

**"Our fathers and grandfathers were born here..."
Shangaan eviction experiences from the Gonarezhou National Park, 1957-1968**

Baxter Tavuyanago*

Abstract

When Gonarezhou was declared a game sanctuary in 1934, there followed concerted efforts to remove all people resident in the park-designated area. This was a process that gained traction from the mid-1950s and was only accomplished in 1968. This study interrogates the various responses of the Shangaan to their displacement from Gonarezhou National Park (GNP), a terrain they called home. Three case studies are used to illustrate the varied reactions. The forced removals are examined in the broader discourse of the history of colonial conquest, land alienation and African resistance to colonially-imposed projects. By interrogating archival sources, oral testimonies and secondary literature, the study contends that the Shangaan of south-eastern Zimbabwe put up stiff resistance to eviction from the land of their ancestors. It also notes that while literature on the history of national parks in Zimbabwe abounds, the subject of Shangaan eviction experiences has attracted limited academic scholarship. This article seeks to augment the knowledge on Shangaan contest for the control of the Gonarezhou terrain during the period from 1957 to 1968.

Keywords: Shangaan; Gonarezhou; co-existence; conservation; ecology; eviction; poaching.

Opsomming

Toé Gonarezhou in 1934 'n wildreservaat verklaar is, was daar doelgerigte pogings om alle mense wat in die aangewysde area woonagtig was, te verwyder. Die proses het in die middel-1950's trekkrag begin kry en is eers in 1968 afgehandel. Hierdie studie ondervra die Shangaan se verskeie reaksies op hierdie verplasing uit die Gonarezhou Nasionale Park (GNP), 'n gebied wat hulle huis genoem het. Drie gevallestudies word ondersoek om aan te dui hoe reaksies verskil het. Die verwydering van mense word ondersoek in die breër diskloers van die geskiedenis van koloniale verowering, grondontteiening, en Afrika se weerstand teen koloniale projekte. Deur gebruik te maak van argivale bronne, mondelinge getuienis en sekondêre literatuur voer hierdie studie

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aan hoe die Shangaan van suidoos Zimbabwe sterk weerstand gebied het toe hulle verwyder is van die grond van hul voorvaders. Hierdie studie let verder op die feit dat die Shangaan se ervarings minimale aandag in die akademie geniet ondanks die talrykheid van literatuur oor die geskiedenis van Zimbabwe se nasionale parke. Dit is vir dié rede dat hierdie studie beoog om kennis oor die Shangaan se stryd vir beheer oor die Gonarezhou-gebied van 1957 tot 1968 daar te stel.

Sleutelwoorde: Shangaan; Gonarezhou; saamleef; bewaring; ekologie; uitsetting; stroping.

Introduction

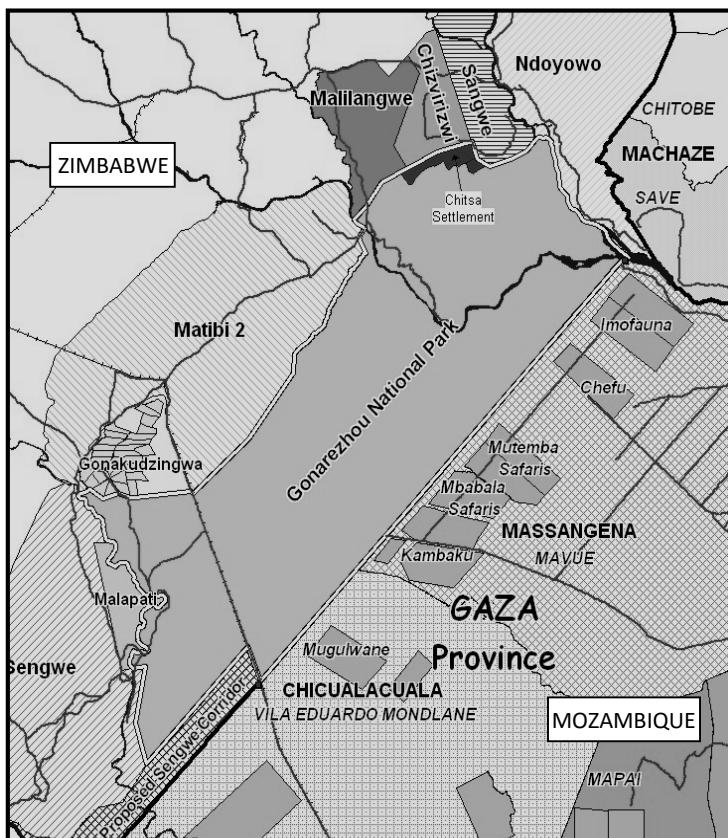
The GNP is a protected area located in the south-eastern corner of Zimbabwe.¹ The park, the second largest in the country after Hwange National Park, covers a surface area of 5 053 km² of open grasslands and dense woodlands.² Located around the park are several communal areas: Matibi No. 2, Ndowoyo, Sangwe and Sengwe (shown on Map 1). Residents of Gonarezhou area were evicted from the park in the 1950s and 1960s.³

On the eve of the occupation of the country in 1890, Gonarezhou was the land of the Shangaan people, also known as the Tsonga or Hlengwe.⁴ Soshangane Manukusa, the founder of the Shangaan (Gaza-Nguni) kingdom entered southern Zimbabwe in about 1821 and conquered and assimilated the local Tsonga, Hlengwe, Ndau, Ronga, Chopi and Tswa clans of the area. The Gaza-Nguni remained the undisputed rulers of south-eastern Zimbabwe until their downfall in 1896.⁵ While in charge of the land, they

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1. At the time of its establishment in 1934, it was called the Gonarezhou Game Reserve. This status was changed in 1975 to the Gonarezhou National Park. In 2002, it joined with Mozambique's Limpopo and South Africa's Kruger National Parks to form an enlarged conservation zone called the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park.
 2. E. Gandiwa, "Wildlife Tourism in Gonarezhou National Park, Southeast Zimbabwe: Opportunities for Wildlife Viewing", *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 13, 1 (2011), p 305. See also National Archives of Zimbabwe (hereafter NAZ): SRG/3, Annual 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), 1981, p 21.
 3. Note that Ndowoyo is incorrectly spelt as Ndoyowo on Map 1. For Shangaan displacements in southern Zimbabwe, see, Masvingo Records Centre (hereafter MRC), MS 18, Delineation Report on the Chitsa Headmanship and Community, Chief Towani: Sangwe T.T. Land, Zaka District; and MRC: MS 22 Delineation Report on the Ngwenyenye or Marumbini Headmanship and Community, Chief Chitanga: Gona re Zhou National Land.
 4. The Shangaan, Tsonga or Hlengwe of Zimbabwe constitute a very small percentage of the country's population. Their larger numbers are found across the borders in Mozambique and South Africa.
 5. For detailed accounts of the Gaza-Nguni incursions, see G.J. Liesegang, "Aspects of Gaza Nguni History 1821-1897", *Rhodesian History*, 6 (1976), pp 1–14; J.D. Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath: A Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Bantu Africa* (Longman, London,

evolved a lifestyle based on a mixed economy which took full cognition of the climatic hazards of the area and the challenges arising from attacks by bugs such as tsetse-flies. Adaptation to the environment made them survivors in an area that was climatically hostile. Their forced removal from the land of their ancestors put them at loggerheads with the colonial state as discussed in the case studies under review which are representative of the communities that were most affected by the massive evictions of the period from 1957 to 1968 and so put up the most noticeable resistance to the game park scheme.

Map 1: Showing GNP and the surrounding settlements



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

Research methodology

This article is firmly supported by archival material sourced from the National Archives of Zimbabwe and the Masvingo Records Centre. The material housed in these archives

1966); H.A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. 1 (Macmillan, London, 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.H. Bannerman, "Hlengweni: The History of the Hlengwe of Lower Save and Lundi Rivers from the 18th Century", *Zimbabwean History*, 12 (1981); G. Mazarire, "Reflections on Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe c. 850 to 1880s", in B. Raftopoulos and A. Mlambo (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe, A History from the Pre-Colonial Period to 2008* (Weaver Press, Harare, 2009); and E. MacGonagle, *Crafting Identity in Zimbabwe and Mozambique* (University of Rochester Press, Rochester, 2007), p 93.

includes official correspondence; government/statutory documents; delineation and annual reports generated by colonial officials from the Native, Commerce and Transport, Law and Order and National Parks' Departments. The study profited from the memoirs of Allan Wright who worked as the district commissioner of Nuanetsi during the years under focus; and also from information gleaned in a colonial journal, the *Native Affairs Department Annual* which was first issued by the Native Affairs Department in 1923.

Furthermore, the research was enriched by information gathered from oral testimonies made by members of the Shangaan community of south-eastern Zimbabwe who lived through the trauma of evictions. These interviews were conducted between 2013 and 2015 when collecting data for my doctoral studies. They captured the emotions and reactions of people who had either experienced the ejections directly or witnessed them from the side-lines of the park. The deliberate interview focus was on recovering the voices of the marginalised Shangaan people. The article also draws heavily on the abundant secondary literature on the colonial empire, national parks and forced removals. Such works include academic texts, theses and journal articles. The qualitative research method was employed to select, present and analyse the material gathered.

Shangaan survival in the forest of Gonarezhou

As background to the Gonarezhou eviction discourse and to situate the discussion in its correct historical context, it is necessary to point out that the Shangaan had developed symbiotic relations with the fauna and flora of their environment before their homeland was turned into a game reserve. The intricate nature of their milieu dictated that they practise a mixed economy that was centred on subsistence cropping, hunting, raising of stock, fishing and gathering of fruits, plants and vegetables. Admittedly, theirs was a dry area that suffered from intermittent droughts but the people had developed ingenious survival tactics which enabled them to adapt in the best possible way to their veld.

Subsistence crop production was without doubt the pillar of the Shangaan economy although early white narratives presented the clan as lackadaisical agriculturalists.⁶ Their alleged inability to engage in productive agriculture was attributed to the generally dry ecology of the region⁷ but also on their alleged laziness.⁸ This view was consistent with the stereotypes generated by colonial administrators

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6. National Archives of Zimbabwe (hereafter NAZ): S2929/8/4, Delineation File, Nuanetsi, H.E. Summer, Provincial Commissioner, Victoria to DC of Nuanetsi, 15 May, 1973; W. Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions, Conservation and Development in Zimbabwe's South-East Lowveld* (Weaver Press, Harare, 2007), p 82; and A. Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods* (Transvaal Printers, Cape Town, 1972), p 201.
 7. NAZ: S235/504, Annual Report, Gwanda, 1926.
 8. NAZ: S235/505, Report of the Assistant Native Commissioner, Nuanetsi for the Year Ended 31st December 1927; and NAZ: N9/1/17, NC Annual Report, Chibi, 1914.

that African agricultural production was held back by the indolence and the slovenly methods that were employed.⁹

However, observations made about the area from as early as 1836 point to an agriculturally industrious community which assiduously cultivated a variety of crops on their rich alluvial soils.¹⁰ The Shangaan were reported to have been fervent crop producers who cultivated *xifake* (maize); *muhlate* (sweet potatoes); *mandunghu* (pumpkins); *matimba* (sweet reeds); *timanga* (groundnuts); *tindluvu* (peas); millet grain crops such as *mahuvu* and *mpowo*; and sorghum grains such as *xibedlani*, *xitishi* and *mutode*.¹¹ The existence of many *ngula* (granaries), *tshurwi na mutswi* (mortar and pestle) and *guyo na mbwanyo* (grinding stones) throughout the Shangaan landscape was evidence of the people's astute agricultural practices.¹²

While acknowledging that the region was prone to perennial droughts, it is not entirely true that the inhabitants were bad crop producers. The local people took full advantage of their understanding of the environment and adapted their agricultural practices to the low rainfall of the region by cultivating small grains, conducting irrigated riverbed farming and practising crop rotation on dry lands.¹³ Their alleged agricultural ineptitude appears to be overstated or perhaps deliberately distorted by colonial authors to fit into the indolence mantra they were propagating. Where conditions allowed, the Shangaan producers excelled in crop production.

The Shangaan of Gonarezhou were also a renowned hunting clan, a fact supported in numerous colonial accounts.¹⁴ J. Parker observed that their hunting and tracking skills were comparable to those of modern soldiers.¹⁵ Again, the fact that

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9. E.D. Alvord, "Agricultural Life of Rhodesian Natives", *Native Affairs Department Annual*, hereafter, *NADA*, 2 (1929), p 9.
 10. J.H. Bannerman, "A Short Political and Economic History of the Tsvanai, Chisa and Mahenye Dynasties of the Ndanga, Chiredzi and Chipinga Districts to c. 1950", Unpublished paper, undated, p 14; and F. Elton, "Journey of an Exploration of the Limpopo River", Unpublished paper, *Royal Geographical Society*, London, 1873.
 11. National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (hereafter, NMMZ), Report by D. Simpson and S. Booysens, "Animal and Plant Ecology Report", Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society, Gonarezhou Expedition, Salisbury, 1962, p 68; Bannerman, "A Short Political and Economic History", pp 13–14. For another perspective on the cultivation of traditional grain crops to mitigate drought, see B. Tavuyanago, N. Mutami and 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.
 12. Interview with Mukhacana Chauke, Mahenye, 7 August 2014.
 13. Bannerman, "A Short Political and Economic History", p 14.
 14. See, among others, St. V. Erskine, "Journals of a Voyage to Umzila: King of Gaza, 1871–72", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 45, 1875, p 92; T.V. Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail* (Books of Africa, Cape Town, 1967), pp 82 and 126; and NAZ: N3/33/8, History of Ndanga.
 15. J. Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts: Inside Story of a Rhodesian Special Branch Officer* (Galago Books, Alberton, 2006), p 208.

vurha ne paxa (bows and arrows) were found in every Shangaan homestead was testimony to the importance of hunting. The Gonarezhou forest was home to a variety of game, birds and edible reptiles on which the local people depended. The Shangaan people managed these bush resources through the application of indigenous, community-guided conservation methods, a fact acknowledged by Wright, the district commissioner while he was superintending the Nuanetsi district.¹⁶ The testimonies of elderly residents of south-eastern Zimbabwe show that the *vahloti* (hunters) killed just enough game at a time to satisfy their immediate consumption needs.¹⁷

Early colonial writings also alleged that the Shangaan were bad stockmen because of perennial attacks by tsetse-fly and other diseases such as rinderpest, foot and mouth and theileriosis.¹⁸ On the contrary, early archaeological studies of the area pointed to a community that raised large herds of cattle in the Malipati area of south-eastern Zimbabwe, a zone that lies in the historical tsetse-fly belt.¹⁹ In support of this claim, J.K. Rennie contended that the Shangaan economy was oriented more towards the rearing of cattle than to crop production, thereby dismissing the notion that cattle raising was peripheral.²⁰ The Shangaan also kept large numbers of other livestock such as goats and donkeys, animals that were more adaptable to the dry weather conditions of the southern Lowveld.²¹

The rivers in the GNP such as the Save, Runde and Mwenezi, and pools like Chasuku, Tembohata and Chivhileni were home to a variety of fish that residents depended upon.²² The veld also had an abundance of trees and wooden poles were used to build fences and to construct huts, granaries and cattle kraals. Fruits like *khuhluru*, *saraji* and *nyii* and indigenous vegetables such as *nyapape* and *mowa* complemented the people's diet. Then too, the *nkanyi* (marula) and *kwangwali* palm fruits were harvested and processed to make the intoxicating wine favoured by many in the community. The bark of certain trees and a variety of plants were used to make antibiotics that treated various ailments.²³

It is therefore evident that living in Gonarezhou, the Shangaan cultivated a special relationship with their ecology. The place supplied them with basic daily needs: meat, fish, pastures, fruits and vegetables. Furthermore, the Gonarezhou forest provided them with firewood and was also home to the graves of their ancestors. It became a site of supplication. It is clear that the land could not be taken from the people

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16. A. Wright, *Grey Ghosts at Buffalo Bend* (Galaxie Press, Salisbury, 1976), p 109. The title of native commissioner (NC) was replaced by district commissioner (DC) in the 1950s.
 17. Group interview with villagers, Chisa, 23 December 2014.
 18. Wright, *Valley of the Ironwood*, pp 259-260.
 19. P. Garlake, "Pastoralism and Zimbabwe", *Journal of African History*, 14, 4, 1978, p 483.
 20. J.K. Rennie, "Christianity, Colonialism and the Origins of Nationalism Amongst the Ndau of Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1935", PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 1973, p 136.
 21. Report, "Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society, Gonarezhou Expedition", 1962, p 68.
 22. Interview with Samuel Khumbani, Mahenye, 4 August 2014. Also see, NAZ: S2929/8/4, Delineation of Communities, Nuanetsi District, p 28.
 23. Interview with Munyamani Boyi Chauke, Chitanga, 2 August 2014.

without dire consequences. Unquestionably, its transformation into a game reserve was destined to demarcate lines of confrontation between the community and the authorities.

The people must move: Colonial displacements

The forced removal of communities from areas earmarked for game reserves was a world-wide phenomenon. The argument advanced was that animals and humans could not co-exist. Areas designated for wildlife had to be protected from the local people; to keep the animals in and the people out, barriers such as fences had to be erected.²⁴ The first national park to be established in the United States of America in 1872, the Yellowstone National Park, was thus founded on the principle of excluding human beings from the park-designated area.²⁵ Such was also the case with early game reserves in Australia, New Zealand and Sweden.²⁶ Similar parks were established in colonial Tanganyika, Kenya and Uganda.²⁷ The founding of national parks in their modern form thus became a feature of colonial Africa, with Yellowstone Park being used as the model.²⁸ Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau discuss the negative effects of evictions when parks were created. They contend that such displacements trigger at least eight impoverishment risks, namely landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of access to common property and social disarticulation.²⁹

Displacements in Africa were tainted by an added racial dimension whereby indigenous blacks were accused of having limited appreciation of nature and of being “first-class poachers”. They had to be removed from parks if the ecosystems of such

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- 24. T.W. Sudia, “Domestic Tranquillity and the National Park System: A Context for Human Ecology”, *The George Wright Forum* (1982), p 22; 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* (W.W. Norton, New York, 1996), p 81; and J.A. Dixon and P.B. Sherman, *Economics of Protected Areas. A New Look at Benefits and Costs* (Earthscan Publications Ltd, London, 1990), p 13.
 - 25. C.M Hall and W. Frost, “The Making of the National Parks Concept”, in W. Frost and C.M. Hall (eds), *Tourism and National Parks, International Perspectives on Development, Histories and Change* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p 3.
 - 26. M. Adams, “Beyond Yellowstone? Conservation and Indigenous Rights in Australia and Sweden”, in G. Cant, A. Goodall and J. Inns (eds), *Discourses and Silences: Indigenous Peoples, Risks and Resistance* (University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 2005), pp 127-138.
 - 27. M. Borgerhoff Mulder and P Coppolillo, *Conservation: Linking Ecology, Economics and Culture* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2005); and P.A. Chhetri, A. Mungisha and S. White, “Community Resources in Kibale and Mt Elgon National Parks, Uganda”, *Parks*, 13, 1 (2003), pp 28-38.
 - 28. Sudia, “Domestic Tranquillity and the National Park System”, p 22; Hall and Frost, “The Making of the National Parks Concept”, p 3.
 - 29. M.M. Cernea and K. Schmidt-Soltau, “The End of Forceable Displacements? Conservation Must Not Impoverish People”, *Policy Matters*, 12 (2003), pp 44-46.

areas were to be preserved.³⁰ Jane Carruthers contends that the establishment of the Kruger National Park in South Africa was followed by massive evictions of indigenous communities from the park area.³¹ Similarly, the creation of the Wankie Game Reserve in 1927 and the Matopos Game Reserve in 1930 in Rhodesia was followed by concerted efforts to evict the resident populations from the areas.³² Similarly, the declaration of the Gonarezhou land as a game reserve in 1934 triggered a process of removing indigenous Shangaan communities from the game-designated area.

Rhodesian imperial rulers maintained that parks such as the Gonarezhou were potential revenue generators through tourism and would create jobs for the affected communities, thus alleviating their poverty.³³ The colonial government then conveniently appointed itself the custodian of the country's wildlife by dictating how it should be managed. In so doing it imposed a Western aesthetic appreciation of nature on black Rhodesian communities.³⁴ Parks were thereby transformed into symbols of racial identity and white political hegemony when scores of indigenous communities were simply kicked out of Wankie and Matopos park-designated areas in a show of state power.³⁵ These displacements should be understood in the context of the enforcement of racially-guided land alignment that followed the promulgation of the discriminatory 1930 Land Apportionment Act.³⁶

In a statement issued by the acting secretary of commerce in 1934, the GNP residents were bluntly informed of the plans to remove them from the area:

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-

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30. J. Igoe, *Conservation and Globalization: A Study of National Parks and Indigenous Communities from East Africa to South Dakota* (Thomson Learning, Belmont, 2004) pp 71, 79 and 83.
 31. J. Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park: A Social and Political History* (University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 1995), pp 33.
 32. NAZ: S1651/46/1, Evidence of E.J. Kelly Edwards, 21 March 1949. Also see, NAZ: S4061, D. Chavhunduka, "Is there a Future for National Parks in Zimbabwe: What are the Pressures on them?" *Wild Rhodesia*, 17 (October 1978), p 14.
 33. NAZ: SRG/3, Annual Report of the National Parks Advisory Board for the Year Ended 31 December 1949, Presented to the Legislative Assembly, 1950. Also see, NAZ: S4061, T. Davidson, "Report on Wankie Game Reserve, October 1928-March 1930", *Wild Rhodesia*, 17 (October 1978), pp 3-5; NAZ: S4061, Chavhunduka, "Is There a Future for National Parks in Zimbabwe?", pp 10-14; S. Mombeshora and S. Le Bel, "People-Park Conflicts: The Case of Gonarezhou and Chitsa Community in South East Zimbabwe", *Biodiversity Conservation*, 18 (2009), p 2602; and T. Davidson, *Wankie: The Story of a Great Reserve* (Books of Africa, Cape Town, 1967).
 34. Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p 12.
 35. NAZ: S1651/46/1, Evidence of E.J. Kelly Edwards, 21 March 1949.
 36. See, Land Apportionment Act, No. 30, 1930.

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.³⁷

The emphasis was on removing the people because in practical terms it was “impossible” for them to co-exist with the wildlife. This was an opinion supported by the divisional road engineer and the assistant native commissioner of Nuanetsi.³⁸ It was a viewpoint couched in the new paradigm prototype called fortress conservation that contended that Western wildlife protection management systems were superior to the wasteful and destructive local conservation practices.³⁹ Such beliefs were untrue. Facts on the ground reveal that many African communities had managed their fauna and flora responsibly in pre-colonial times. What was certainly true, however, was that the label was consistent with imperial historiography.

So, in a bid to justify land use change, south-eastern Zimbabwe was given all kinds of labels. It was arid, uninteresting, waterless, disease-ridden, useless for cropping and unfit for human habitation.⁴⁰ It was claimed that most of the land that later became the GNP had been unoccupied in 1890 when the colonial government took over.⁴¹ Consistent with this mind-set, P. Forestall, the first native commissioner of Chibi roundly condemned the entire Lowveld landscape as unsuitable for human occupation and suggested that it be turned into a game reserve.⁴² Later, colonial reports continued to hammer on the need to remove the “small groups” of the Shangaan from the Gonarezhou milieu for their own good and that of wild animals.⁴³ The argument proffered was that the Gonarezhou land could only assume a “new value” after being converted to a game reserve.

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- 37. NAZ: S914/12/1B, Acting Secretary, Commerce and Transport to Col. the Hon. Deneys Reitz, Minister of Lands, Pretoria, “Gona-re-Zhou Game Reserve, National Park and Game Reserve Scheme, Government Proclamation Gazetted”, 28 September 1934.
 - 38. NAZ: S914/12/1B, Divisional Road Engineer to CRE, 12 June 1932; and NAZ: S1532/91/2, Game, 1922 to 1939, Vol. 2, Acting ANC Nuanetsi to NC Chibi, 11 November 1934.
 - 39. S. Khan, “Sustainable Development and Community Participation: A Case Study of Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park”, Paper delivered at 2nd Conference *IESE Dinamicas da Pobreza e Padroes de Acumulacao em Mocambique*, Maputo, 22 to 23 April 2009, pp 1-3. Also see Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, pp 43 and 92.
 - 40. 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. Also see, NAZ: N3/24/2-4, NC Chibi to CNC, “Re: Native Reserves”, 4 August 1900; *The Sunday Mail*, “Slaughter of Game Again”, 1 March 1964; *The Sunday Mail*, “Gonarezhou Must Not Die”, 22 March 1964; and Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*, p 121.
 - 41. Child, “Report of the Director of National Parks and Wildlife Management”, p 21; and H. de Laessoe, “Ordinary Meeting, 28 August 1906, The Lundi and Sabi Rivers”, *Proceedings of the Rhodesian Science Association*, 6, 2 (1907), p 123.
 - 42. NAZ: N3/24/2-4, NC Chibi to CNC, “Re: Native Reserves”, 4 August 1900.
 - 43. Bannerman, “Hlengweni”, p 483; and NAZ: S4061, Chavhunduka, “Is There a Future for National Parks in Zimbabwe?” p 14.

What was also evident in the Gonarezhou eviction debate was the matrix of power relations during the colonial period, or to put it more precisely, the hegemony of the colonial empire. The broader picture was the control and protection of the conquered, the benign tutelage of the subject people. It was, ironically, a question of protecting the interests of the colonial subjects without fully consulting them, a common characteristic of the imperial state. In this particular case, British imperial guidance depicted as rescuing the Shangaan from the “climatic hazards” of an area that they had, incidentally, lived in all along. What was furthermore revealed from the eviction conversation was the extension of the imperial arm of the state into an area perceived to be far from administrative centres such as the native commissioner’s office. The people were to be quarantined into native reserves where they would be easily controlled. This was also a confirmation of the political control of this remote area of the country.

The displacement of the up to 7 000 Shangaan people still in the park did not, however, commence immediately after the declaration of the game reserve in 1934. This was due to policy disagreements between the various government departments. While the Department of Commerce pushed for the immediate removal of the Shangaan, the ministry of Agriculture and Lands was opposed to the displacement, not on benevolent grounds, but for fear that the population was too large to be moved out at once.⁴⁴ The chief native commissioner was particularly wary of the proposed mass evictions for fear that Matibi No. 2, the area earmarked for their resettlement, had a limited carrying capacity given its water challenges and poor soils.⁴⁵ The people were also ironically saved from early ejection by tsetse-flies because the government prioritised fighting the scourge in the “next two decades”, so their eviction was temporarily shelved.⁴⁶

The eviction of people from the GNP gained traction in the 1950s when the Chisa community was targeted for removal. Thereafter, all the land from Nuanetsi through Bubye to the Limpopo River and extending as far as the Portuguese East Africa (PEA) border was re-designated as the Sengwe Special Native Area to accommodate evictees from the park. Again, upon being appointed in 1958, the district commissioner of the Nuanetsi district, Allan Wright, did not hide his plans to turn the vast, picturesque and “empty” Lowveld area into a wildlife sanctuary. He fantasised:

Before me, as far as the eye could see, was the vast, *empty* 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

44. Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, pp 147–148. The Department of Commerce was more interested in promoting tourism in the area.

45. NAZ: S1532/91/2, Game, 1922–1939, Vol. 2: CNC to Acting Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Lands, 8 January 1935; and NAZ: S1542/G1/1, CNC to Minister of Commerce and Transport, 13 November, 1933.

46. 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 252.

a wonderful national park this south-east corner of Rhodesia would make ... What a wonderful game reserve the vast *unoccupied* 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* (emphasis added).⁴⁷

Thereafter, together with the like-minded people, he worked tirelessly towards converting the vast Lowveld area into a national park.⁴⁸ Thus, the period between 1957 and 1968 witnessed intensified government efforts to remove all the Shangaan who were still living in the GNP, and the Chisa, Ngwenyeni and Xilotlela communities were targeted. Their contestation to eviction from the land of their grandfathers is the focus of the discussion that follows.

As shown earlier, there were still large numbers of the Shangaan in the game-designated area right into the 1950s. Most were concentrated around the Sabi-Lundi junction.⁴⁹ These people were constantly reminded that they were illegal residents who would have to vacate the area sooner or later. The growing rumour in the early 1950s was that they were to be moved to Matibi No. 2 and Sengwe reserves (shown on Map 1) and their lands turned into a Special Shooting Zone, effectively making it an exclusive game area.⁵⁰ Another rumour, which was not entirely untrue, was that they were going to be joined by Ndebele and Karanga-speaking people from other parts of the country in their new settlement areas.⁵¹ The Chisa, Ngwenyeni and Xilotlela communities put up strong resistance to eviction from the home of their ancestors.

The Chisa of Gotosa

The Chisa people had a long history of confrontation with the colonial government which had earned them the reputation of being a disobedient people. The conflict began when their land was demarcated into a Controlled Hunting Area at the inception of colonial rule in the 1890s. The tension was heightened when their area was later quarantined as a tsetse-fly selective animal elimination zone.⁵² An early collision was evident in the running battles that ensued over hunting restrictions imposed by the state between 1890 and 1933 and the threats of eviction that characterised the post-1934 period.⁵³ It should be noted that their experiences were not unique because

47. Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp 34 and 64-65.

48. Southern Rhodesia, *Land Apportionment Act Amendment Act*, No. 37 of 1961.

49. NAZ: TH10/1/1/161, "Nyamutongwe Ruins, Postscript".

50. NAZ: SRG/3, Annual Report of the National Parks Advisory Board for the Year Ended 31 December 1950, Presented to the Legislative Assembly, 1951.

51. Interview with Ward 10 Councillor, Mabalauta (GNP), 5 September 2014.

52. Mombeshora and Le Bel, "People-Park Conflicts", p 2609. Chief Chisa is wrongly captured as Chitsa in most colonial literature.

53. Interview with Paulus Chikomba, Village Head, Chisa, 28 June 2014.

forced removals elsewhere in the world had triggered similar community contestations.⁵⁴

The protest of the Chisa came in the form of open resistance to the game reserve scheme; and this unrest intensified from the mid-1950s. Game boundaries were redrawn in 1957. These expediently coincided with the downgrading of the Chisa chieftainship to a headmanship. The demotion was, in all certainty, punishment for the chief's opposition to the game reserve project and his general insubordination.⁵⁵ The relegation, understandably, increased tension between the state and the Chisa community and turn the Chisa into more hardened and uncooperative subjects for most of the colonial period. It should be noted that the 1950s and the 1960s were a period of intensified political tension in the country as a whole which culminated in the rise of militant African nationalism. The era witnessed the formation of radical nationalist political parties that instigated resistance to the colonial state and demanded self-governance.⁵⁶ The action of the Chisa people should be understood in this broader national mood.

Consequent to the heightened political tension in the country and in direct response to the perceived recalcitrance of the Chisa people, in 1957 the state proceeded to remove them forcibly from the Gotosa area of the Sabi-Lundi junction to Chingoji. Soon afterwards, they were moved again, this time to the Seven Jack area inside the park but on its periphery. They were given a fifteen-day notice period to vacate their Gotosa homes. Those who resisted had their huts burnt down. They were then bundled into trucks and dumped on the new sites which, to all accounts, had not been prepared in advance. In protest, some opted to cross the border into Portuguese East Africa (PEA). Others went to the neighbouring Ndanga district and yet others joined Chief Tsvovani across the Sabi River.⁵⁷ The cost of their eviction was dire. Many left their valuables such as *makuyo* (grinding stones), *tshurwi na mutswi* (pestles), *timbita* (clay pots), *tihlelo* (winnowing baskets) and some of their livestock.⁵⁸ They also left behind their fertile Gotosa land, ancestral graves and most importantly, their "identity that had been crafted over the years and engraved in our land back there".⁵⁹ Community members interviewed in Chisa reminisced that the evictions were indeed traumatic.⁶⁰

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54. 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), p 5.
55. Interview with Headman Mpapa, Mpapa Village, 21 July 2014. Also see Mombeshora and Le Bel, "People-Park Conflicts", p 2609.
56. A.S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe* (Cambridge University Press, New York, 2014), pp 146–148; J. Barker, *Rhodesia: The Road to Rebellion* (Oxford University Press, London, 1967), p 18; *Preventive Detention (Temporary Provisions) Act*, No. 39 of 1959; Southern Rhodesia *Law and Order (Maintenance) Act*, 1960; and *State of Emergency Act*, 1959.
57. Interview with Paulus Chikomba, Village Head, Chisa, 28 June 2014.
58. Interview with Enias Masiya, Guluji Ward 22, 28 June 2014.
59. Interview with Paulus Chikomba, Village Head, Chisa, 28 June 2014.
60. Group interview with villagers, Chisa, 23 December 2014.

The evacuated land became game terrain, but more precisely it was used as an exclusive white recreational hunting enclave. A tsetse-control fence was erected along the Chivonja Hills, separating the game reserve from Chisa's new area. This barrier prevented the people from grazing their cattle in their old homelands and also restricted their access to the lands for hunting and gathering purposes. Understandably, the Chisa people were riled by the erection of the restrictive fence and their total exclusion from their old Gonarezhou land. Confrontation was heightened in 1962 when the community was again forcibly moved from the Seven Jack area to the Ndali locale in the adjacent Sangwe Tribal Trust Land (see location on Map 1, indicated as Chitsa settlement). The latest move was ostensibly to accommodate the new *ndhedzi* (tsetse)-control fence erected to fight new outbreaks of the disease.⁶¹

While Chisa was assured that he would return to the Seven Jack area after the elimination of *ndhedzi*, the agreement was never honoured. The area was soon afterwards leased to Ray Sparrow, a white rancher who, ironically, converted it into a cattle grazing area.⁶² In 1974, another veterinary fence was put up in the disputed area thus putting an end to Chisa hopes that they would return to the Seven Jack area. When the status of the game reserve was changed in 1975 to that of a national park, the Seven Jack area was incorporated in its entirety into the GNP, with the "temporary" 1962 veterinary fence becoming the official boundary. This move heightened tension among the already agitated Chisa community.

The Ngwenyeni of Marhumbini

Headman Ngwenyeni of Marhumbini lived south of the Sabi-Lundi junction.⁶³ His headmanship had been recognised by the native commissioner, Forestall, in 1898 when the headman was appointed supervisor of the British South Africa Company territory adjoining south-eastern Rhodesia and PEA. However, to the disappointment of the Rhodesian government, the headman continued to give allegiance to his paramount chief Mavube across the border, now under Portuguese administration. Notably, he continued to act as if he was a Portuguese subject, an embarrassing situation to the Rhodesian government.⁶⁴ This misplaced allegiance was perceived by the government as an act of defiance but may have arisen out of ignorance on the new line of command.

When Ngwenyeni's area was incorporated into the GNP in 1934, his people and all those who were living in the park-designated zone at the time, became eviction targets. The threat intensified at the beginning of the 1960s. Ngwenyeni took pre-emptive action by initiating dialogue with Wright; he wanted an assurance that his people would retain tenure on the land of their ancestors. He contended that

61. Interview with Enias Masiya, Guluji Ward 22, 28 June 2014.

62. Interview with Joshua Dzviririri, Mupinga, 17 April 2014.

63. Ngwenyeni was also incorrectly referred to as Ngwenyenye in colonial narratives.

64. Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p 49.

throughout their long stay in the area, they had always lived harmoniously with animals of the veld.⁶⁵

The order for them to vacate to the Bengi Springs area of Malipati came in 1963.⁶⁶ The suggested move was opposed by Wright who, for selfish reasons, felt that the picturesque Bengi Springs area should remain part of the GNP.⁶⁷ He recommended that the Ngwenyeni be allowed to remain at Marhumbini and serve as a tourist attraction, a position clearly captured below:

I saw the Ngwenyenyenye [Ngwenyeni] group, primitive, ultra-conservative, unspoiled Shanganes 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 have a wonderful opportunity to combine the two great attractions in a unique and beautiful setting ... The presence of the Ngwenyenyenye [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.⁶⁸

Displayed in Wright's reasoning was, surely, an inherent contradiction in his game park perception. For him to now argue that humans and game could indeed co-exist because he wanted to retain the Bengi Springs area in his park project was without doubt, sly and selfish. Again, as W. Wolmer correctly observed, Wright's suggestion for the Ngwenyeni people to remain in the game-designated area revealed another innate contradiction whereby one wildlife “wilderness” would thrive with human beings in it, yet others would be spoiled by the presence of humans.⁶⁹ This was indeed an incompatible contradiction!

It was no surprise that the people of Marhumbini resisted movement from an environment that had sustained their lives for a long time.⁷⁰ Faced with stiff opposition from the Ngwenyeni, the government opted for a compromise position in which D.C. Wright and A. Fraser (the director of wildlife conservation) agreed with the Ngwenyeni in 1963 that they remain at Marhumbini. That way, the Bengi Springs area was saved from being turned into a native reserve. The people were, however, warned that those found poaching would be summarily evicted. They were also required to provide labour on the GNP projects such as fencing and maintenance as part of showing their gratitude. They were also barred from accommodating additional people into the

65. MRC: MS 22, Delineation Report on the Ngwenyenyenye or Marumbini Headmanship and Community, p 84; and NAZ: TH10/1/1/193, “Sacred Places”.

66. Interview with Headman Ngwenyeni, Malipati, 24 July 2014.

67. Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p 268.

68. Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp 329 and 339–340.

69. Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p 151.

70. Interview with Headman Ngwenyeni, Malipati, 24 July 2014.

area.⁷¹ Such stringent conditions only served to heighten tension over the ownership of the Gonarezhou land.

For his part, the district commissioner expected, rather presumptuously, that the Ngwenyeni would be grateful for receiving the special eviction moratorium and additionally getting jobs on their doorsteps. Wright did not seem to realise or deliberately ignored the fact that years of physical and psychological harassment had hardened the people to an extent that no amount of compassion, short of concrete guarantees of permanent tenure on their forefathers' land would mollify them. The bitterness of living under the fear of displacement was real and could not easily be wished away. What the Ngwenyeni wanted was simply to be allowed to live on their ancestral lands, without being molested.⁷²

The Fraser-Wright Agreement was broken four years down the line, in 1967. This came soon after the transfer of A. Fraser to the Umtali district. The new directorate of the Department of Wildlife Conservation revived the idea of pushing the Ngwenyeni out of the park. The pretext, this time, was that their increased poaching activity and expanding population had become a real danger to the ecology of the game area. Again, officers in the Wildlife Department, with the exception of Fraser still found it problematic to put up with a situation where Africans would remain permanent park residents.⁷³ Their 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 ... 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 (emphasis added).⁷⁴

The Ngwenyeni took the bold step of fighting to the bitter end. That fight included a passionate appeal to the government to allow them to stay. They even indicated their preparedness to offer free labour to the Department of Wildlife and to live in the area without cattle. In an attempt to save face, or perhaps in some demonstration of ignorance about the issue at hand, the new district commissioner responded unconvincingly to the plea in a memorandum dated 5 January 1968. He denied ever having given orders for the removal of the Ngwenyeni from Marhumbini.⁷⁵

71. Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p 329.

72. Group interview with villagers, Chisa, 23 December 2014.

73. MRC: MS 22, Delineation Report on the Ngwenyenye or Marumbini Headmanship and Community, p 87.

74. MRC: MS 22, Delineation Report on Ngwenyenye or Marumbini Headmanship and Community, p 87.

75. MRC: MS 22, Delineation Report on Ngwenyenye or Marumbini Headmanship and Community, pp 87–88.

Notwithstanding this minute, the Ngwenyeni were put under stringent new conditions: no new adults could be registered in their villages; those placed on national parks labour agreements were to comply fully with their new labour conditions; and a voluntary move “without bitterness” to a new resettlement area in Sengwe Tribal Trust Land was encouraged.⁷⁶ That nobody volunteered to move to the new site was not surprising. What was intriguing was the proposal itself. Despite their protests and appeals, the forced removals became a reality in August 1968.⁷⁷ The people were moved in large numbers to the Malipati area of the Sengwe Reserve. Again those who resisted had their huts burnt. Like their Chisa neighbours they were bullied and were forcibly moved.⁷⁸ It transpired that the new site, as Wright himself acknowledged, was not really suitable for human settlement.⁷⁹

The forced eviction of the Ngwenyeni from Marhumbini was celebrated in conservation circles; it created unlimited mobility for the wildlife in the park. It was reported, for example, that soon after the removal of the “squatters”, game 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”.⁸⁰ Meanwhile, in their new place of residence, the Ngwenyeni became a people “without land” as the area was already overpopulated and the terrain rocky.⁸¹ They continued to *kuhlota* (hunt) illegally in order to survive but also as an act of protest and defiance. The new regional warden, Douglas Newmarch, complained on 3 November 1970 that poaching was increasing in the southern area of the game park. He attributed this to the fact that a group of embittered “squatters” had recently been moved from Marhumbini.⁸²

Their resistance and continued defiance was, without doubt, a clear case of the people’s self-assertion and a refusal to be taken for granted. In addition, it was an attempt to declare and confirm their indigeneity to the area and an assertion of the value they placed on their heritage; they were prepared to defend this at all costs. Broadly, theirs was an act of indigenous resistance to colonial oppression, an anti-imperial struggle consistent with the national political agitation of the 1950s and 1960s.

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- 76. MRC: MS 22 Delineation Report on Ngwenyenye or Marumbini Headmanship and Community, p 88.
 - 77. The government used soldiers and the police to drive the people out. This was revealed in interviews with Lyson Chisaka Masango, Mahenye, 6 August 2014; and Mhlava Chirhindze, Mahenye, 7 August 2014.
 - 78. Interview with Mhlava Chirhindze, Mahenye, 7 August 2014.
 - 79. Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p 341.
 - 80. NAZ: SRG/3, Annual Report of the National Parks Advisory Board for Year Ending 1968, Presented to the Legislative Assembly, 1969, p 23.
 - 81. Interview with Headman Ngwenyeni, Malipati, 24 July 2014.
 - 82. NAZ: SRG/3, Annual Report of the National Parks Advisory Board for Year Ending 1968, Presented to the Legislative Assembly, 1969, p 23.

The Xilotlela of Vila Salazar

The Xilotlela people, located on the southern tip of the GNP and along the PEA border were also targeted for eviction in 1963. They were to be moved to a place called Bejamseve, located between the Nuanetsi and Limpopo rivers about 40 kilometres south of their current location. The reason was predictable – to create space for game. Wright, the district commissioner who had engineered the resettlement was convinced that Xilotlela's people would appreciate being moved to the new virgin land where he had sunk eight boreholes, demarcated land in the reddish soil of the area and identified what he considered to be first class pastures.⁸³

In an act that could be interpreted as passive resistance, headman Xilotlela requested an audience with the district commissioner before his people could be moved. The pretext was that he wanted the DC to explain the reasons for their relocation, but in essence this was a case of the traditional leadership mobilising its subjects against an unpopular state programme. At the convened meeting, the headman explained why "Chibgwe", had called the gathering.⁸⁴ He sarcastically stressed the drilling of new boreholes, the large grazing lands and the purported excellent soils he and the elders had seen. He also revealed that missionaries would come to build schools for them in the new area.⁸⁵

Wright was asked to address the points the headman raised. Chibgwe hammered on about the advantages of relocation. He emphasised the major points explained by headman Xilotlela but also stressed that people would be able to keep plenty of cattle because measures had been taken to contain the tsetse-flies. He even promised free transport to the new site. Wright was most disappointed with the community's response. Not a single person wanted to move and the people reiterated their desire to remain at their present location. Headman Xilotlela encapsulated the position of his subjects:

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 [the capital city] with our elders and tell the Government this (emphasis added).⁸⁶

It turned out that this was a well organised protest meeting led by the traditional leadership. Headman Xilotlela had planted his spokespeople strategically in the crowd and told them to express their opposition to relocation to a site away from

83. Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p 335.

84. The district commissioner, Allan Wright, was nicknamed "Chibgwe" (hard stone) because of his alleged ruthlessness in dealing with his African subjects.

85. Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p 334.

86. Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p 334.

their ancestral land. They added that they did not want to move to the new site because it was a place they had avoided in the past because of its aridity.

In an attempt to explain away the people's reaction, with typical colonial arrogance the district commissioner claimed he was not at all surprised by the reaction, because, in his words: "African aversion to any enforced move is well known to me."⁸⁷ What was clear, however, was that he had seriously misjudged the reaction of his subjects. What he probably learnt was that the African population he was dealing with could not be bullied or taken for granted. Hiding his embarrassment as best he could, the DC toyed with three possible choices: to abandon the project altogether; to use force to remove the people; or to arrange a trip for them to the capital city as suggested by the headman. He went for the last option but shortly afterwards claimed that the elders assigned to accompany him to Salisbury had "chickened" out because the thought of a big city frightened them.⁸⁸ However, their reaction could either have been an act of protest or possibly the result of intimidation by Chibgwe's dreaded secret agents.⁸⁹

In the end, a negotiated deal was struck whereby the Xilotlela people would remain in their homeland but without cattle. While the cattle position was officially explained as a tsetse-control measure it was, without doubt, punitive action, a "slap on the wrist" for their supposed obstinacy. As further punishment, soon thereafter Xilotlela's area was re-designated a Special African Area and a buffer fence was erected,⁹⁰ supposedly to protect the people from game. While the community had won the battle to remain on their fatherland, the full war was yet to be won because they were harassed repeatedly throughout the colonial period for allegedly poaching and crossing the borders (South Africa and Mozambique) to conduct illicit activities. What they had demonstrated, however, was that they were no pushovers. For that, they were greatly admired by their neighbours.

The final boundaries of the Gonarezhou game reserve were demarcated in terms of Government Notice No. 776 and 777 of 1968.⁹¹ By the end of that same year, all the GNP residents, irrespective of earlier agreements, had been removed and settled in marginal lands abutting on the park. These were lands which, incidentally, were already overcrowded by earlier settlers and recent immigrants. However, the people continued with their war of defiance against the park establishment from the fringes of the protected area.

87. Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p 335.

88. Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, p 335.

89. Soon after taking over the Nuanetsi District in 1958, Wright established a web of African spies in the entire district. It is most probable that the system was activated to intimidate the people, hence their withdrawal from the Salisbury trip.

90. Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, pp 335-336.

91. NAZ: SRG/3, Annual Report of the National Parks Advisory Board for the Year Ending 1968, Presented to the Legislative Assembly, 1969, p 5.

Poaching and laying snares in the contested GNP escalated as the aggrieved people continued their practice of *kuhlota* (hunting), given their limited survival options outside the park. Park officials recorded increased poaching incidents in the GNP following the total removal of the people.⁹² It was reported that in 1968 alone, 63 African poachers were apprehended in the park for contravening the park's regulations. The Department of Parks also indicated that poachers were becoming more aggressive when confronted by law officers, a sign of increasing tension.⁹³ The escalation of poaching that characterised the post-1968 period was a clear indication of the changing nature of the struggle for control of the disputed Gonarezhou territory.

The three case studies discussed above illustrate the hegemony of the Rhodesian colonial government. It simply appropriated the responsibility of re-allocating the indigenous people's land to create a wildlife sanctuary – without so much as consulting the affected communities. It removed them from the land, often using force. This made for sour relations with the local people; there was ongoing dissatisfaction and confrontation throughout the period under study. The case studies also revealed the forms of resistance adopted by the indigenous communities living in the area. The studies demonstrated how the traditional leadership engineered such resistance, although rather indirectly. This was especially the case with the Ngwenyeni and Xilotlela communities. While such resistance yielded temporary eviction reprieves it did not, in the long run, prevent the colonial government from imposing its will and removing all the park's residents by 1968.

Conclusion

This article focused on the resistance of the Shangaan indigenous communities of south-eastern Zimbabwe to eviction from the GNP. It demonstrated how the evictions were part of a broader colonial scheme to deprive indigenous communities the use of their lands for subsistence. The study revealed that the Gonarezhou case was not an isolated one but consistent with park-induced evictions elsewhere on the African continent. Fundamentally, the study illustrated how the formation of a game sanctuary on Shangaan lands was in itself a statement of conquest and control by the colonial state. The introduction of a new form of wildlife management based on Western-styled conservation methods was alien to the local people. It forced them off their traditional lands, deprived them of their livelihood and was imposed on them without consultation.

The study thus revealed that the interactions the Shangaan had developed with their veld and their environment were disrupted by their ejection from the Gonarezhou land. The veld that had provided them with land for cropping, pasture lands, meat,

92. NAZ: S4061, "Land Use", Wild Life Society of Rhodesia, Newsletter No. 40, January 1970, p 3.

93. NAZ: SRG/3, Annual Report of the National Parks Advisory Board for the Year Ending 1968, Presented to the Legislative Assembly, 1969, p 23.

fruits and vegetables became a no-go area under the new conservation model. When faced with eviction from the land of their forefathers from the mid-1950s, the Shangaan resisted. The article used three case studies of the Chisa of Gotosa, Ngwenyeni of Marhumbini and the Xilotlela of Vila Salazar to demonstrate the different forms of contestation, including passive resistance, the mobilisation of the traditional political institutions and open confrontation with the colonial government. Such resistance aroused the wrath of the state and gave rise to the angry confrontation that characterised the entire eviction period from 1957 to 1968. In the end, the colonial state triumphed and used its might to dislodge the Shangaan from the land of their forefathers.

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