessed any tangible results. *Hahayimelele ekhu hivona lesvi svihumako* (we are still waiting for its results).¹⁴⁰⁰

The Transfrontier Park is just a theoretical project that is being talked about. It has not been put into practice and so has not affected us. The park is tricky. It was brought about by whites with the intention of gaining a lot from our wildlife. Our wild animals are allowed to migrate as far as Kruger (NP) and Mozambique. We were robbed of our animals.¹⁴⁰¹

Again, in an interview with a Sengwe elder conducted in 2006 by Sibanda, the interviewee had no kind words for the park authorities:

The GLTPCA [initiative] is like a thief. It came unexpectedly. We were misled and then taken by surprise. This is not good. So, is this what you call consultation? Is this the best way of making people participate? How do you expect the community to participate when you want them to be removed from this place [to create the wildlife corridor]?¹⁴⁰²

¹³⁹⁷ Interviews conducted in Ward 13, August 2014.

¹³⁹⁸ The feeling was expressed in interviews conducted in Ward 13, an area within the Transfrontier Corridor.

¹³⁹⁹ Interview with villagers, Ward 13 and 14, Sengwe Communal Area, August, 2014.

¹⁴⁰⁰ Interview with Tsatsawani Matamise, Ingwani Village, Boli, 23 July 2014.

¹⁴⁰¹ Interview with Overseer Hobwani, Chikombedzi, 21 July 2014.

¹⁴⁰² Sibanda, 'Rhythms of Power and International Engineering in Conservation', p. 83.

The same elder decried the failure to consult local spirit mediums on the planned community relocation. To him, such an omission was a blatant disregard of village etiquette and an invitation of disaster as it was believed that the wrath of the ancestors would certainly befall the area.¹⁴⁰³

The Sengwe-Tshipise community also expressed anxiety over the possible loss of farming and grazing lands, forest and water resources and the severance of family ties as a result of the relocation. They feared for the safety of their children from attacks by wild animals as more of these were released from the KNP into the GNP. Those of the older generations regretted the risks associated with leaving the graves of their ancestors, once again. It was a situation that unsettled them as in the view of many; it would expose them to all sorts of misfortunes away from the protection of their ancestors.¹⁴⁰⁴

Again, in a feedback workshop held to assess progress on the implementation of the GLTP programme in 2005, the same communities presented an array of other fears. Top on the list were worries that they would not receive adequate compensation for the relocation, that their limited skills in wildlife management would hamper attempts to engage in full-time game ranching, that there was lack of trust between them and park authorities who always suspected that they were into poaching and that they had not been given adequate information on what the park project really entailed.¹⁴⁰⁵ They were also apprehensive that instead of assisting local people to survive through cross-border activities, the project would bring their informal trans-border survival activities under surveillance effectively disrupting their daily activities and inhibiting them from

¹⁴⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰⁴ Interviews conducted in Chibwedziva, Muhhanguleni and Malipati during the month of February, 2014 were explicit on the point.

¹⁴⁰⁵ Report of the Proceedings of the Workshop Held to Develop Prospects for Lowveld Development within the Context of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation area, Hakamela Camp, Malilangwe Trust, 31st of May 2005.

conducting important means of survival.¹⁴⁰⁶ Their fear was that the establishment of formal crossing points would lead to the introduction of stringent crossing controls where documents such as passports would be required. Such papers were generally difficult to obtain during the ‘Zimbabwean Crisis’ period and involved travelling long distances away from their homes and crossing points to centres where they were issued, a huge inconvenience indeed.¹⁴⁰⁷ Above all, the community feared the negative effects associated with displacement. Such consequences were articulately presented by Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau as; landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of access to common property and social disarticulation.¹⁴⁰⁸ So, while park proponents were clearly excited about the Trasfrontier Park project, communities in the designated zone were understandably apprehensive. For the term park to them evoked unpleasant memories of land alienation and displacement.¹⁴⁰⁹

As earlier stated, the border-lying Sengwe-Tshipise community had experienced forced displacements during Zimbabwe’s independence war. The villagers were forced into PVs. The fertile flood plains of the Limpopo were planted with landmines by the Rhodesian government in its war of attrition against ZANLA guerrillas. The people were further dislodged from their homelands during the height of the RENAMO war. These developments had caused untold suffering to these border communities. The latest talk about their planned displacement, to yet unknown places had understandably an unsettling effect on them.¹⁴¹⁰

¹⁴⁰⁶ Again, interviews conducted in Chibwedziva, Muhhanguleni and Malipati during the month of February, 2014 were revealing on the point.

¹⁴⁰⁷ Bhatasara, Nyamwanza & Kujinga, ‘Trasfrontier Parks and Development in Southern Africa’, p. 637.

¹⁴⁰⁸ Cernea & Schmidt-Soltau, ‘Poverty Risks and National Parks’, pp. 1818-1823. Also see, Cernea & Schmidt-Soltau, ‘The End of Forcible Displacements?’ pp. 44-46.

¹⁴⁰⁹ Metcalfe, ‘Impacts of Transboundary Protected Areas on Local Communities in the Three Southern African Initiatives’, p. 6.

¹⁴¹⁰ Bocchino, ‘Landmines and Conservation in Southern Africa’, p. 88.

The park and the development paradigm

It is on record that relations between parks and indigenous communities have not always been cordial. The GLTP was no exception. The centre of conflict was the differing perceptions on the utility of park lands. While Western conservation philosophy believed in protecting wildlife for aesthetic and conservation purposes, indigenous communities saw their value in the protein they provided. In addition, while park advocates claimed to be advancing a form of conservation with a development paradigm that opened infinite opportunities for indigenous communities, local people felt the park institution downgraded them to just being mere service providers.¹⁴¹¹

The GLTP was celebrated in conservation circles as a success story.¹⁴¹² Park promoters regarded the Transfrontier Park as an economic and ecological anchor for the region. They argued that the park established frameworks and strategies that promoted community development through participation in wildlife management. It was also advanced that the mega-park empowered or would empower marginalised ethnic border communities. The park was depicted as a potential spinner of revenue from expanded tourism and a good example of regional cooperation and partnership. Furthermore, it was claimed that local people would be provided with a stake in the tourism industry which was deemed to be better than depending on traditional subsistence cropping and cattle rearing.¹⁴¹³ In addition, it was asserted that communities contiguous to the GLTP would receive skills in wildlife management that would assist in enhancing their lives.¹⁴¹⁴

¹⁴¹¹ Impey, 'Songs of Mobility and Belonging', p. 256-257.

¹⁴¹² Metcalfe, 'Impacts of Transboundary Protected Areas on Local Communities in the Three Southern African Initiatives', p. 5.

¹⁴¹³ Bhatasara, Nyamwanza & Kujinga, 'Transfrontier Parks and Development in Southern Africa', pp. 633 & 636.

¹⁴¹⁴ Spenceley, 'Tourism in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', p. 649.

What the above line of argument missed was that the same communities had been surviving on subsistence agriculture, with its intermittent challenges, since before colonial rule. Attempts to change the tastes of local people through the introduction of the CAMPFIRE programme in independent Zimbabwe had failed to meaningfully substitute the traditional subsistence system. Past experience with other parks had also shown that sole dependence on wildlife rearing would not sustain the lives of indigenous communities. The latest effort was, thus, seen as just another smokescreen directed at justifying the establishment of the park. Again, what came out clearly from the development paradigm was that in order to sell, it had to be hinged on the communities' sustainable use of the flora and fauna of the newly established park. The folly with such kind of thinking, however, was that it made wildlife resources the core and humans the peripheral subject in the relationship, thus, pitting humans against animals of the Transfrontier Park.

Indeed, some benefits did accrue to both the region (Southern Africa) and the nation (Zimbabwe). At regional level, the three countries were able to jointly promote ecosystem management. Consultative and regular collaborative meetings assisted in building strong political relations among the participating states resulting in the minimisation of conflict. Together, the countries were also able to market the forest products of the region, thus, taking advantage of the principle of the economies of scale.¹⁴¹⁵ At national level, the Zimbabwean state got some revenue from the mega-park although the anticipated income was greatly affected by the 'Zimbabwean Crisis' of the 2000s and the fact that by 2008, the project was yet to be fully implemented. The state, through the venture, also managed to improve its profile of good neighbourliness. Furthermore, the park

¹⁴¹⁵ Bhatasara, Nyamwanza & Kujinga, 'Trasfrontier Parks and Development in Southern Africa', p. 634.

brought the developmentally marginalised communities of southern Zimbabwe to the national limelight through attracting donor attention which donations, however, remained a mirage.¹⁴¹⁶

The indigenous communities of the areas affected were by and large wary that the park scheme was a ploy to provide participating states with the opportunity of collectively policing areas perceived to have been out of reach of the administrative centres. These were sites suspected to have been associated with poaching, drug and gem smuggling, trafficking of humans, rebellion and civil disobedience. Local villagers also supposed that the whole project was another land grab, this time, by their own folk.¹⁴¹⁷ They believed probably rightly so that the three governments were trying to covertly penetrate these remote areas using environmental issues.¹⁴¹⁸ The argument proffered fitted well into the discourse of states extending their sovereignty into fluid borderland spaces by advancing the cause of nature.

Communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe continued to feel neglected and believed probably correctly so that they were only remembered when it suited powerful actors such as the state and its international partners.¹⁴¹⁹ The fact that the project was externally driven right from conception through planning to implementation confirmed the above.¹⁴²⁰ Empirical evidence suggested that the GLFP largely marginalised indigenous communities by making them play second fiddle to wildlife. It mostly brought about increased poverty and the disenfranchisement of local communities through displacement and the planned eviction.¹⁴²¹ Spenceley confirmed that by 2004, limited benefits had accrued to affected communities due to the country's unstable political

¹⁴¹⁶ Ibid. p. 635.

¹⁴¹⁷ Interviews conducted in February 2015 with selected resettled Chisa farmers.

¹⁴¹⁸ Duffy, 'Peace Parks', pp. 1-2, 15-16.

¹⁴¹⁹ Interviews conducted in Masukwe under Chief Sengwe in August 2014 brought out such feelings.

¹⁴²⁰ Ferreira, 'Communities and Transfrontier Parks in the Southern African Development Community', p. 168.

¹⁴²¹ See, Cernea & Schmidt-Soltau, 'Poverty Risks and National Parks' for further insight.

and economic climate, while Busch contended that the GLTP created acrimony between the park implementers and indigenous communities.¹⁴²² This convinced Chaderopa to conclude that the park suited the ideologies of its foreign sponsors more than the needs of the local people and that the philosophy promoted state-centric top-down management approaches which generally neglected the views of those on the ground.¹⁴²³ It was, therefore, indisputable that foreign funders greatly influenced the direction of the development paradigm of the Park to their advantage.

Critics of the park scheme condemned it for attempting to privatise more communal lands without the consent of the said communities. It was also labelled a latter-day form of ecological imperialism.¹⁴²⁴ Local communities remained distant onlookers on a project that was meant to benefit them.¹⁴²⁵ They failed to act when conservation responsibilities were transferred from the state to non-state actors whose intentions were suspicious and whose focus was more on regional than local conservation initiatives. This unsurprisingly rendered them largely irrelevant to the needs of indigenous communities trapped in the park zone.

Bhatasara, Nyamwanza and Kujinga were certainly correct when they noted that the park benefits at local level should not be overstated¹⁴²⁶ since in Sibanda's view, most of the said benefits were simply "development myths."¹⁴²⁷ For while achieving the objectives of its principals (states, region and the private sector), the GLTP without doubt marginalised remote rural communities of the area in a clear case of the state colluding with international capital against the poor rural folk

¹⁴²² Spenceley, 'Tourism Investment in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area, Scoping Report', Unpublished paper, March 2005, pp. 6-7 & J. Busch, 'Gains from Configuration', p. 395.

¹⁴²³ Chaderopa, 'Cross Border Cooperation in Transboundary Conservation-Development Initiatives in Southern Africa', p. 51.

¹⁴²⁴ Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 176.

¹⁴²⁵ See Impey's argument in a related matter; Impey, 'Songs of Mobility and Belonging', p. 269.

¹⁴²⁶ Bhatasara, Nyamwanza & Kujinga, 'Transfrontier Parks and Development in Southern Africa' p. 629.

¹⁴²⁷ Sibanda, 'The Urban and Rural Spaces', p. 23.

of the region. It was for this reason that Buscher and Dietz concluded that in spite of the long list of promised benefits, the only tangible output of the GLTP treaty was the translocation of animals within the park and the main beneficiary was the environment.¹⁴²⁸

Whither GLTP

By 2008, no relocation of communities on the Zimbabwean sector of the park had taken place as the political dithering continued. The talk over the induced movement of the affected communities, however, continued and people remained disconcerted. The slow progress in the implementation of the project targets was attributed to the absence of agreement on several operational issues but also on the seeming lack of political will on the part of the government of Zimbabwe to push the project through.¹⁴²⁹ In an all stakeholders' workshop on the park development held in 2005, the meeting recorded stunted progress on the issue of the relocation of humans, noting that the planning momentum and the implementation process were both almost at standstill. It turned out that the issue was not given full attention as it was considered thorny then due to the ongoing land reform programme.¹⁴³⁰

In another show of hesitancy to act, the Governor of Masvingo Willard Chiwewe, under whose province the park fell uttered a rather cautious government position in 2006 when he stated that the government would remove the Sengwe-Tshipise people "as soon as we have an alternative place to relocate them. Right now, we do not have the actual land."¹⁴³¹ To say land was unavailable when many black Zimbabweans were being resettled under the FTLRP was just being devious.

¹⁴²⁸ Buscher & Dietz, 'Conjunctions of Governance', p. 10.

¹⁴²⁹ Gonarezhou National Park, General Management Plan 2011-2021, p. 177.

¹⁴³⁰ Sustainable Development and Natural Resources Management in Southern Zimbabwe, Regional GLTFP/TFCA Steering Committee, Proceedings of the Workshop on the Review of Scenarios for Tourism and Regional Development in the GLTFCA in Zimbabwe, Chiredzi, 5-6 April 2005, pp. 4 & 7.

¹⁴³¹ *Zimbabwe Standard*, 20/2/2006.

What was certainly correct was that the government found it rather clumsy and contradictory to evict unwilling black communities from the lands of their abode when everybody else was getting land under the land reform programme. Again, the government was, during the decade, sensitive to taking actions that had the potential of alienating its rural voters given the challenges it was facing from the MDC opposition. Removing disinclined communities at the time was considered as political suicide that could cost votes. The government was then forced to take a cautious route.

What the government also seemed to have been doing was to buy time in the hope that the whole issue of relocation would come to pass or be pushed forward to a time when conditions on the ground would be conducive. Again, its lacklustre approach to the GLTP project only served to confirm its spoiler intentions. It is almost certainly correct to argue that since the project was led by South Africa, there was some subtle rivalry with Zimbabwe over regional leadership. The fact that such control was slipping away from Zimbabwe with South Africa's ascendancy on the regional map made it likely for the country to throw spanners into the works.

Again, mass movements of people from the park-designated areas appeared to have targeted Zimbabwe and Mozambique and not South Africa, a situation which made Zimbabwe suspect the intentions of its southern neighbour. At the same time, Zimbabwe was going through an unprecedented economic crisis that made it unreasonable to invest resources in a wildlife project in a remote part of the country when the centre itself was failing to hold.¹⁴³² So, its commitment to the project remained rhetorical probably to please its neighbours and win their sympathy during its difficult political and economic period. It explains why, by 2008, the relocation of people from the Sengwe-Tshipise area was yet to take place.

¹⁴³² Sengwe-Tchipise Wilderness Corridor Local Development Plan, Report of the First Stakeholders Workshop, Hakamela Camp, Malilangwe, Chiredzi, 6-7 December 2005, p. 15.

On the part of the affected residents, their voices in the Transfrontier Park discourse were fading with time. As time progressed, the people became less acquainted with what was happening given that updates on the park progress became irregular and the project became shrouded in mystery.¹⁴³³ Those who were said to have been consulted at the commencement of the scheme including the Sengwe-Tshipise TFCA Committee appeared to have been gradually losing interest in the scheme as the years passed and nothing happened.¹⁴³⁴ Still, the fact that talk about the project continued in conferences, workshops and closed doors haunted the Sengwe-Tshipise community which wanted just to be left alone. The community, therefore, remained generally confused by the government's indecision to clearly spell out their future, in regard to the GLTP.

Conclusion

Chapter 7 has revealed that the idea behind the creation of a transfrontier park in Southern Africa was as old as colonialism itself. It has shown that in proposing the park, its champions: the three states of Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe and their foreign backers were guided by regional wildlife interests more than the needs of local communities caught up in the park-designated zone. The chapter revealed that the GLTP marginalised the already disadvantaged communities living on the fringes of the GNP when it targeted them for eviction. This explained the lukewarm support it received from the affected communities. Again, the chapter has shot at the suggestion that the project would alleviate poverty in the region by creating jobs. It argued that on the contrary, it threatened the livelihoods of the people as it moved to bring law enforcement agents closer to the border people.

¹⁴³³ Sibanda, 'Rhythms of Power and International Engineering in Conservation', p. 84.

¹⁴³⁴ Sustainable Development and Natural Resource Management in Southern Zimbabwe, Report of the Project Evaluation Workshop, Chiredzi, 20-21 January 2005.

The chapter also illustrated that the driving philosophy behind the GLTP was both foreign and regional and, so, at tangent with the desires and needs of indigenous communities in the affected areas. Its human development paradigm was overstated as results on the ground pointed in the opposite direction. Threats of eviction, for example, reminded people of earlier unpleasant displacements and created disquiet among communities within the Transfrontier Park corridor. Chapter 7 has also demonstrated, through the Sengwe-Tshipise case that local people of the area were generally frustrated with the seemingly limited utility of the GLTP as they rightly complained that it favoured animals and marginalised them in its development paradigm. It, resultantly led to an increase in human-wildlife conflict.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

The focus of the study was on exploring and evaluating the varied responses of the GNP evictees to forced removal from the park and resettlement outside the PA between 1934 and 2008. In this, the study hoped to make a contribution to the historiography of national parks in general and the fields of social and environmental history in particular. It also hoped to input knowledge on the impact of parks on indigenous communities living next to them and, in the case of the current study, Shangane peoples who were initially resident in the Gonarezhou forest but now live on the fringes of the PA following eviction from the park. The study was in response to the realisation of a glaring knowledge gap on the history of the reactions of Zimbabwean communities to the establishment of national parks in the country. So, cutting across the thesis was contestation to the loss of the Gonarezhou homeland by the mainly Shangane communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe and clearly emerging from the seventy four year study were the interrelated sub-themes of eviction, contestation to eviction and survival outside the park.

The study noted that the establishment of national parks in their modern form became a feature of colonial Africa, having been adopted from the Yellowstone Park model of the United States of America.¹⁴³⁵ The thesis recorded that such a concept advocated for the creation of an animal paradise devoid of human beings. In essence, it proposed the total removal of people from places declared as national parks as the continued residence of such people was viewed as anathema to the park concept. The approach became known as fortress conservation and its hallmark was the fortification of such PAs with exclusive fences that were abhorred by the communities abutting the parks. The study documented that consistent with the Yellowstone Park precincts, the

¹⁴³⁵ Sudia, 'Domestic Tranquillity and the National Park System', p. 22, Hall & Frost, 'The Making of the National Parks Concept', p. 3 & Frost & Hall, 'Reinterpreting the Creation of Myth, Yellowstone National Park', pp. 17-29.

establishment of the GNP essentially led to the forced removal of scores of Shangane residents from the park-designated area between 1934 and 1968. These were subsequently resettled in crowded areas adjoining the park where they have lived since.

Park advocates led by the state advanced the argument that PAs like the GNP had a high potential of promoting domestic tourism whose ripple benefits would cascade to the local communities such as the displaced Shangane. They, furthermore, argued that the net result was the creation of jobs for the local people which would lead to the alleviation of poverty and improved lifestyles in such communities.¹⁴³⁶ This thesis broadly dismissed such a line of argument on grounds that when put on the scale, the effects of displacement actually increased poverty in the peripheral areas, thus, outweighing the suggested benefits.¹⁴³⁷ Again, the current study contested the notion advanced by colonialists that areas such as the Gonarezhou were terrains totally unsuitable for human habitation. It instead showed in chapter 2 how the Shangane had, prior to the occupation of the area by white settlers, adapted to their environment in such a way that they were able to sustainably eke a living out of it in spite of the hardships of the area such as low rainfall and tsetse-fly infestation. The study concluded, therefore, that much of the condemnation of the terrain was a ploy to justify the creation of the park.

Also coming out of the study was the evident government neglect of border-lying areas of the country. The thesis illustrated how the neglect of communities adjoining the GNP was clearly consistent with the argument that borderland communities were the least concern of any central

¹⁴³⁶ See, among others, Gonarezhou National Park, General Management Plan, 2011-2021, NAZ: S4061, C. Saunders, 'Wildlife and the N. R. B: The Use of Land for Parks and Wildlife', Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, pp. 63-65, NAZ: S1194/1645/3/1, Chief Forest Officer to Acting Secretary, Department of Agriculture & Lands, 8 April 1933, Gonarezhou Plan: Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, Harare, January, 1994 & National Park Act, 1949.

¹⁴³⁷ See, *inter alia*, Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p. 2 & Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 1.

government due to the perception that these were, after all, areas of illegality. The study, however, revealed that such conclusions failed to acknowledge the fact that borderland activities were also forms of responses to the people's changed lifestyles resulting from their removal from a milieu that had sustained their lives before it was declared a PA. Both the Rhodesian and the Zimbabwean governments appear to have generally neglected the Shangane communities of the region throughout the period under review.¹⁴³⁸ Another theme permeating through the thesis was the generally antagonistic nature of relations between the park institution and the affected villagers which fundamentally translated to human-wildlife conflict. The study underscored how such friction put Gonarezhou conservation goals into peril during the entire period under focus.¹⁴³⁹

Chapters 2 to 7 focused on specific aspects of the varied people's responses to living on the fringes of the GNP. Chapter 2 in particular provided the historical background to the eviction debate by locating indigenous peoples in the Gonarezhou environment before the area was declared a game reserve. To this end, the chapter began by tracing the settlement of the region to the 17th century when the Rozvi were then the overlords of the area. It revealed how, by the turn of the 20th century, the entire Lowveld landscape had become the indigenous home of the Shangane of the Gaza-Nguni fame. The chapter underlined the dominance of the group in all spheres of life on the eve of colonial occupation. It illustrated the resilience of the clan in taming the generally harsh conditions of the region. It in particular demonstrated how the local people used their indigenous knowledge to skilfully harness the milieu. The chapter also showed how the local people had, by the time of colonial occupation adapted to the environment in such a way that they proudly called it home.

¹⁴³⁸ An extended discussion is given in; Brunet-Jailly, (eds), 'Special Issue: Rarely Studied Borderlands'.

¹⁴³⁹ See, Mombeshora & Le Bel, 'People-Park Conflicts', p. 2602 & Gandiwa, Gandiwa & Maboko, 'Living with Wildlife and Associated Conflicts in a Contested Area Within the Northern Gonarezhou Park, Zimbabwe', p. 253.

The chapter, furthermore, revealed how the utilitarian relationship between the Shangane communities and the fauna and flora of their Gonarezhou veld had created an umbilical cord whose severance with the establishment of the GNP had far-reaching consequences on the lifestyles of the people. It illustrated how the veld provided the community with basic subsistence. It was also shown in the chapter that the symbiotic relationship formed between the Gonarezhou forest and local residents forced the latter to adopt astute environmental management practices directed at sustainably harvesting the fruits of the forest. The chapter revealed how the people made full use of the various plants and animals of the forest for their sustenance, even during years of drought, which were frequent in the area. It also showed how the care of the forest was a collective community responsibility managed through community rules and regulations, taboos and penalties which were all meant to ensure the sustainable communal reaping of the veld's resources. The chapter, thus, refuted the colonial misconception that indigenous land management systems were unscientific, wasteful and unfriendly to the environment.¹⁴⁴⁰ It, however, acknowledged that like other pre-colonial societies on the African continent, the Shangane also practiced activities that were destructive to the environment. This area is without doubt fertile ground for further study.

In response to the general perception that the Shangane were an essentially hunting people, the chapter went on to illustrate how they on the contrary engaged in a mixed economy which included crop cultivation, stock raising, fishing and gathering of fruits and vegetables. In particular the chapter indicated how these were all practiced in response to the varying climatic changes of the region. Findings presented in the chapter demonstrated the importance of cropping; an activity conducted by both male and female members of the clan. Again, the chapter established that by and large the people's fishing and hunting were regulated activities meant to ensure the

¹⁴⁴⁰ Alvord, 'Agricultural Life of Rhodesian Natives'.

exploitation of the forest's fish and animals with the future in mind. Destructive methods that were often used such as poisoning of fish ponds and digging of pits during hunting were certainly not the norm. The chapter also noted that the Shangane raised large herds of cattle, goats and sheep and used their herbal knowledge to come up with *murhi* (medicine) that warded off mosquitoes and treated diseases caused by the tsetse-fly bug.

Chapter 2 also revealed the special spiritual attachment that the local people had with the *mikwembu* (gods) of the Gonarezhou shrines of Mapokole and Nyamatongwe. In particular, it demonstrated how the people believed in the guidance of the *mikwembu* for their daily economic, political and social activities. The chapter narrated how the removal of people from the Gonarezhou veld was believed to have exposed them to all sorts of misfortunes away from the protection of their ancestors. It also revealed how the same forests were places for traditional initiation practices such as *hoko* (male circumcision) and *komba* (female rites of passage).

Chapters 3 and 4 concentrated on developments during the colonial period with chapter 3 focusing on the Shangane's resistance to removal from the game-designated area while chapter 4 examined the local people's adaptation to living outside the PA. Chapter 3 examined the gradual removal of the vulnerable and generally neglected Shangane people from the Gonarezhou land between 1934 and 1968 and revealed how the process drew battle lines between the local residents and the GNP institution. It traced the move towards the establishment of the Gonarezhou PA and underlined how early land alienations in the region such as the creation of national parks introduced various forms of confrontation with the local people. The chapter recorded how during the colonial period extended efforts were expended on forcibly removing communities from the Gonarezhou veld. It,

however, noted how the whole displacement process was delayed by policy discord during the colonial period and in particular the Veterinary Department's opposition to the park project.¹⁴⁴¹

Chapter 3 also probed the various strategies used by the local people to resist forced removals from the Gonarezhou sanctuary. It showed how the struggles that characterised the entire colonial period were rooted in the people's resistance to eviction from the PA. The chapter revealed that while guided by conservation precincts of removing people from game-designated areas, the whole process was also masked in the racial discriminatory trajectory of removing Africans from prime lands to allow for white projects to thrive.¹⁴⁴² Chapter 3, thus, demonstrated how white administrators assigned themselves the responsibility of stewarding the country's game parks such as the GNP by essentially crafting and applying exclusive laws and practices.

Associated with the removal of indigenous communities was the erection of loathed exclusive fences which were meant to protect wild animals inside the fences from poachers living outside the fence barrier. Chapter 3 demonstrated how the construction of such fences increased human-wildlife conflict, thus, impacting negatively on the conservation goals. The chapter also revealed how the deliberate exclusion of indigenous communities from park resources intensified friction between them and the state and how it in turn transformed indigenous communities into criminals (poachers) who, in protest, had to break the law to access their old hunting grounds. In addition, the chapter illustrated how in the case of the Chisa, Xilotlela and Ngwenyeni communities, traditional institutions took leading roles in resisting eviction from the Gonarezhou terrain. These were communities which were particularly targeted for punishment by the colonial state for their

¹⁴⁴¹ NAZ: S1194/1614/6, Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Lands to Secretary Department of Internal Affairs, 'National Parks', Zimbabwe National Parks & Wild Life Conservation, August, 1992 & Report, 'Extracts from Boys Diaries: Stephen Driver-Thursday 2nd September'.

¹⁴⁴² See, among others, Moyana, *The Political Economy of Land in Zimbabwe* & Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*.

perceived insubordination and alleged opposition to white rule. Effectively, the chapter has shown how the various forms of reactions to eviction from the park were motivated by the people's opposition to displacement from the Gonarezhou milieu.

Chapter 4 explored the people's survival lifelines from the periphery of the PA. It particularly concerned itself with the local people's new realities of living outside their traditional lands and having to grapple with the new labelling where their traditional hunting was now vilified as poaching while cross border trade and labour migration were condemned as smuggling and trespassing, respectively.¹⁴⁴³ Crucially, the chapter examined three forms of protest during the colonial period; increased poaching, intensified cross-border labour migration and the local people's embracing of nascent nationalism in the area under the influence of Gonakudzingwa restrictees. The chapter illustrated the extent of poaching in the PA, labour migration and the local people's political involvement through the citation of recorded incidents.

The chapter, furthermore, examined how the outlawing of the old age practice of hunting in the Gonarezhou forest was criminalised and how such action turned the people into vicious poachers who had to be hunted by park officials, instead. It was explained in the chapter why the vastness of the PA, the local people's determination to continue poaching and the state's inability to effectively monitor the entire game area made it difficult to stamp out the practise. Additionally, chapter 4 critiqued the *modus operandi* of poachers and revealed that while in the government's view, poachers were driven by the profligate nature of the African, in reality; the practice was propelled by the people's need to subsist on the game resources. In addition, the chapter, highlighted how the frequent harassment of poachers by park officials only served to intensify

¹⁴⁴³ A detailed discussion of the phenomenon is presented in; Impey, 'Songs of Mobility and Belonging'.

tension between the two. Overall, the chapter revealed how anti-poaching campaigns, in spite of their noted impact failed to significantly reduce poaching in the GNP as people devised ingenious ways of evading the arms of the state. What the chapter did not deal with in detail, which area need to be pursued in further studies is the overall destructiveness of protest poaching.

Chapter 4 also unravelled how the old practice of crossing the Limpopo River for greener pastures intensified following the people's removal from the Gonarezhou lands. The chapter showed that while the move was viewed by some as an act of surrender it was undoubtedly a reasonable adaptation to the people's changed conditions and certainly an acceptance of their predicament. It was noted that the migration affected the Rhodesian government through loss of valuable labour at a time when the country's industries were in infancy. Again, the impact of labour loss at this critical time of Rhodesia's economy could certainly be an interesting area for further studies.

The chapter, furthermore, underscored the critical role played by the Gonakudzingwa restrictees in whipping the political emotions of the local people against the Rhodesian government's hated land policies. It exposed how the internees encouraged the local people to reclaim their ancestral lands and even offered them assistance in realising the same, come independence. The chapter found out that the Gonakudzingwa detainees served as both a source of inspiration to local disgruntled residents and a centre of strong local and national opposition to white rule. It crucially highlighted the broader significance of the establishment of the Restriction Camp right inside the contested Gonarezhou land as one of mobilising the nation against the colonial regime's land policies. Consequently, the chapter was able to situate the local people's struggle over a lost piece of land in the broader nationalist political discourse of the 1950s and 1960s. In this, it underlined the critical role played by parks in mobilising local and national sentiments against unpopular government projects that essentially benefitted a few favoured whites.

The next three chapters focused on developments in independent Zimbabwe. Chapter 5 examined the government's attempts to assuage the local people's pain of losing the Gonarezhou land by roping them into a wildlife management partnership called the CAMPFIRE. The chapter interested itself in finding out how the indigenous people responded to such an initiative. The next chapter critiqued the FTLRP in relation to south-eastern Zimbabwe. It specifically examined the implications of the takeover of a part of the GNP by the Chisa community and the invasion of commercial farms adjoining the communal areas. Chapter 7 concerned itself with the GLTP and particularly how it affected Zimbabwean communities falling within its corridor.

Chapter 5 began by reviewing the local people's independence expectations in relation to the recovery of the lost Gonarezhou land. It then noted the people's disappointment when the Zimbabwean government treated the park institution as sacrosanct. The chapter demonstrated how the local people responded through increased poaching, starting off veld fires, unlawfully clearing Gonarezhou forests and defiantly driving cattle into the park. It showed how such actions heightened tension with the state in independent Zimbabwe but indirectly forced the government to change its way of doing business by adopting the CAMPFIRE co-management arrangement with communities living next to the PA.

The chapter, again, revealed how the paradigm shift adopted by the government was in recognition of the important role that local communities could play in enhancing wildlife management practices and in particular the need to inject the people's indigenous knowledge in wildlife management.¹⁴⁴⁴ It, furthermore, shot the view advanced by park advocates that programmes such

¹⁴⁴⁴ Gonarezhou National Park Management Plan, 2011-2021, p. 173.

as the CAMPFIRE scheme had the potential of transforming the lives of the people living next to parks for the better.

While the chapter noted some tangible benefits that accrued to local communities during the first decade of the implementation of the CAMPFIRE programme such as safari dividends and individual household royalties it, in the main, contested the programme's underlying assumptions that it would economically empower local communities, decentralise wildlife management decision making, create jobs for local people and open mutual partnerships in areas that would benefit both humans and animals of the GNP. On the contrary, findings from the Mahenye community scheme were that in spite of its highly publicised devolution principle, it failed to significantly transform the lives of the local people for the better. This was because its guiding philosophy remained that of conservation and not development and the authority to determine the route to be followed by the programme remained the prerogative of the RDCs in charge.¹⁴⁴⁵

Overall, the chapter revealed that proceeds including those from adjoining Lowveld conservancies remained paltry and, so, unable to compensate the people for the loss of the control of the resources of the park. This was mainly because it was impossible to fully decentralise wildlife management in a situation where parks remained the property of the state. Further to that, the partnership was not founded on equality of participants as the respective RDCs assigned themselves supervisory roles. Again, the programme lacked indigeneity due to its overdependence on external funding. The chapter also revealed how donor fatigue crept in during Zimbabwe's crisis years and how this in turn explained its decline.¹⁴⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴⁵ Balint & Mashinya, 'The Decline of a Model Community-Based Conservation Project', p. 807.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Bond & Frost, 'CAMPFIRE and Payment for Environmental Services', p. 3.

Chapter 6 examined the FTLRP and showed how land claims in south-eastern Zimbabwe were centred on the desire to recover both the GNP and adjoining commercial ranches. The chapter traced land contestation to colonial land policies introduced in 1890. It noted that *Jambanja* was caused by the slow pace of land redistribution in the first two decades of independence but triggered by increasing political pressure from a militant MDC opposition party and its partner, the civic society of the country. It demonstrated how the government decided to use the land as a diversionary tactic to deflate the opposition. It, furthermore, showed how the hurried implementation of the FTLRP made it a generally chaotic programme.

In addition, the chapter revealed how land takeovers of commercial farms in the Chiredzi and Mwenezi districts and the Chisa people's occupation of a part of the GNP were perceived to have been expressions of the people's desire to return to their old homelands. In particular, the chapter showed how the Chisa case was a good example of the self-restitution of land by a disgruntled community living on the fringes of the protected Gonarezhou land. It, furthermore, revealed that by and large the bringing down of the GNP fences at the height of the land reform programme threatened wildlife conservation efforts. The chapter also demonstrated how the government went out of its way to protect the park and the surrounding conservancies from occupation, arguing that the reclamation of these areas was no longer tenable in the changed circumstances. At the same time, the chapter illustrated how the government went on to facilitate the occupation of white commercial farms next to the Sangwe and Sengwe communal areas which was a significant gain for the indigenous communities who could no longer recover the lost Gonarezhou land.

Chapter 6, furthermore, noted the different land beneficiaries and observed that many deserving landless peasants failed to get land because of the partisan nature of the redistribution process. It, however, showed how though a rushed programme, the FTLRP changed the agrarian landscape of

the Lowveld through the introduction of A1 and A2 farms on a large scale. It also revealed that while the *modus operandi* of occupying farms was fraught with violence, conflicts and contestations among occupants it, nevertheless, went a long way in relieving land pressure in adjacent villages. Land redistribution also connected the people once again with ancestral landscapes, a move that was worth celebrating. The chapter, however, noted how the general failure by the state to introduce modern supportive agricultural systems on the new resettlements rendered the new settlements just as unproductive as the old communal lands as production remained at subsistence levels. It, again, showed how the failure by the state to guarantee land tenure on the new farms created uncertainty for the new farmers which made it impossible for them to invest heavily in the new settlements. Many retained old homes as a fall-back position.

Chapter 7 examined the GLTP project of Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe and paid particular attention to the Zimbabwe sector of the park. The chapter traced the origins of the Transfrontier Park to the early colonial period and revealed how the programme which aimed at creating an African wildlife without borders was largely hijacked by South Africa and Western donors.¹⁴⁴⁷ It demonstrated how its broader focus of promoting regional wildlife interests instead of enhancing local people's lifestyles made it to fail to attract the full support of the indigenous communities living within its corridors.

The Sengwe-Tshipise case study revealed that the people who fell within the park zone were supposed to be moved to some location yet to be identified. The communities contested the proposed movement on grounds it would, once again, dislocate their lives. Further to that, they protested the lack of adequate consultation on the perceived benefits that the park would bring to

¹⁴⁴⁷ Bhatasara, Nyamwanza & Kujinga, 'Trasfrontier Parks and Development in Southern Africa', p. 634.

the community. They rejected the premise that the Transfrontier Park would enhance their lifestyles.¹⁴⁴⁸ Indeed, chapter 7 demonstrated that the park's human development thrust was certainly overstated. Again, the chapter indicated that just like the earlier CAMPFIRE programme, the GLTP fell short of addressing the basic needs of local residents because it remained detached from the people in planning and implementation. The chapter noted that the failure to implement the project (for it remained just largely on paper right up to 2008) was a result of lack of political will on the part of the Zimbabwean government which at the time was fully entangled in the FTLRP. All in all, the programme failed to take off because its values appear to have been foreign in origin and remained elitist in the eyes of the indigenous Shangani communities.

Overall, it is the contention of this thesis that relations between the indigenous peoples of south-eastern Zimbabwe and the GNP were throughout the period under study generally antagonistic. The antagonism was certainly a result of the differing perspectives on the supposed utility of the park. It was, again, the current study's conclusion that the operations of the park during the colonial period and independent Zimbabwe were basically similar. The only noticeable difference was, however, the attempt by the independent government to rope in local communities in the management of the park through the CAMPFIRE partnership arrangement which according to the revelations of this enquiry did not go far in alleviating rural poverty and mending strained relations between the park institution and the indigenous communities living on the fringes of the PA. The GNP, therefore, continued to be a contested space beyond 2008.

¹⁴⁴⁸ Sustainable Development and Natural Resources Management in Southern Zimbabwe, Proceeding of the Seminar on the Development of Collaborative Management for the Sengwe Corridor, Chiredzi, 20-21 March 2003.

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