

Forced Removal and Social Memories in North-western Zimbabwe, c1900-2000

by

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Abstract

This is a study in regional history focusing on a case of forced removal that happened in the late 1950s in North-western Zimbabwe and partially on another of voluntary migration in the 1980s. Forced removal and voluntary migration, both as a process and as an event, are used here as prime entry points for a better understanding of rural settlement history in colonial and postcolonial Africa and of the contestations regarding ethnic identity and social belonging that came along with it. Through forced removal, Rengwe, the Zimbabwean area of study, emerged as a combined or merged chiefdom of groups with collective experiences and similar identity but with different historical backgrounds. Later, they were joined by immigrants of other ethnic identities. These broader processes of movement, ethnic identity and social belonging are the main interest of this study. This study argues that stories and memories of forced removal tell us not only about relocation itself, but also about events before and after it. The study pursues two agendas, namely; it gathers memories of relocation and of the environment, and analyzes how they were entangled with each other in a historical perspective. It then examines the impact of these memories on constructions and contestations of social belonging and identity in Rengwe after resettlement. It argues that forced removal and migration as collective experience play a significant role in the formation and negotiation of identity and in building social relations.

The study also distinguishes two kinds of memory applied in such cases, “displaced” and “nostalgic.” Displaced memories are used as a source of information about the past before forced removal, and they were relied upon to conceptualize human-environment relations in the past. Such memories were used by both forced and voluntary resettlers to make sense of history and inscribe meaning into and belonging to the landscape, both old and new. Nostalgic memories, in contrast, are defined as carrying views about the past which are used to reinterpret, explain and criticize present circumstances in the context of today’s socio-economic and political challenges. Lastly, this study observes that memories of forced removal and environment were and are used to describe and to explain the changing power relations between different sections of Rengwe’s forced resettlers.

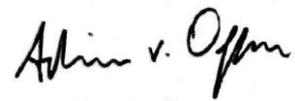
Zusammenfassung

Dies ist eine regionalgeschichtliche Studie, in deren Mittelpunkt ein Fall erzwungener Umsiedlung steht, der sich in den späten 1950er Jahren Nordwest-Zimbabwe abgespielt hat. Teilweise einbezogen wird eine weitere Fallstudie über freiwillige Zuwanderungen in den 1980er Jahren. Erzwungene Umsiedlung und freiwillige Migration, beide als Ereignis und als Prozeß verstanden, werden hier als primäre Zugänge zu einem besseren Verständnis ländlicher Siedlungsgeschichte im kolonialen und nachkolonialen Afrika und der sie begleitenden Auseinandersetzungen um ethnische Identität und soziale Zugehörigkeit verstanden. Durch erzwungene Umsiedlung in spätkolonialer Zeit stieg Rengwe, das zimbabwische Untersuchungsgebiet dieser Arbeit, zu einem kombinierten Chiefdom („Häuptlingstum“) auf, das Gruppen mit ähnlichen kollektiven Erfahrungen und Identitäten (Korekore), aber mit unterschiedlichem historischen Hintergrund zusammenbrachte. Später wurden sie noch mit Einwanderern anderer ethnischer Identitäten vereinigt. Diese umfassenderen Prozesse räumlicher Bewegung, ethnischer Identität und sozialer Zugehörigkeit bilden das eigentliche Erkenntnisinteresse dieser Studie.

In der Untersuchung wird argumentiert, daß Geschichten und Erinnerungen gewaltsamer Umsiedlung uns nicht nur etwas über die Verlagerung der Wohngebiete an sich erzählen, sondern auch über Ereignisse davor und danach. Solche Erinnerungen werden auch genutzt, um die heutige Situation kritisch zu beleuchten. Die Studie verfolgt dabei zwei Zwecke. Zum einen stellt sie Erinnerungen an die Umsiedlung und an die natürliche Umwelt am alten Siedlungsort zusammen und analysiert in historischer Perspektive, inwieweit diese miteinander verflochten waren. Zum anderen betrachtet sie die Auswirkungen dieser Erinnerungen auf Konstruktionen und Auseinandersetzungen um soziale Zugehörigkeit und Identität in Rengwe nach der Umsiedlung. Sie argumentiert daß die kollektive Erfahrung gewaltsamer Umwidlung und Migration eine wesentliche Rolle bei der Bildung und Aushandlung von Identität und sozialer Beziehungen spielt.

Die Studie unterscheidet auch zwei Arten von „Erinnerung“ die in solchen Fällen beobachtet werden können, nämlich „verschobene“ (*displaced*) und „nostalgische“. „Verschobene Erinnerungen“ werden als Quelle des Wissens über die Vergangenheit vor der erzwungenen Umsiedlung verwendet, und um Mensch-Umweltbeziehungen in der Vergangenheit zu konzeptionalisieren. Solche Erinnerungen wurden sowohl von gezwungenen als auch von

freiwilligen Umsiedlern beutzt, um ihrer Geschichte Sinn zu geben und Deutungen und Zugehörigkeiten in die Landschaft einzuschreiben, sowohl in der alten als auch in der neuen Umwelt. „Nostalgische Erinnerungen“ werden dagegen definiert als Träger von Sichtweisen der Vergangenheit, die verwendet werden, um gegenwärtige Zustände im Kontext aktueller sozio-ökonomischer und politischer Herausforderungen zu reinterpretieren, zu erklären und zu kritisieren. Schließlich gelangt die Studie zu dem Ergebnis, daß Erinnerungen an erzwungene Umsiedlung und an die Umwelt dabei helfen können, die sich wandelnden Machtbeziehungen zwischen verschiedenen Teilen der umgesiedelten Bevölkerung Rengwes zu beschreiben und zu erklären.



.....
Supervisor's Signature

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After all is said and done, I take full responsibility for what is contained in this document. All ideas and shortcomings found therein, are solely my own.

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Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	Assistant Native Commissioner
ANC	African National Congress
BSAC	British South Africa Company
BSAP	British South African Police
CAMPFIRE	Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CNC	Chief Native Commissioner
DA	District Administrator
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FTLR	Fast Track Land Reform
GAA	Group Areas Act
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
GN	Government Notice
GNP	Gonarezhou National Park
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
KNP	Kruger National Park
LAA	Land Apportionment Act
LDO	Land Development Officer
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai
MP	Member of Parliament
MPNP	Mana Pools National Park
NAD	Native Affairs Department
NAZ	National Archives of Zimbabwe
NC	Native Commissioner
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	Native Purchase Area
PV	Protected Village
PRV	Pfumo reVanhu
RNLB	Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau

RSF	Rhodesia Security Front
RTTL	Rengwe Tribal Trust Land
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SANP	South African National Parks
SNA	Special Native Area
SNP	Serengeti National Park
TTL	Tribal Trust Land
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
USNA	Urungwe Special Native Area
UTTL	Urungwe Tribal Trust Land
WW1	World War 1
WW11	World War 11
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
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZNA	Zimbabwe National Army
ZPWMA	Zimbabwe Parks & Wildlife Management Authority

Chapter 1: Compulsory Movement, Environment and Social Memories

Introduction

In the preface to his book, *Suffering for Territory*, Moore has remarked that, “a specter is haunting Zimbabwe - the specter of radicalized dispossession.”¹ Rightly so, colonialism is judged by history for causing havoc in land allocation and causing displacement in the process. The majority of those who suffered displacement still possess strong memories of those environments from where they were evicted. The people of Rengwe Communal Lands in northwest Zimbabwe are among those groups of Africans that were compulsorily moved, in their case, from the Zambezi Valley (*Gowa*) and *Gota* in Sipolilo (now Guruve) respectively, to the Rengwe Area between 1957 and 1958.

This study attempts to come to terms with, and to contrast narratives of forced relocation and how they are employed in debating, negotiating and contesting ethnic identity, social belonging and distinction in Rengwe. This chapter, in particular, locates the case of Rengwe within the larger context of forced removals in colonial Zimbabwe. Rengwe, as a territory, contains merged chiefdoms of people who came from different areas and backgrounds. After Zimbabwe’s independence in 1980, it also experienced a new wave of migration, adding a new dimension to its composition and to the question of social belonging and ethnic identity. The study, thus, gives primacy to narratives and memories of forced relocation, emphasizing how both the event and process are recalled and described in retrospect. It concentrates on the vibrant, but also contested memories that are relied on to make sense of the past and to construct social identities by way of reinterpreting forced relocation in very dynamic ways.

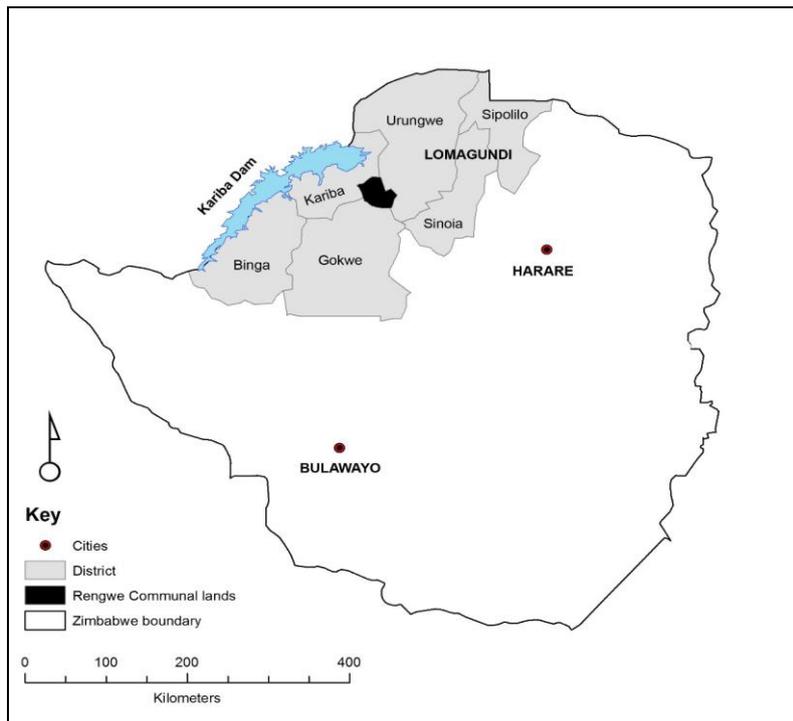
Rengwe is found in Urungwe (now Hurungwe) District and is located 100 kilometers southwest of the town of Karoi [refer to map 1, page 3]. Karoi is a town found in Mashonaland West Province. Rengwe was created in the 1950s as a Special Native Area

¹ D. Moore, *Suffering for Territory: Race, Place and Power in Zimbabwe*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2005: ix

(SNA), and later referred to as a Tribal Trust Land (TTL) and now Rengwe Communal Land. SNAs were created in the 1950s for occupation by Africans who were compulsorily moved from the so-called European areas and Crown Land but could not be accommodated in the original areas reserved for Africans. SNAs and “native” reserves were then merged in 1961 to form Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) in accordance with provisions that were carried in the new Southern Rhodesian constitution.² Although created for Chief Goremusandu Dandawa (herein referred to as Chief Dandawa) and his people, who occupied the middle Zambezi Valley, Rengwe contests that political territorial identity because it is inhabited by people of different ethnic groups. Notable are people who were evicted from *Gota* and moved all the way to Urungwe District in Rengwe, even prior to the movement of Chief Dandawa to his newly designated territory.

The name Urungwe carried three meanings relating to its space before independence, but only two have been maintained to date. First and foremost, it referred (and still refers) to a mountain situated in the Zambezi Escarpment which was used by Africans to identify their country as *nyika yeUrungwe* (Urungwe country). Its boundaries then, were not very clear, but the Zambezi Escarpment and plateau formed its larger part, excluding the valley below which was known as *nyika yeGowa* (*Gowa* [Valley] country). Mount Urungwe was (and is) extensively famous for its sacredness. When colonialism extended to this territory around 1898 and later established it as a standalone district, it was named Urungwe District. Its boundaries were first defined in Government Notice (GN) 687/1945, and redefined in GN 298/1956. Lastly, it referred to the space that was demarcated as a “native” reserve first in 1913 and developed into the biggest African Reserve in the district in the 1940s known as Urungwe Reserve. Urungwe Reserve ceased to exist when TTLs were renamed communal lands.

² A.J. Christopher, “Land Tenure in Rhodesia”, in *The South African Geographical Journal*, vol. 34, 1971: 46



Map 1 – Study Area, (Adapted from Surveyor General, Rhodesia, 1975)

Gowa is another term one is bound to come across more often in discussions and among certain sections of people of the Dandawa Chiefdom. The term is used in various contexts. At times it is used to distinguish or categorize people (not as an ethnic identity) as *vanhu vekuGowa* (people of *Gowa*). At local beer parties some elders are heard remarking *magowa mune shupa* (*Gowa* people are troublesome). At other times they talk of *kwedu kuGowa kwaiva nani* (*Gowa* was better). *Gowa*, thus, refers to an environment where space, place and landscape overlap, and also to people’s relations, social belonging and distinction.

Originally, the study sought to analyze *Gowa* as an environmental concept, and to draw comparisons with Rengwe, the current home of its former inhabitants. This idea was based on common statements and comments that were made about *Gowa*. The objective at that point was to examine why Rengwe has not superseded the meaning and memories of *Gowa*. If this approach had been followed, this study would have limited its analysis of *Gowa* to environmental issues, rather than as a story of historical change and as a story of forced removal, ethnic identity and distinction.

My initial impressions were proved misplaced during field research conducted between June and October 2011 in Rengwe. Von Oppen has argued that, “field research inevitably leads to some confrontation with current views of the people under study, current among those in the field and also in the researcher’s mind.”³ Rightly so; when my research participants’⁴ views confronted my own, that marked a turning point in this research. It opened a new world of interpretations and created new impressions on statements about *Gowa* and Rengwe’s history. In June 2011, a female participant responding to a question about when and where she was born, remarked:

Uhm my friend! I don’t know when I was born, but if you ask me about relocation I can tell you something. I don’t know anything about my date of birth. We never learnt numbers to know our dates of birth, especially with the way people were chased away like grasshoppers from *Gowa*. So I don’t want to lie to you about my date of birth.⁵

By asking about the date of birth, my intention was to gradually prepare my respondent for our discussion. It is common knowledge that keeping exact dates of birth was not crucial to Africans before the advent of colonialism. Such a practice was only introduced and duly followed by colonial governments for labour requirements and taxation. The participant’s response above revealed that the story of relocation was remembered and mattered more than her date of birth.

Upon reflecting on this interview, I realized that *Gowa* meant much more than just the environment. It represents change, memories of relocation and experiences of the force people of *Gowa* encountered as illustrated in the verbal imagery: “People were chased away like grasshoppers from *Gowa*.” This response ushered a new approach to the study. Several questions emerged in connection with Siyana’s response. Such questions included among others: Why were people removed and how do they themselves explain or perceive the removals? Why were they moved to Rengwe? How did they respond to compulsory

³ A. von Oppen, *Terms of Trade and Terms of Trust: The History and Contexts of Pre-colonial Market Production Around the Upper Zambezi and Kasai*, Lit, Münster, 1992: 2

⁴ I refer to the people I interview as research participants because they were much more than mere respondents. They were very active in the dialogue as they engaged with and challenged my views during our discussions.

⁵ Interview, Siyana Katsvete, Mtirikati, 27 June 2011

movement, and how did they cope with resettling in an unfamiliar environment? In what way does relocation influence debates about social belonging and ethnic identity in Rengwe?

Gowa turned out to be more than a mere ordinary reference to environment, an observation that also applied to Rengwe. Instead, references to the two environments carry narratives about relations with other groups, compulsory movement, place-making and determining meaning of place and demarcation of space. With the exception of the immigrants, the study originally treated Rengwe's forced resettlers as one group, but in actual fact, they are two different groups who, nonetheless, identify themselves as Korekore people. I realized that the narrative I wanted to emphasize was one of the many narratives that were interwoven in the social history of the chiefdom. The story, therefore, is not only about environmental perceptions, but also about colonial government reforms in the countryside, socio-economic changes, modernization programmes, ethnic identities and social belonging. The study, thus, got shaped and reshaped with each discussion and analysis that took place. It turned out that stories about *Gowa* represent varied historical narratives that carry different impressions and assessments of the people.

Compulsory relocation emerged as the axis of remembering, story-telling, and central expression of the social history of Rengwe. In participants' narratives, forced relocation caused the rearrangement of villages by distributing populations across the Rengwe landscape. It also redefined traditional authority and power. Forced removal was crucial for the colonial government. It brought out the colonial settlers' perceptions and spelt out their intentions concerning state-making. The colonial position was expressed in annual and monthly reports, and correspondences among various government departments involved in land, agriculture and African affairs. Africans' views were partially recorded in the same colonial documents, but are mostly found in the Africans' memories. As a result, this study gives primary focus to social memories in which environment is seen as a medium of expression for various claims and perceptions. It emerged that forced removal is the prism through which people recall the past and debate change in the present. The colonial government, on the other hand, saw it as the key to implementing a series of changes in colonial Zimbabwe.

Many of the changes introduced in colonial Zimbabwe revolved around issues of land and race, and actions taken relating to these aspects continue to haunt post-independent Zimbabwe. Among them was the compulsory movement of African people into what were called reserved areas. These African reserves were located in hot regions with less fertile soils, and were also prone to drought. Europeans, on the other hand, were given the more fertile lands that receive good rainfall. This is what Moore described as the “specter of racialized dispossession” that bred disorder, violence and confusion at the turn of the second millennium through Zimbabwe’s “controversial” land reform. It is not in the interest of this study to delve deep into the debate about Zimbabwe’s land reform, but suffice to say that the controversy emerged on the manner in which white-owned commercial farms were repossessed. The repossession has been referred to differently as *Jambanja*, Fast Track Land Reform (FTLR) or “Third Chimurenga,” which terms are verbal expressions that attempt to capture the perceptions of actions associated with that land reform process.⁶

There exists a plethora of literature on land, forced removals and land claims examining both colonial and post-colonial resettlement programmes and responses in Zimbabwe. Some of the studies focus on the Tonga of Binga, the Shangwe and Madheruka of Gokwe and the Shangaan of the southeast Lowveld.⁷ There exists no study on colonial resettlement in Urungwe District in general, and Dandawa Chiefdom in particular. Colonial resettlement in Rengwe happened almost at the same time with resettlement in Binga and Gokwe. As such, studies on these two areas are relied on to compare and contrast with what happened in Rengwe.

⁶ For detailed analysis of these terms see J. Chaumba, *et al.*, “From Jambanja to Planning: The Reassertion of Technocracy in Land Reform in Southeastern Zimbabwe”, Research Paper 2, University of Sussex, United Kingdom, 2003b: 7-8; K. Chitiyo, “Harvest of Tongues: Zimbabwe’s ‘Third Chimurenga’ and the Making of an Agrarian Revolution”, in M.C. Lee. and K. Colvard (eds), *Unfinished Business: The Land Crisis in Southern Africa*, African Institute of South Africa, Pretoria, 2003: 159-160

⁷J. McGregor, *Crossing the Zambezi: The Politics of Landscape on a Central African Frontier*, Suffolk, James Currey, 2009; M. Tremmel, *The People of the Great River: The Tonga Hoped the Water Would Follow Them*, Gweru, Mambo Press, 1994; P.S. Nyambara, “That Place was Wonderful!” African Tenants on Rhodesdale Estate, Colonial Zimbabwe, c1900-1952” in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2, 2005: 267-299; W. Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions: Conservation & Development in Zimbabwe’s South-East Lowveld*, Oxford, James Currey, 2007

The approach used in this study is not different from the one that was employed by Fr. Michael Tremmel in his research on the Tonga of Binga whom he referred to as “the people of the Great River.” Tremmel and I have employed the “history from below” approach in which we have gathered stories and memories from the local people who experienced forced removal from areas they regarded as their ancestral lands and homes.⁸ These two groups’ involuntary resettlement processes were not all the same, despite the context that seemingly appeared similar. The Tonga people were removed from the Zambezi River and were resettled in Binga under their chiefs and were not mixed with other people who did not share a similar cultural history. The colonial government’s immediate reason for their removal was the construction of Kariba Dam which was going to inundate the area that was occupied by the Tonga on both shores of the Zambezi River.

As Tremmel has put it, the flooding of the Zambezi Valley resulted in the “flooding of farms and ancestral burial grounds”⁹, hence the colonial government and even the Tonga themselves had no choice but to move to higher or safer ground. The case of Dandawa is somewhat different because it is a case of two different groups that were forcibly removed. One group was moved from the Zambezi Valley and the other from *Gota* in Sipolilo and were resettled in Rengwe Special Native Reserve. For the Zambezi group, their movement had nothing to do with the flooding of the Zambezi Valley yet the issue of the Kariba Dam was used as collateral to convince the people into moving. Both evicted groups identify themselves as Korekore. The former Zambezi group is also referred to as *VaGowa*.

Of all the existing literature on land, land claims and forced removals in Zimbabwe, it was McGregor’s work on the Tonga groups of Leya, Dombe and Nambya found in the Hwange and Binga Districts of north-western Zimbabwe that inspired this study the most.¹⁰ McGregor’s research focused on the Zambezi River landscape and the different claims made by different African groups and white settlers alike. Her book, *Crossing the Zambezi*, not only

⁸ Tremmel, 1994: 5

⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰ Such works include J. McGregor, *Crossing the Zambezi*, 2009; “Living With the River: Landscape & Memory in the Zambezi Valley, Northwest Zimbabwe”, in W. Beinart and J. McGregor (eds), *Social History and African Environments*, James Currey, Oxford, 2003a; and “The Victoria Falls 1900-1940: Landscape, Tourism and the Geographical Imagination”, in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 29, no. 3, 2003b

shows how crossing the Zambezi is critical to revealing the knowledge and skills of the Tonga people, but also brings out how the river valley is a site of struggle for claims among the Tonga groups themselves, as well as among them and external actors, including the colonial and post-colonial governments.¹¹ She has shown the centrality of the damming of the Zambezi River and the transformation it caused to the landscape. But most importantly, the construction of Lake Kariba created a long-standing grievance for the Tonga of Zimbabwe who were displaced and promised that the water would follow them. However, they have continued to suffer acute water scarcity despite living in close proximity to the lake. They have also failed to benefit from the flourishing fishing industry.¹²

Under the nationalist discourse, compulsory removal has been analyzed and regarded as one of the major causes of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle and of peasant consciousness and support of the struggle.¹³ This study, on the contrary, focuses on the process of forced relocation, on what happened or what is perceived to have happened, and how it is remembered in retrospect. Nationalist discourse has over-emphasized resistance and that has emerged as one of its weaknesses because it reduced politics in former colonies merely to anti-colonial action.¹⁴

Resistance and its purported victory, as championed by nationalist discourse, have been told mainly as stories of men who had been strongly involved in confrontations with the colonial and settler regimes, whilst women often remained sidelined in nationalist narratives and politics. This study, therefore, wants to listen to the alternative narratives of evicted groups themselves, including women, regarding the relocation process, and contrast them with the narratives of the colonial government and other case-studies of displacement in colonial

¹¹ McGregor, 2009: 2-3

¹² *Ibid*: 7; I. Marowa, "The Tonga People of Zimbabwe: Historical Memories and Contemporary Challenges of a Minority Society, c1940-2005", in M. Mbanaso and C. Korieh (eds), *Minorities and the State in Africa*, Cambia Press, U.S.A., 2010: 178-179

¹³ T. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study*, James Currey, London, 1985; N. Sithole, *Roots of a Revolution: Scenes from Zimbabwe's Struggle*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977 – Sithole, (see page 17, 19), described the 401 men who had gathered in the mountain as *vana vevhu* literally translated as 'children of the soil' who represented the land-dispossessed black people of Zimbabwe. The dispossession cascaded into other areas to mean dispossession of their human dignity, fundamental human rights, freedom, human equality and opportunities among other things.

¹⁴ F. Cooper, "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History", in *The American Historical Review*, vol. 99, no. 5, 1994: 1519

Zimbabwe. The study pays attention, wherever possible, to the gendered nature of recollection and remembering.

Colonial and nationalist narratives took turns to represent the official narrative about dispossession with the net effect of suppressing accounts of the people who suffered and endured displacement. For instance, the construction of Cahora Bassa in Mozambique rendered voices of the displaced peasants inaudible because the hydroelectric project was premised on the idea that Europeans were guardians of progress, civilization and modernity.¹⁵ The Mozambican post-colonial state continued the construction of that wall of silence around Cahora Bassa, but as Isaacman argued, accounts of the displaced peasants called into question the official representation which perceived chaos and disorder as relics of the pre-colonial past and order as a production of the colonial state.¹⁶ Similarly, accounts of the displaced people in Rengwe have remained silenced and worse, the recollections of women who suffered displacement and compulsory movement have not been excavated. When silenced accounts and official narratives are brought together, there is bound to be memory contestation from above and below, and from the center and the periphery.¹⁷

Colonial authorities and the Africans hold different views about forced removals. Accounts by Native Commissioners (NCs), for instance, never used terms that referred to coercion. Instead, annual reports by NCs talk of “moving” Africans and less about compulsory resettlement.¹⁸ They used words such as “movement,” “moved,” “settlement” and “resettlement” to describe the removal process, and nowhere did its use imply any form of coercion as claimed by Africans.

Narratives of the displaced people themselves emphasized the use of force to explain how the colonial officials cheated them into moving. Local terms used to describe the process translate

¹⁵ A. Isaacman, “Displaced People, Displaced Energy and Displaced Memories: The Case of Cahora Bassa, 1970-2004”, in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2005: 231

¹⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁷ J.K. Olick and J. Robbins, “Social Memory Studies: From ‘Collective Memory’ to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices”, in *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 24, 1998: 126

¹⁸ See Annual reports, Urungwe District, S2827/2/2/3-7, National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ), Harare, 1955-1961

to “forced removal” or “compulsory movement.” The challenge, however, is that such a comparison relies on two sources created at different times. On the one hand are colonial documents that were created between 1898 and 1961 and have remained unchanged. Then social memories, on the other hand, which are told today and are therefore recreated according to contemporary circumstances at the time of telling and at the discretion of the storyteller. Mouton and Pohlandt-McCormick have argued that many things shape memory and these include circumstances of remembering, the age of the narrator both then and now and the temporal distance between the event and telling.¹⁹ The study is interested, therefore, not only in memories of forced removal, but also in the difference of perceptions on both sides, then and now, anchored on the ideas of reordering space and land use practices. It also attempts to bring a comparative perspective with other studies of forced removal in the country.

Frame of Analysis

This study addresses two broad questions: How does the memory of forced removal shape the construction and contestation of social belonging and identity of the people affected? And how is the environment, past and present, of these people reflected in these processes? Forced relocation is a key event or prime point through which we ultimately learn not only about removal, but also about how people mould their memories of the past into a critique of the present. In answering the questions, the study relies on three key concepts, which are: social memory, environment (and space), and forced relocation. These concepts interweave to form a triangular framework within which the aspects of social belonging, ethnic identity and distinction are analyzed. The question that emerges is: how relevant are the three concepts in achieving the objectives of the study?

Notably, this study shares the same framework of analysis with Schmidt’s book, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe* that gives centrality to violence in analyzing and understanding the evolution and historical process of suffering in Honde Valley in Eastern Zimbabwe.²⁰ Schmidt

¹⁹ M. Mouton and H. Pohlandt-McCormick, “Boundary Crossings: Oral History of Nazi Germany and Apartheid South Africa - A Comparative Perspective”, in *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 48, 1999: 41

²⁰ H. Schmidt, *Colonialism & Violence in Zimbabwe: A History of Suffering*, James Currey, Suffolk, 2013: 1-2

has relied on violence, memory and landscape to make two crucial contributions: firstly, the making and unmaking of community and belonging through violence, and secondly, how those who suffer violence invest experiences of violation with meaning.²¹ Despite being set in geographically different regions, Schmidt's and this study, use memory, landscape and environment to discuss violence, suffering, and forced removal respectively. Despite otherwise using the same frame of analysis, we have different perspectives in that Schmidt's argument is about coming to terms with the experience of violence, whereas my target point is social belonging and contestation in which forced removal is central.

Social memory is the prime concept being used in this study. It stresses on "social" because there are collective and ethnic identities at stake throughout the discussion. It should, however, be noted that memory is a complicated concept which deals with a number of things such as, among other issues, who is remembering and why, and what is being remembered. In essence, social memory can mean two things. Firstly, it is memory shared among groups of people about things in the past, and secondly, it is itself being shaped by changes in the environment. Social memory exists because it has a meaning for the group or individual that remembers, but the way the meaning is articulated is not simple,²² and as Fentress and Wickham have argued, "when we remember, we represent ourselves to ourselves and to those around us."²³

According to Maurice Halbwachs, the first theorist on "Collective Memory," memories are constructed in dialogue with social surroundings. Thus, we interpret individual memories within a social context.²⁴ Memory and remembering are two distinct aspects. Memory is an active and continuous social process in the mind, whereas remembering is the practice and telling of the memory. Thus, social memory is reconstructed out of possible memories for relevance and posterity, but the fact that it is itself a social process means it is bound to be contested.

²¹ *Ibid*: 2

²² J. Fentress and C. Wickham, *Social Memory*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1992: 87

²³ *Ibid*: 7

²⁴ J. Cole, *Forget Colonialism? Sacrifice and the Art of Memory in Madagascar*, University of California, California, 2001: 22-23

This study looks at social memories not only as shared, but also as divided or contested within larger collectivities. Division in memory comes in the context of age, class, gender, religion and generation, among others. In Rengwe memories of dispossession are twofold, that is, related to origin (*Gowa vs Gota*) and to gender; hence there is no one memory of the past, but multiple memories. These divisions offer the opportunity to witness what Thomson has described as “the public struggle between different versions of the past” because memory “is a battlefield.”²⁵ Nonetheless, by using social memory, this study is not in any way intended to contribute to that debate, but is merely using it as a conceptual framework to analyze a historical process and to reconstruct a historical narrative.

These social memories are composed of three layers which are: how memory reflects on the past, how people remember after removal, and how present circumstances influence remembering. Of these three layers, only the third is directly accessible through oral data. Divided memories represent social struggles, especially struggles dealing with claims of legitimacy, and are considered part of the past that is still shining in the present. Memory is used in this study in four contexts. Firstly, it is taken simply as a source of information about a specific real past, or a methodological tool to access the past²⁶ that can assist the researcher to develop a historical narrative. Secondly, it is considered as a cultural concept which is socially constructed but located within a historical process that makes it dynamic in different contexts and times. Thirdly, it is regarded as a source of identity where people draw, develop, construct and reconstruct, shape and reshape and dispute their sense of belonging, and also make meaning of forced relocation and place. And fourthly, memory is considered as a view of the past in which people look at today in a sharper light to reinterpret the past and explain the present. The purpose of analyzing memory in the fourth sense is not to show what happened. Instead, it is meant to gather the people’s perceptions and assessments of the past by bringing it into dialogue with the present.

²⁵ Thomson, 1990: 73

²⁶ Schmidt, 2013: 8-9 - She stresses that memory is a research tool through the application of oral history to access the past.

Environment is the second concept used in this study and which has been examined differently by different disciplines that include archaeology, geography, history and natural sciences. In this study, environment has nothing to do with nature per se, but is seen from the vantage point of space, place, landscape and surroundings. A thin line distinguishes environment, space and landscape. In fact, the best way to describe their interaction is that they overlap. Environment is not just the natural world, but is much more like the physical world, whereas space is neutral and found in the environment. Landscape, on the other hand, can either be physical or in one's perspectives where it is seen and constructed in the mind. Thus, environment is broadly understood as representing relationships of certain features and as a territory. For instance, environment is viewed as also representing resources and not only inhabited space. Consequently, this requires one to understand how people relate to, perceive and make meaning of their surroundings in order to appreciate the memories of the environment for their social meaning.

Dwellers and visitors tend to focus on and emphasize different aspects of the environment. The study argues that environment is not only about plants and people, but also about social belonging and distinction, land use and land practices, and the past. Physical space becomes a projection screen where identities are remembered and contested and where land use and practices can tell about the environment. Landscape is employed to tackle the people's perceptions and their making of meaning of place. It has been defined as an "imaginative construction of the environment," which brings "together discussion of material changes in the environment with imaginative interpretations."²⁷ Hayes has observed that landscape denotes "land that is marked by historical and cultural layers of meaning which have accumulated over time."²⁸ Studies on landscape agree that it is socially constructed through cultural processes and that it is an outcome of the historical interaction between people and the physical environment. Luig and von Oppen have pointed out that "landscapes should not be viewed as finished products, but rather as involved in a historical process emanating from

²⁷ W. Beinart and J. McGregor, "Introduction", in W. Beinart and J. McGregor (eds), *Social History and African Environments*, James Currey, Oxford, 2003: 4

²⁸ Hayes, "A Land of Goshen: Landscape and Kingdom in Nineteenth Century Eastern Owambo (Namibia)" in M. Bollig and O. Bubbenzer (eds), *African Landscapes: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, Springer, New York: 2009: 225

the dynamics of the material, cognitive and political construction of a society's environment."²⁹

They have also lamented that the majority of studies on landscape in Africa looked at colonial projections at the expense of African perceptions.³⁰ Yet, as has been observed by Rössler, "kinship structures are 'mapped' onto the [African] landscape so much that kinship relations and perceptions of the landscape are closely entwined."³¹ In their study of the Luo in Kenya, Cohen and Odhiambo have described and discussed Siaya landscape, revealing the outsider and insider perspectives involving the science of studying the "other," the observed and the observer.³² The insider-outsider dichotomy is a complicated one, because its understanding changes according to context which at times makes a section of the "assumed" insiders to become outsiders.

Cohen and Odhiambo have revealed that the "land" carries three different meanings for the Luo, that is, it refers to *piny* (territory), *thur* (homeground) and *lowo* (reproductive soil). Among the people of Rengwe, land is known as *nyika*, a term which means different things at different times. *Nyika* can be used to refer to territory or country, inhabited space, reproductive soil, as well as to the ecology and resources and to the environment or space in general. Environment, as a concept, is significant as a way of structuring, expressing, talking and remembering historical change in a wider sense. That has contributed, to some extent, to the creation of myths about the environment on the basis of interpreting forced removal as part of trying to find reasons for the observed changes. In terms of the landscape, it argues that landscape starts to be a landscape or develops meaning only when people begin a relationship with it, and if it is outside that relationship, its significance remains subtle or unnoticed.

²⁹ U. Luig and A. von Oppen, "Landscape in Africa: Process and Vission" in *Padeuma: The Making of African Landscapes*, Vol. 43, 1997: 16

³⁰ *Ibid*: 20

³¹ Rössler, 2009: 308; see also U. Dieckmann, "The Spectator's and the Dweller's Perspectives: Experiences and Representation of the Etosha National Park", in M. Bollig and O. Bubenzler (eds), *African Landscapes: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, Springer, New York, 2009: 353

³² D.W. Cohen and A. E.S. Odhiambo, *Siaya: The Historical Anthropology of an African Landscape*, James Currey, London, 1989: 1-3

Lastly, I use the concept of forced removal, also referred to as forced relocation, compulsory movement or involuntary resettlement, to ascertain and understand its influence on the construction of social memories and ethnic identities. Relocation is important in this analysis because it alienated people from their traditional environment and introduced them to a new land or environment. That process of being uprooted is not an easy one for the removed people, and as Scudder has argued, it exposes the resettlers to multidimensional stress, especially in the initial stages of the resettlement process. The resettlement stress components can be broken down into physiological, psychological and socio-cultural stress.³³

Forced removal is the prime point of this study because it is central to the Dandawa's memories on one hand, and to the colonial government's state-making process and institutionalized control of the people on the other. It is also central for comparative purposes with other peoples who experienced the same. In order to obtain recollections about the past and evaluation of the present, one has to rely on what is central or key to a group's past experience. And as has been argued by Connerton, "to evoke more distant memories, it is enough to direct our attention to the recollections which occupy a primary place for the thoughts of the group,"³⁴ and forced removal is one such popular memory in Rengwe.

In addition, removal also influenced the process of group formation by defining Rengwe's forced resettlers as one group against others. As a result, it brings us to the issue of social belonging and ethnic identity, as well as issues relating to the emergence of conflicts in this merged chiefdom. At this point, we ask: how do they talk about their story of removal, and how do they make sense and meaning of their history? The study emphasizes the importance of relocation and environment in the history of Rengwe and its development. It should, nevertheless, be noted that relocation is not seen as a root cause of changes that happened, but a catalyst which only accelerated and enforced processes such as group formation and ethnicisation in Rengwe.

³³ T. Scudder, "Resettlement", in A.K. Biswas (ed.), *Water Resources: Environmental Planning, Management and Development*, McGraw Hill, New York, 1997: 671

³⁴ P. Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989: 37

Literature Review: Debates on Forced Removals

There exists a plethora of literature on displacement in Africa, focusing on different types of resettlement, as has been noted by Scudder, such as spontaneous resettlement, facilitated spontaneous resettlement, sponsored voluntary resettlement and involuntary resettlement.³⁵ Before focusing on debates about forced removal or relocation, it is necessary to define it and understand its various contexts. In doing so, I rely on Turton's analysis of refugees and forced resettlers,³⁶ to contextualize the displacement of the Rengwe people.

Forced resettlers, according to Turton, are people who are forced to move because of a development project or a government-sponsored programme and are allocated a specific area to resettle with provision of minimum support and services to assist them in re-establishing themselves.³⁷ This study looks at one particular case of forced removal in colonial Zimbabwe, and situates it in relation to other, comparable case studies such as those on Binga and Gokwe.³⁸ [see to map 1, page 3] These two studies, as my own, primarily focus on dispossession due to racial legislation and development. Tremmel has researched extensively on the Tonga of Binga in which he stayed in their community for many years and managed to gather oral narratives and memories of seventeen Tonga focusing on "their stories of life along the [Zambezi] river, their painful memories of being displaced, and hardships of resettlement."³⁹ This case of the Tonga shares some similarities and differences with the Dandawa resettlement case. Whereas the Tonga were removed in 1957 due to the damming of the Zambezi River, the Dandawa group from the Zambezi Valley were not directly connected to the dam construction, but were nonetheless evicted during the same time.

³⁵ Scudder, 1997: 667

³⁶ D. Turton, "Refugees & Forced Resettlers: Towards a Unitary Study of Forced Displacement", in A. Pankhurst & F. Piguet (eds), *Moving People in Ethiopia: Development, Displacement and the State*, James Currey, Suffolk, 2009

³⁷ Turton, 2009: 24

³⁸ Tremmel, *People of the Great River*, 1994; McGregor, *Crossing the Zambezi*, 2009; P. Nyambara, "Madheruka and Shangwe: Ethnic Identity and the Culture of Modernity in Gokwe, Northwestern Zimbabwe, 1963-79" in *Journal of African History*, Vol. 43, No. 2, 2002: 287-306

³⁹ Tremmel, 1994: 14

What emerges in oral narratives and memories of both the Tonga of Binga and the Dandawa in Rengwe is the centrality of the the story of forced removal. It is not only a story of victimhood, but also a story that educates us about issues of collective memory and identity, matters of social belonging and distinction, nostalgia and current grievances against authorities, both local and national. McGregor has concluded that given the social and political changes and the ongoing hardships after resettlement, displacement is cast as “central both to short and long term processes of loss and impoverishment”.⁴⁰ The centrality of the displacement event has resulted in the Tonga (and Dandawa) looking back at life before removal with nostalgia and using it as “foundational to modern collective identity” in which the Tonga now identify themselves as “people of the great river.”⁴¹ Thus, the years of “splendid isolation”, as Tremmel describes them, are now viewed more positively and together with the removal event have been used to construct a strong sense of collective identity. This collective identity is used in debates about social belonging and distinction from people who have joined their chiefdoms or those who have moved to occupy and benefit from their former homelands through the fishing and tourist industries.

Despite these similarities between the Tonga studies and this study, all using an approach that emphasizes oral narratives and memories, they show some notable differences which are interesting to examine. Firstly, there are differences in ideas of how ethnic identity and the construction of collective identity have developed over the years and especially on how it has been deployed during the years of the liberation struggle and its aftermath. This study is focusing on a totally different ethnic group, the Korekore, which is also composed of two different groups with different historical backgrounds, but both claiming to be Korekore. Secondly, the new lands in which the Tonga and Dandawa were resettled offered different opportunities, and it is the intention of this study to point out this contrast and the difference in developments that occurred in them, as a way of assessing debates connected with matters of social belonging, distinction and identity. Thirdly, this study foregrounds the internal processes of integration which in the Tonga case were not relevant because they were people that had a common history which was traced back to the Zambezi River and belonged to one

⁴⁰ McGregor, 2009, 139

⁴¹ *Ibid*; Tremmel, 1994: 6

chief. In the Dandawa case, there was the emergence of a combined chiefdom in which a chief and a headman were brought together culminating in a struggle for traditional authority at the local level. This study thus approaches the Dandawa case by way of contrasting it with the Binga case to analyse how ethnicity, social belonging and distinction were constructed and reconstructed over the years. A similarity in these two cases of forced removal, however, is that in both of them people were resettled in areas perceived to be “empty”, lands that were not occupied by any group of people. As such, they are considered the first-comers to this land, in which case they had to develop their own imprint on the landscape and ascribe cultural meaning to it.

Gokwe, on the other hand, presents a sharp difference to the Tonga and Dandawa cases. Pius Nyambara who has researched extensively on Gokwe has indicated that the Gokwe region was home to the Shangwe ethnic group, and prior to the 1950s, the region was sparsely populated.⁴² Geographically, Gokwe, just like Binga and Rengwe, was dry, malarial and tsetse fly-infested such that it was inhospitable. In addition, all the three territories are located in the north-western part of Zimbabwe which makes them perfect cases for comparing and contrasting particularly to appreciate and understand the different responses given to forced removal. Moreover, they are useful in analyzing the kind of nostalgia that has developed over the years, as well as examining the evolution of ethnic identity and the creation of social relations.

Whereas the cases of Dandawa and Binga Tonga involved movement to areas perceived as “empty”, that of Gokwe offered a different scenario. Of course, all were regarded as frontier territories by the colonial government. African farmers who occupied Rhodesdale Crown Land which was situated on the high veldt, with an ideal climate and rich soils, were evicted by the colonial authorities due to the apportionment of land between the races and the

⁴² P. Nyambara, “Madheruka and Shangwe”, 2002: 287; “Immigrants, ‘Traditional’ Leaders and the Rhodesian State: The Power of ‘Communal’ Land Tenure and the Politics of Land Acquisition in Gokwe, Zimbabwe, 1963-1979” in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 4, 2001: 773

immediate need to resettle ex-service men from World War II (WWII).⁴³ As a result, Africans who occupied Rhodesdale were forcibly moved in the 1950s to Gokwe, making the region experience a large influx of immigrants whom the indigenous (Shangwe) referred to as “Madheruka.”⁴⁴ The Gokwe context offers a good comparative case with Dandawa because we experience different ethnic groups being put under one chief. In the Gokwe case, the indigenous Shangwe did not move. Instead, they endured the arrival of new immigrants who turned their sparsely populated territory into a hive of agricultural activity and with a population boom.⁴⁵ Nyambara uses the story of forced removal and the development of cotton in Gokwe in the early 1960s to explore the construction of ethnic identities and perception of the other.⁴⁶

Although the term “Madheruka” is not commonly used in Dandawa, there are immigrants who saw this territory as a frontier soon after independence and voluntarily migrated to resettle there. The immigrant population, commonly referred to as “mavhitori”, [people from Masvingo and surrounding areas, derived from the colonial name Fort Victoria] created a situation in Gokwe in the 1950s which was comparable to the Dandawa context. The only difference was that immigrants to Gokwe were forced and that it happened during the colonial period, while the new wave of immigrants to Dandawa occurred after independence in 1980 and was voluntary. “Mavhitori” as an identity concept is not indicative both of the composition and ethnicity of the immigrant population. Rather, it is loosely applied to persons who have resettled not as a matter of government policy. The majority of “mavhitori” originates from Masvingo, southern Zimbabwe. After the involuntary resettlement of the 1950s, Gokwe experienced another wave of immigrants in the 1960s onwards, and this time the immigrants were coming from different parts of the country. As Nyambara observes, they were “particularly from the south and were largely voluntary.”⁴⁷ Interestingly, this wave of voluntary immigrants, arriving not in government hired trucks, still fitted the Shangwe’s identity of anyone other than them as “Madheruka”. A similar situation was found in Binga in

⁴³ P. Nyambara, “That Place Was Wonderful”, 2005: 267; “Madheruka and Shangwe”, 2002: 287

⁴⁴ Nyambara, 2002: 287

⁴⁵ V. Dzingirai, “This Good Land is not for Elephants.” Poverty, Migration and Development in the Binga District of the Zambezi Valley, Zimbabwe” in *Journal of Sociological Science*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1999: 265

⁴⁶ Nyambara, 2002: 288

⁴⁷ Nyambara, 2001: 773

the 1960s and 1970s where after resettlement some landless Ndebele people migrated into the area and turned the “wilderness” into agricultural commercial zones. This trend continued after independence as thousands of “landless and petty commercial farmers” flocked to Binga which they regarded as “Eden.”⁴⁸

The Madheruka in Gokwe, the Ndebele in Binga, and the Mavhitori in Dandawa perceived themselves as more enlightened and better Africans compared to those they found settled on these lands. Such a perception contributed to the negative way the indigenous or firstcomers were perceived both by the colonial authorities and the immigrants. Nyambara notes that administrative officials in Gokwe regarded the immigrants or Madheruka “as the embodiment of modernization because they had been exposed to forces of modernization in their areas of origin while both officials and immigrants alike regarded indigenous Shangwe as backward and primitive.”⁴⁹

Thus, these two cases of forced or involuntary resettlement, Binga and Gokwe, present a rich comparative and contrasting platform which this study taps on as it examines the question of social memory, social belonging and distinction, and ethnicity. They both are critical in their central focus on different nostalgias that exist in these territories, perceptions of the other and how both the involuntary and voluntary resettlers interacted with and perceived their frontier regions. It is largely within this context that the Dandawa study is examined and analyzed and the major argument carried here is that of historical change and its effect on other stages of history.

One omission in studies of forced removal has been the impact of removal on women and children. It has been argued that instead of improving the livelihoods of and empowering forced resettlers, it has, in fact, impoverished them, with women, children and the elderly believed to be the most affected.⁵⁰ Doing such research several years after removal affords an

⁴⁸ Dzingirai, 1999: 266

⁴⁹ Nyambara, 2002: 287

⁵⁰ Scudder, 1997: 669; W. Abbute, “Social Impact of Resettlement in the Beles Valley”, in A. Pankhurst & F. Piguet (eds), *Moving People in Ethiopia: Development, Displacement and the State*, James Currey, Suffolk, 2009: 131; S.N. Tripathy,

opportunity to obtain the forced resettlers' assessment and evaluation of their condition then and now, as well as what they think of relocation. Extensive research on the Tonga of Zimbabwe has been carried out by McGregor who has looked at the centrality of the Zambezi River to claims held by the Tonga groups, on the one hand, and the colonial government, on the other, and how, in turn, these claims interacted.⁵¹ She did not focus on forced removal per se, but on Zambezi River as a physical landscape and the different claims associated with it. Her analysis is crucial in understanding landscape and environment debates. McGregor's and this study deal with matters of social belonging, but, nonetheless, relying on different media in analyzing and evaluating claims. McGregor has used the Zambezi River valley landscape, whilst I have relied on memories and forced relocation.

Her researches on the Zambezi River have focused on the relationship between landscape, identity and memory; aspects which are also grappled with in this study, thereby making her analyses central to this study. This study, however, is interested more in examining memories of the environment for their social meaning in the context of historical change. To achieve this objective, the study employs Isaacman's idea of "displaced people and displaced memories."⁵² Isaacman has used the term "displace" in two contexts: firstly, to capture lived experiences of riverine communities violently dislodged from their historical homelands, and secondly, to show how the dominant colonial and post-colonial narratives have disavowed and rendered inaudible stories of the dislodged riverine people in Mozambique.⁵³ This study primarily focuses on memories of the environment on one side, and those of removal, on the other, which are themselves displaced, not only in the context of movement, but also in focusing on situations that are not there or reachable. This study goes beyond just getting the silenced narrative by analyzing how Rengwe forced resettlers responded to forced relocation.

There is not much literature dealing with the history of Rengwe. Chimhowu has researched on spontaneous resettlement and changing livelihoods in Rengwe and emphasized how land, as a

"Tribal Displacement and Deprivation in India", in R.C. Pandit (ed.), *Development-vs-Displacement of Tribal People in India: Problems and Prospects*, Abhijeet Publications, Dehli, 2009: 2, 6

⁵¹ McGregor, 2003a: 87; 2003b: 1; 2009: 7-8

⁵² Isaacman uses the concept to reveal the silenced narratives of Mozambican riverine communities that were forcibly removed from the Zambezi River due to the construction of Cahora Bassa Dam.

⁵³ Isaacman, 2005: 205-206

resource, has generated competition and tension in the area.⁵⁴ His study has contributed significantly to the debate on livelihood and dry land farming in Rengwe, but not to its history. Historical studies on such peripheral areas have mostly focused on the liberation struggle because they were war zones. For instance, Marowa has looked at the rural heritage of the liberation struggle and the construction of a sellout identity during the liberation period in the Dandawa Chiefdom.⁵⁵ As a result, the interest of this study is to examine how forced removal as a colonial development influenced historical change and social belonging.

Racial dispossession was more profound in South Africa because of the presence of many races such as Coloureds, Indians, Africans and Whites. Early literature on forced removals in South Africa has discussed hardships suffered by uprooted people, whilst others analyzed the relation between forced removals and apartheid policy.⁵⁶ The Natives Act of 1923 marked the beginning of the pursuit of segregation in urban areas, but was superseded by a more rigid Group Areas Act (GAA) in 1950 which stipulated that “certain areas would be proclaimed as Group Areas in which only members of a particular group might live, own property and conduct business.”⁵⁷ Communities in Durban and Cape Town were the ones largely affected by the establishment of Apartheid cities which caused the forced removal of Durban Indians and Coloureds,⁵⁸ and the Coloured and Indian families of the Black River Community of Cape Town.⁵⁹

Involuntary resettlement has also been a practice of post-colonial governments that engaged in structuring the countryside, for instance Tanzania,⁶⁰ or development-related displacement

⁵⁴ A.O. Chimhowu, “Extending the Grain Basket to the Margins: Spontaneous Land Resettlement and Changing Livelihoods in Hurungwe District, Zimbabwe”, in *Journal of Southern African History*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2002: 552, 560

⁵⁵ I. Marowa, “Landscape and Memory: Understanding Rural Heritage of the Second Chimurenga in the Dandawa Area of Hurungwe District, c1975-1980”, Unpublished M.A. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Zimbabwe, 2006; “Construction of the ‘Sellout’ Identity During Zimbabwe’s Liberation Struggle: A Case Study of the Dandawa Community of Hurungwe District, c1975-1980”, in *Identity, Culture and Politics: An Afro-Asian Dialogue*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2009

⁵⁶ *Ibid*

⁵⁷ *Ibid*: 61; A. Lemon, “The Apartheid City”, in A. Lemon (ed.), *Homes Apart: South Africa’s Segregated Cities*, Indian University Press, Bloomington, 1991: 1; U. Dhupelia-Mesthrie, “Dispossession and Memory: The Black River Community of Cape Town”, in *Oral History*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2000: 35

⁵⁸ Lemon, 1991: 3, 10

⁵⁹ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2000: 35

⁶⁰ B.J. Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti: A History of Landscape Memory in Tanzania from Earliest Times to Present*, Ohio University Press, Athens, 2007; E. Fisher, “Forced Resettlement, Rural Livelihoods and Wildlife Conservation Along the Ugalla River in Tanzania”, in D. Chatty and M. Colchester (eds), *Conservation and Mobile Indigenous People*:

as was the case in India.⁶¹ In rural Tanzania, a government-sponsored villagization scheme known as “Ujamaa” or “development villages” was launched in 1967 by President Nyerere.⁶² Tanzanian peasants were involuntarily resettled in structured villages in the countryside. Those who have examined Ujamaa have focused more on the unexpected outcomes of the involuntary resettlement process. Von Oppen has looked at Ujamaa as representing new ways of defining space and creating new territories,⁶³ whilst Scott has analyzed why government-sponsored schemes meant to benefit, improve and empower its citizens failed to achieve their objectives.⁶⁴ The heterogeneity that emerged, for instance in western Handeni, created fertile ground for conflicts over land, land use and land practices as a consequence of creation of new territories.⁶⁵ Although this study is not focusing on the creation of new concepts of space, it all the same draws from von Oppen’s analyses of the consequences of the creation of heterogeneous territories. Rengwe emerged as a merged chiefdom in which new perceptions of space were created both by the colonial state and the forced resettlers.

The study, thus, follows the social construction approach which perceives landscape, space and social memory to be constituted within social processes of interaction that account for change over time. It, therefore, focuses on what people say in their narratives, what they do not say, and how they talk about change in order to analyze forced removal and to reconstruct the historical narrative of Rengwe.

Research Methodology

This is a historical study which recognizes that the field of research is a socially constructed space involving perceptions of both the researcher and the researched. The relationship

Displacement, Forced Resettlement and Sustainable Development, Berghahn Books, Oxford, 2002; J.C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1998; A. von Oppen, “Villages Beyond Ujamaa: Land Conflicts and Ecology in Western Handeni”, in S. Doris (ed.), *Changing Rural Structures in Tanzania*, LIT, Münster, 1996

⁶¹ Tripathy, 2009; P. Pradhan, “Impact of Displacement on the Socio-economic life of Tribals”, in R.C. Pandit (ed.), *Development-vs-Displacement of Tribal People in India: Problems and Prospects*, Abhijeet Publications, Dehli, 2009; A.K.P. Pattnaik, “Displacing the Tribals: A Crisis in Development”, in R.C. Pandit (ed.), *Development-vs-Displacement of Tribal People in India: Problems and Prospects*, Abhijeet Publications, Dehli, 2009

⁶² Scott, 1998: 223-224; von Oppen, 1996: 85-86

⁶³ von Oppen, 1996: 88, 90

⁶⁴ Scott, 1998: 184

⁶⁵ Abbute, 2009: 132; von Oppen, 1996: 94-95

between the two is not linear because the field of research is a space of complicated relationships and interactions. Notably, it is occupied by agents who are actively hunting for information about the other and are also willing to share their information wherever possible.

Since this study is about forced removal, the research relied very much on stories and memories of the Rengwe people, both first and latecomers, to construct a systematic narrative that tells their story. As a result the study relied more on historical and anthropological methods of data collection in order to gather the people of Rengwe's social memories, perceptions and meaning of forced removal. This methodological approach is not different from that used by Tremmel in Binga because both studies deal with stories of eviction, life in the Zambezi Valley, and life after resettlement. Tremmel has described the period before the Tonga removal as a "time of splendid isolation" which, nonetheless, is a period full of painful memories regarding their forced removal.⁶⁶ However, in this study I go beyond just gathering stories and memories to focus on matters of social belonging and ethnic identity. To this end I also use a comparative methodological approach to discuss different perceptions to the environment, responses to involuntary resettlement and nostalgia issues.

Personal narratives, interpretations, perceptions and opinions of research participants were obtained through individual and group interviews and discussions. Men and women who participated in this study were perceived as research partners or participants because this work is a product of their narratives, perceptions, interpretations, analyses and opinions which are fused with my own conceptions, ideas and arguments from other sources of information. In this study the people of Rengwe speak for themselves, and the narratives, stories and memories espoused here are a result of, as Tremmel put it for the Tonga, "a process of trust, remembering, story-telling, translating and recording"⁶⁷ which was undertaken between 2011 and 2013.

⁶⁶ Tremmel, 1994: 16; 14

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*: 6

Oral history worked very well with memories that are “nostalgic,” supporting what Irwin observed in Liptako, whose story scene is set in the time “before the White man came.”⁶⁸ However, it should also be noted that relying on oral history and memory raises problems of reliability and validity as von Oppen has argued.⁶⁹ In this research, the challenges that were posed by oral history were mitigated to some extent by making a comparison with colonial documents but being cognizant of the shortcomings of written accounts. Such include studies on the Tonga and Madheruka who experienced forced removal as well as other case studies beyond Zimbabwe’s borders.

Choosing oral history was not accidental because stories and memories of forced relocation can only be tapped from participants’ personal experiences. This approach proved invaluable in two ways: firstly, it corrected my misconception of the field, and allowed me to come to terms with what mattered most to the people under study. Secondly, it helped me to know the social groupings involved, either directly or indirectly in the study. Field research was conducted in Rengwe and the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) between June and October 2011, and between August and November 2012. I held interviews focusing on the recent and remoter pasts with selected research participants. Amazingly, this opened new areas of interests. Long stays in Rengwe proved useful because they brought out new perspectives of looking at things as well as raising new questions. All in all the study is a product of stories and memories told by forty-one people of Rengwe who were displaced from *Gowa*, *Matinhari* and *Gota*, eight from immigrants, one telephonic interview with the first resident medical doctor at Chidamoyo Mission Hospital, one group discussion and personal communication via electronic media with Ziden Nutt, the missionary who pioneered the establishment of Chidamoyo Mission.

Biographical interviews were purposely used with the intention of giving participants the feeling of having control over the story-telling process thereby allowing them to narrate as much as they knew. Interviews were mainly done with the first generation, the few still available, elderly men and women who endured forced removal, and a few of the second

⁶⁸ P. Irwin, *Liptako Speaks: History From Oral Tradition in Africa*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1981: xix

⁶⁹ von Oppen, 1992: 37

generation, particularly those who were young children at the time of relocation. The selection of research participants was done purposely and randomly. Purpose selection was done to get participants who could remember as much as possible going as far back as the beginning of the nineteenth century. Random selection was used to cater for potential participants who were suggested by other participants or other people whom I engaged in informal discussions. This was done to widen the pool of participants and also to cater for the gender composition.

During interviews, some participants employed the “ask, respond and wait” tactic which made our discussions strenuous. In some circumstances, research participants asked insightful questions regarding the purpose of the study, what it will benefit them and what I wanted to know. All that made this research to be an active process that kept me reflecting upon my research questions and reshaping my conceptions. The greatest challenge with memories is to ascertain why the participant is expressing them in the way s/he is doing? Thompson has argued that documents and records do not come to be available by accident, but there is a social purpose behind both their creation and preservation.⁷⁰ Similarly, social memories have a reason and social purpose, especially the way they are recalled and told for posterity’s sake. Whilst one has to deal with the intention of the memories, there is also the problem of unwillingness to recall by “either a conscious avoidance of distasteful facts or unconscious repression.”⁷¹ Indeed, it is hardly possible to get to the core of the process, but suffice it to say when people tell a story there is something they are also not telling which is hidden, but which is very crucial to the narrative.

I encountered unwillingness to recall, especially with stories pertaining to the Second Chimurenga, where some participants claimed they remembered nothing or did not know anything about it or misrepresented what happened. At one point, a participant rebuffed me saying, “how do I know, maybe you have been sent by the government to spy on me, and after I talk to you, I get killed.”⁷² This confirmed Mouton and Pohlandt-McCormick’s argument

⁷⁰ P. Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988: 1

⁷¹ *Ibid*: 114

⁷² Interview, Kashimu Magwadi, Chidamoyo, 7 July 2011

that “narrators actively shape and measure their recollection... life histories of experiences in repressive contexts are influenced by the contemporary political context...”⁷³

Field research in Rengwe was conducted three years after the disputed and violent presidential plebiscite of June 2008. During that time any negative talk about the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) was not tolerated, neither was support for the opposition, Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T). The fear that was instilled into the people still engulfed them in 2011, when I conducted my first field research. After judging from stories by other participants, I concluded that it was not only fear that blocked them from sharing their memories, but in actual fact they possess different versions about the liberation struggle. These contradicted the official national narrative which tended to praise the guerrillas, creating a sense of heroism thereafter. People in the rural areas do not have the political clout to express their opinions without serious consequences from those who claim to be responsible for their freedom. Unfortunately, such alternative or silenced versions will go down unrecorded.

Faced with such a situation, I had to rely on other methods to initiate discussion of and debate about unpleasant memories which worked in some cases but failed in others. This followed Vansina’s argument that we should look for other traces of the past to get the story about it.⁷⁴ Vansina found out that the Rainforests of Equatorial Africa had remained without historiography, as studies focused only on the demographic growth of kinship groups due to lack of sources of information. He had to rely on other sources that gave him relevant information about the past to understand, differentiate the societies and places, thereby identifying their complexity. Vansina has argued that, “every object we use, nearly everything we say, everything we do, and almost everything we think and feel carries the imprint of the past.”⁷⁵

⁷³ Mouton and Pohlandt-McCormick, 1999: 42

⁷⁴ J. Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforests: Towards a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa*, James Currey, London, 1990: 8

⁷⁵ *Ibid*

As a historical narrative, the study also drew on archival records, mainly colonial files, and a large corpus of written material on concepts and arguments. Colonial files and memories of the people of Rengwe were made to dialogue by asking research participants to comment on what was in the colonial documents, and also re-reading colonial documents to clarify and to analyze perspectives and opinions that were raised during interviews and discussions. By this I wanted to ascertain what perspectives were in memories and not in colonial files, or in colonial files but not recalled or known by participants, and then ask why, in order to get the meaning of memories in relation to my research question. Published literature was chosen on the basis of its relevance and contribution to the subject matter for two reasons. Firstly, to understand the broader debates and arguments relating to my research topic and therefore shape my own argument, and secondly, to get similar cases elsewhere for comparative purposes, which would assist in drawing both specific and general conclusions.

Organization of the Thesis

This study is divided into eight chapters with each chapter addressing a particular question linked to the main research question. Chapter 2 looks at memories of forced removal. It argues that this is a key event in coming to terms with the history of Rengwe and in debating matters of social belonging and distinction. It examines how forced removal is remembered both as an event and as a process. It perceives this compulsory movement as central in the reconstruction of the social memories of Rengwe's forced resettlers. Forced removal acts as the axis that connects the Rengwe forced resettlers before and after relocation experiences. The chapter also evaluates the forced resettlers' opinions regarding the reasons for their involuntary resettlement, and how it was explained to them by the colonial government.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the pre-relocation period Zambezi Valley (*Gowa*), but they examine different aspects. Chapter 3 reconstructs the human-environmental relations in *Gowa*. It examines how people related to that environment. It makes a reconstruction of memories of a past that may have been ignored but which the people seem not to forget. In this chapter, memory is used as a source of information to reconstruct historical and environmental narratives about the period, not only before involuntary resettlement, but also before the extension of colonialism to the Zambezi Valley.

Chapter 4 examines the extension of colonial authority to the Zambezi Valley and its Escarpment. It explains the relationship between the colonial authorities and the local population before resettlement. It analyzes how colonial officials created their image, and in turn, how Africans perceived them. This chapter gives a background to involuntary resettlement and argues that forced relocation represented the peak of colonial expansion to this region. On another level, it also introduces the actors and their bilateral relationships to the land and the environment. It relies on names that were given to colonial officials to reconstruct in hindsight the kind of relationship that existed between them and the local population. The names are taken as mnemonic devices and as narratives that are used to remember and talk about the colonial official in question.

Chapter 5 and 6 look at the period after the movement and at the creation of a new and merged chiefdom in Rengwe. Chapter 5 emphasizes the concept of place-making, arguing that the forced resettlers should not be seen merely as victims but as actors in the resettlement process. It illustrates how both the colonial government and Africans responded to the process of forced removal in Rengwe. The colonial government wanted to create an environment conducive for human habitation with nucleated settlements whilst Africans wanted an environment that would carry social meaning resonating with their cultural traditions and history. Chapter 6 discusses the issue of inscribing meaning into the Rengwe landscape, arguing that it only became a landscape, a space imbued with meaning, the moment when the colonial government, African hunters and the forced resettlers themselves started to interact with it.

Chapter 7 looks at social memories in hindsight, situating them between the past and the present. It argues that memories of the past tend to be nostalgic, but holds that they should not simply be dismissed as meaningless or mythical. It emphasizes that by identifying them as nostalgic, we are overlooking the claims they contain rather than seeking to understand the meaning behind them and why they are presented in such a way. Memory in this chapter represents a view of the past that is relevant for the present and also addresses the uncertainty of the future.

Finally, Chapter 8 is the conclusion that revisits the questions that have been raised in this study and assesses the extent to which they have been answered. It also identifies gaps that still require further research and analysis.

Chapter 2: Remembering Forced Removal

Introduction

“Chaotic evictions” or “massive uprooting” is how Elizabeth Colson has described the removal of 57,000 Tonga people in 1957 and 1958 who lived on both sides of the middle Zambezi Valley.⁷⁶ In contrast to Zimbabwean researches on forced eviction, Colson and Scudder researched and documented the social organization and human ecology of Gwembe Tonga before their eviction and changes that followed thereafter.⁷⁷ While colonial evictions in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) were somewhat chaotic because they lacked sufficient prior planning, evictions in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) exhibited some semblance of order at the planning level but faced challenges at the implementation stage. The legalized Land Apportionment Act (LAA) of 1930 had already set in motion the process of African evictions by creating White and African areas. However, this does not mean the preparation and actual process of eviction proceeded smoothly.

For instance, the Tonga in Manjolo led by their chief and headmen resisted and refused to move because “of the malende shrines and trees associated with ancestral spirits which would be submerged under the lake.”⁷⁸ Similar resistance to forced removal was encountered in Hwange District where the Tonga led by chief Siansali gave trouble to the authorities over removal from the dam.⁷⁹ McGregor has concluded that this resistance had nothing to do with nationalist mobilization, but opposition was easily created because the Tonga “did not want to leave their homes and fertile lands by the river to move to the arid tsetse- and game-infested hinterland.”⁸⁰ In contrast, resistance seems not to have been so overt among the Madheruka and *Gowa* dwellers who were moved to Gokwe and Rengwe respectively to cause anxiety for the colonial authorities.

⁷⁶ Colson, 1971: 3, 26

⁷⁷ Scudder, 1993: 127

⁷⁸ McGregor, 2009: 112

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*: 113

I start this chapter by examining the memories of a people who have experienced three different worlds during the last few generations. Firstly, they remember a period of largely unlimited freedom under different governing systems (pre-colonial and early colonial), a period that is today idealized and viewed in rather positive terms. Secondly, they remember a late colonial government that engineered their collective and forceful relocation which is therefore perceived negatively. Thirdly, they recall an independent government that started off positively, but slipped over the years to a negative image as well. Of the different phases of their modern history, these people thus possess revealing, starkly contrasting memories which are also in dialogue (or in opposition) with official intentions of the time.

These memories are framed within a shared context, but they are complicated by the fact that they are often divided and contested. According to Fentress and Wickham, “the sort of memories one shares with others are those which are relevant to them, in the context of [a] social group”⁸¹ Memories of forced removal in the 1950s occupy a central place among Dandawa’s forced resettlers and indeed they are of particular relevance to them. They form the basis of understanding their present as a group of forced resettlers in particular and Korekore people in general, in stark contrast to the group of voluntary immigrants. As Stevenson has put it, “the past is myself, my own history, the seed of my present thoughts, the mould of my present disposition.”⁸²

This chapter looks at how forced removal is remembered and interpreted today in a bid to come to terms with the forced resettlers’ thoughts about the past as well the present. Ideas about relocation are central in the modern history of Rengwe’s forced resettlers. In their own memories today, forced removal represents a key to explain to themselves the changes that have occurred in their lives over the last sixty years or so. Also at the time of the event itself, relocation was imagined by the colonial government as a key to implementing changes in the country. Thus, ideas about forced removal have always been connected to a history of rural change in which involuntary resettlement, as it was perceived by the colonial authorities and

⁸¹ Fentress and Wickham, 1992: x

⁸² E. Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral History*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992:

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as it is perceived by the resettlers themselves, was\is seen either as a catalyst or even as a root cause of that change. Memories of relocation are, therefore, instrumentalized and used in current disputes and debates about ethnic identity, belonging and authority in Dandawa Chiefdom. In order to pursue these propositions, the chapter asks four questions: 1) Why and how do the Dandawa evicted groups tell the story of forced removal today? 2) How do these memories relate to what actually happened? 3) Why did the colonial government want the removal? And 4) How did they sell the idea to the people?

The memories presented in this chapter belong to the present and are relied on to explain the past in hindsight. They are contrasted with archival sources of the 1950s and before as well as with the cases of forced removal in Gokwe and Binga. Archival sources, however, raise a methodological problem because it means comparing government views from the time of removal itself with memories of the forced resettlers today. It makes it difficult to reconstruct how the people themselves saw the whole process at the time. What is more challenging is that Dandawa Chiefdom is composed of two groups that were forcibly removed from different regions, that is, *Gowa* and *Matinhari* (Zambezi Valley and its Escarpment), and *Gota*. I was therefore confronted with contrasting narratives on the same side. As a result, the chapter has to piece together narratives that differ along several lines, focusing on similarities and differences to be revealed in this way, including the colonial government's perspective.

Relocation is not treated as an event, but as part of a historical process that has an impeccable meaning on the chiefdom's social history. This chapter, thus, serves two functions: showing the importance of removal in the memory of the evicted groups and explaining the reasoning for removal.

Describing Memories of Forced Removal

It is a truism that memories of forced removal are ignited by and reconstructed within the context of present circumstances. This creates the problem of verifiability or of understanding the particular slants, emphases and tendencies of their stories and memories. These memories are reconstructed in retrospect focusing on changes in their lives, culture, social integration and traditions during the last sixty years or so. This is not a unique case. Isaacman for instance found out that when Mozambican peasants speak of Cahora Bassa Dam built between 1970

and 1974, their memories focus on “forced eviction from their homeland, being herded into strategic hamlets, and the unpredictable discharges of water that destroyed their crops and flooded their fields.”⁸³ Similarly, the Tonga of Binga talked about the “separation of families, the flooding of farms and ancestral burial grounds and the removal of people in truckloads without compensation to infertile land with little water.”⁸⁴

Both the Tonga and Rengwe’s forced resettlers lament the challenges of their new environments emphasizing how they struggle to live today. Forced removal has been described differently by the Dandawa, Tonga and Madheruka. Dandawa’s forced resettlers used terms such as *kudzingwa* (chased away) or the colloquial term *kufosekedzwa* (forced) to capture and convey the nature and way of their forced movement. The Tonga term *kulonzegwa* is used to describe eviction and to convey the idea of forced movement.⁸⁵ Despite the centrality of forced removal from the Zambezi Valley, the Tonga and Dandawa look at it from different angles.

Forced removal is the prism through Rengwe’s forced resettlers’ memories of the past and present are reconstructed and reshaped and are used to offer explanations to the transformations taking place in their socio-economic and political lives since about the 1930s. It is also the prime point which the Tonga use to state the “broken promise of development made in the course of the Kariba resettlement,” and for “looking back at life with the river and could likewise function to assert ownership of the new lake and make claims to state resources.”⁸⁶ The event has remained deeply inscribed in the memories of the older generation who always remark that, “the Whites used force because they had the gun,” which means that, had they resisted, their resistance would have not lasted for long. Relocation structures the people’s memories with regards to what and how they remember. Thus, forced removal has two functions, namely: it describes colonial development towards human management and

⁸³ Isaacman, 2005: 205

⁸⁴ Tremmel, 1994: 5

⁸⁵ McGregor, 2009: 113

⁸⁶ *Ibid*: 130

economic investment,⁸⁷ and it is the gateway to explaining the evictees' lives before and after the movement, as well as their present circumstances. It is their history seen through forced removal both in the present and the past.

A number of changes happened in the earlier colonial period before relocation which had a huge impact on the people's memories. Such changes included taxation, *chibharo* (forced labour) and migrant labour which saw able-bodied men balancing time and energies between family responsibilities, on the one hand, and participating in the colonial labour system, on the other. After forced relocation, the Dandawa resettlers found themselves allocated specific territories where they were required to observe and follow new land uses and practices. The Second Chimurenga (Zimbabwe's war of liberation), post-colonial policies, the power given to traditional chiefs, spontaneous resettlement allowed soon after independence in 1980, the existence of partisan politics, the land reform of 2000 and the economic collapse that characterized the country mainly between 2004 and 2008 have all had their impact on memories of forced removal. These factors, among others, better explain why relocation that occurred more than fifty years ago is still crucial in the people's memories today.

When speaking about Rengwe, Dandawa elders who endured the forced removal of the 1950s, always remark that "this isn't our *nyika*."⁸⁸ This is a precise summation of their memories of the present while at the same time it alludes to the story of forced relocation. This statement emphasizes two things, that is, social belonging and space. In addition to this, one is also confronted with claims that the land which they have been occupying since their forced removal is believed to be *VaMbara* country who abandoned it due to suffering and disease.

Their narratives of involuntary resettlement emphasize the idea that "Whites brought us here." One discerns three things in this: firstly, the idea that until the moment of movement they did not physically know exactly where they were being resettled because they were never

⁸⁷ D.A. Low and J.M. Lonsdale, "Introduction: Towards the New Order 1945-1963", in D.A. Low and A. Smith (eds), *History of East Africa, Vol. 111*, Clarendon press, Oxford, 1976: 13-14

⁸⁸ Research participants from both groups used this statement in the first instance although they later conceded to the fact that they now consider Rengwe as their home because it is where they live. It is, however, more pronounced or used among the former *Gowa*.

consulted to choose a place of their liking. In contrast, Tonga Chiefs whose life had depended so much on the Zambezi River tried to find places “with some kind of water source or river, often where their people already had grazing rights for their cattle.”⁸⁹ Secondly, Dandawa’s forced resettlers are both showing their dislike of Rengwe and also distancing themselves from the decision of relocation and rejecting pre-emptive questions regarding their socio-economic development and their failure to exert control over their current environment. The argument of being brought by the whites represents deep resentment, expresses their present-day concerns and explains their alleged “backwardness” today. As a result, the land itself is perceived as non-livable and unproductive.

Thirdly, the idea of “being brought” points to compulsory movement and is used to emphasize the popular conception that the country they now occupy is not theirs. In popular discourse, *nyika* is used to mean occupied space, but it is also used in other contexts to refer to environment emphasizing natural resources and the productivity of the land. *Nyika* is owned through the imagined ability to influence certain behaviour involving both the natural and physical environments. The idea of *nyika* is used here as an entry point to tell the story of relocation by narrating what happened before, during and after the relocation process. The fact that they were forcibly removed and the problems they are experiencing all seem to play a significant role in the idealization of their former homelands, a stark contrast to what Nyambara found among Madheruka immigrants in Gokwe. Madheruka survived on a tenant economy on Rhodesdale Estate before their forced removal to Gokwe. They enjoyed unrestricted cultivation and access to land, and coupled with that there were no laws restricting the number of livestock individuals could own. Rhodesdale was well-watered and had fertile soils such that after relocation, the Madheruka referred to the estate as a “wonderful place.”⁹⁰ The two groups idealize their former homeland for different reasons. For the Madheruka it is the entrepreneurial activities that take centre stage whereas for Rengwe’s forced resettlers, it is what Fried has called the “grieving for a lost home” syndrome.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Tremmel, 1994: 30

⁹⁰ Nyambara, 2005: 273-274

⁹¹ cited in Scudder, 1997: 672

The extent to which memories of Dandawa forced's resettlers are dwelling on forced removal can be illustrated by snippets from interviews with research participants. A female participant cited earlier on in the introductory chapter, remarked that:

Uhm, my friend! I know not my date of birth, but if you ask me about relocation, I know a little bit. I can't remember my date, especially with the way people were chased away like grasshoppers from *Gowa*....⁹²

Another participant, Magwadi, reiterated that:

I don't know my date of birth. Our parents didn't know how to write. There were no schools, so I don't know my date of birth. I can narrate about other things I saw and experienced as I grew up.⁹³

Unlike Madheruka who were removed from Rhodesdale Estate because it was productive and was reserved for white farmers and ex-servicemen, Dandawa group from the valley was removed because the area fell under unassigned land and it was deemed unlivable. One would expect Madheruka to give the story of being chased away because of what they lost. Instead, the narrative of being chased away like grasshoppers is found among the Dandawa *Gowa* who were being moved from what Tremmel called an area or period "of splendid isolation."

Such a narrative is told to express how the event was interpreted according to their worldview. It affected the willing and unwilling, the young and old, the strong and weak, and the health and sick, and also created anxiety for the future, particularly for those whose well-being depended on immovable resources.⁹⁴ Relocation is seen as representing a frame on which memories are projected. Female participants could neither provide their dates of birth nor even the date of relocation, but nonetheless, they managed to contextualize their memories of what transpired in the 1950s. In the case of *Gowa* for instance, women were not well-travelled, and therefore they lacked experience of the world outside *Gowa*, where dates were crucial and required in the day-to-day lives of people by the colonial administration.

⁹² Interview, Siyana, 2011

⁹³ Interview, Mugwadi, 2011

⁹⁴ Scudder, 1997: 681, 672

This work tries in as much as possible to intertwine female and male narratives to reconstruct Dandawa's history of forced removal and comparing it with those of Tonga and Madheruka. That comparative dimension gives this research an edge against the other two earlier researches.

In the second excerpt above, the participant's memory is woven within her own life experiences and that of the group, which are both premised on eviction. Forced removal culminated in the creation of particular image(s) that represent(s) force, the movement and remembrance. Generally, both women and men reconstructed their narratives based on their own experiences, those of others and hearsay. In the first excerpt, Siyana plainly indicated relocation is the key to telling the story, not only of eviction, but also of change. A possible reason why women never got enthusiastic about dates could be the absence of the requirement for women to obtain *chitikinyana* (birth certificate) and later *chitupa* (identity document). These documents carried information about the holder and were obtained at Munyami on the escarpment. Men were supposed to possess these documents for tax and work purposes. This could partly explain why men knew much about dates coupled with their work experiences and exposure, compared to women who remained confined mostly to their household environment.

Siyana's analogy that people were chased away like "grasshoppers" highlights two things. Firstly, it refers to force and the nature of the force which also alludes to the concept of power. Secondly, it tells something about her and the group's world-view based on the environment to which they were exposed. Grasshoppers damaged their fields of sorghum precipitating at times famine and hunger in *Gowa*. They were a threat and as a result they were chased away, captured and roasted to destroy them or were at times eaten as a snack. Siyana used her recollections of how grasshoppers were treated after they swarmed their sorghum fields to describe the kind of force used by the colonial authorities against them. Images work perfectly with recollection and they represent the people's perceptions and feelings. In Sierra Leone, Shaw came across the "image of the road" in memories dealing with the Atlantic Slave Trade which was used by Ben Okri as follows; "in the beginning there was

a river. The river became a road and the road branched out to the whole world. And because the road was once a river, it was always hungry.”⁹⁵

The image of the road represented the Atlantic Slave Trade in which the Atlantic Ocean became the road used to transport slaves to various destinations. The most crucial is the point that the road was always “hungry,” something relating to the impact and change it created by moving people to new territories whilst depopulating some African territories. Similarly, internal relocation did not only remove people, but it also changed their environmental knowledge and mental maps as some of the knowledge was non-transferrable or became less relevant in the new land.⁹⁶

Contextualizing Rengwe People’s Memories of Forced Relocation

This section explains the importance and use of memories of relocation in different contexts: gender, local power, religious structures, socio-economic and political relations or conflicts today. What Rengwe-forced-resettlers recall today is influenced by their imagination of what happened in 1957/58, but at the same time emphasizing different issues. Connerton has argued that “people experience the present world in a context connected with past events and objects, where images of the past serve to legitimize a present social order.”⁹⁷ In Rengwe, relocation caused huge changes in socio-economic, political systems and behavioural patterns. It took away certain rights and privileges people had enjoyed in the past because interventions by the colonial government disrupted their traditional systems.

Memories of eviction among Dandawa’s forced resettlers can generally be put into two categories, that is, male and female narratives. By analyzing the narratives through these two categories, it is meant to avoid suffocating alternative views or perceptions and most importantly, to capture the views of women whose accounts and interpretation is normally sidelined. Even though relocation was a one-off event, the chapter argues that it was

⁹⁵ R. Shaw, *Memories of the Slave Trade: Ritual and the Historical Imagination in Sierra Leone*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2002: 2

⁹⁶ Scudder, 1997: 672

⁹⁷ Connerton, 1989: 2, 3

experienced differently between men and women. It was quite fascinating and stimulating how research participants without the slightest inclination of the objectives of this research jumped to tell the story of their forced eviction. Attempts to gradually and systematically approach the narrative were in most cases thrown off the rail as storytellers took control to emphasize their perspectives and narratives.

For instance, Chidoma in his narrative hastened to point out the crucial position that was occupied by his *VaMbara* lineage in the history of the Dandawa Chiefdom. He explained that alongside the recognition of Goremusandu as Chief Dandawa in *Gowa*, the *VaMbara*, particularly Chidoma family, were also recognized by the colonial authorities. As a result, his narrative quickly jumped to point out that:

Chief Dandawa owned no rituals, they belonged to the *VaMbara*. When *Ngosi* (Native Commissioner) *Tamei* (Dawson) visited Dandawa and asked him; “Do you know that you are going to be removed from *Gowa*?” Dandawa asked, “Where am I to be resettled?” He was told in Rengwe near Sanyati River due to government policy. The *Ngosi* told him to perform his rituals, but he said he did not have rituals, they belonged to the *VaMbara*. So my father was instructed to perform the rituals.⁹⁸

Chidoma saw relocation as having created a gap in the traditional structures. Thus, he used it not only to tell the story of movement, but also to explain *VaMbara*'s position in the chiefdom. His intention was to put into context the increasingly diminishing involvement and presence of *VaMbara* in traditional structures in Rengwe compared to *Gowa*. Secondly, he also wanted to bring out the celebrated role of their ancestors whose rituals served as a protective measure for the *Gowa* dwellers during their process of movement. His father who led in ritual performance implored on the ancestors to secure the people's safety during transportation in government-hired trucks. It is highly believed that the ancestors honoured the request because no accident was recorded or happened; the relocation and movement went on smoothly. Such a narrative is meant to position *VaMbara* in general as significant players in Dandawa Chiefdom's traditional structures.

⁹⁸ Interview, Kamurosi Chidoma, Chidamoyo, 28 June 2011

Similarly, in *Gota*, *Ngosi Musoromuchena* told the people to perform their rituals in preparation for removal. Relocation represented the antithesis of the process of White settlement in Zimbabwe. In *Gota*, the rituals were not only performed to inform the ancestors of the impending removal, but also to seek advice on what to do - whether to comply or not. As narrated by Bhauza:

Our elders went to inform *Mutota*, the lion spirit, about the removal. The spirit told them, “It’s only the legs that are being moved to Urungwe, but the head is remaining here.” Our elders didn’t understand what it meant.⁹⁹

Contrary to the *Gowa* narrative, the presence of the lion spirit of *Mutota* seemed to have infused a sense of resistance among *Gota* dwellers. The claim attributed to the spirit that “only the legs are being moved, the head remains here” seemed to have created a sense of insecurity and uncertainty regarding the future among *Gota* inhabitants. Unlike their *Gowa* counterparts, *Gota* people were active in early nationalist politics which combined with their local beliefs contributed to some kind of resistance. The forms of local resistance expressed through spiritual sentiments should, as rightly argued by Nyambara, be “analysed in their own right without ignoring the ways in which they intersected with broader nationalist movements.”¹⁰⁰ Nyambara observed that African tenants in Rhodesdale created a rural nationalism that gave wider meaning to local grievances and protest.¹⁰¹ Although the one that developed in *Gota* can not necessarily be equated to some kind of rural nationalism as in Rhodesdale, it is worth stating that they indeed offered resistance to forced removal. They were only cowed into submission when armed forces arrived and the fear of the gun overtook them. That former *Gota* dwellers participated in early nationalist politics is documented in NC reports, though not in depth. Soon after their resettlement in Rengwe, the *Ngosi* of Urungwe raised serious concerns about Mushoshoma, the Headman of former *Gota* dwellers, because of his involvement in Congress politics. The *Ngosi* claimed that if Mushoshoma was not a member, he was close to being a supporter of Congress politics.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Interview, Bhauza Mushoshoma, Rengwe, 8 July 2011

¹⁰⁰ Nyambara, 2005: 269

¹⁰¹ Nyambara, 2005: 269

¹⁰² Annual Report, Urungwe District, S2827/2/2/6 Vol. 1, NAZ, 1958: 32 - By Congress politics, the NC was referring to the African National Congress which was the party that represented nationalist politics in the late 1950s.

Interestingly, these narratives present us with two different perspectives about the ancestors. On the one hand, we have ancestors who did not say anything regarding forced removal, but whose assumed actions were interpreted through the smooth and accident-free movement of the people. On the other, we have ancestors that spoke their mind and opposed relocation but all the same could not stop the process. The colonial authorities' power in the second scenario is presented as effective to the living human beings but not to spiritual beings. Possibly, this was one of the reasons that caused Headman Mushoshoma to demand returning to Guruve (Sipolilo) as discussed in Chapter 5. Both memories carry the same notion of leaving behind their ancestors, a perspective which they use today to claim connection, ownership and belonging to these former homelands, notwithstanding other developments that have taken place such as the 2000 land reform in the case of *Gota*.

In a way, narratives of these rituals seem to be strategically placed in order to highlight four things. Firstly, they are used to claim the autonomy of each group prior to forced removal. Secondly, they prove that despite claiming a collective Korekore identity, they are in fact different, not only in terms of their past, but also in their rituals and lion/territorial spirits. This is still evident today as the former *Gota* people have *Chipute* as their spirit medium, whilst the *Nzou Samanyanga* from *Gowa* had the late *Hwindo* as their lion spirit and are awaiting a new one to manifest whereas Chidoma, Katumha and Nyamahwe families continue to hold on to their *Mbara* rituals. Thirdly, they are used to note and explain changes in culture and ritual performances as practised today as well as to explain why they perform their rituals separately. Lastly, they explain and illustrate changes in traditional authority and structures as a consequence of forced relocation. This is what Connerton noted when he argued that “in remembering an event I am also concerned with my own self...”¹⁰³ An outstanding aspect in the ritual narratives is the extent of the power attributed to the ancestors which is beyond the imaginable. This aspect of ancestral involvement and power is absent in the Gokwe and Binga case studies. In Madheruka's case it is non-existent but present in the Tonga's case though in a different dimension which centred on lamenting the flooding of their ancestors' graves.

¹⁰³ Connerton, 1989: 22

A point of stark contrast is how resistance or opposition to forced removal was expressed. The Madheruka's opposition started well before forced removal because they developed gradually their fight against the colonial government's destocking and land restricting policies which Nyambara described as contributing significantly to the African voice in colonial Zimbabwe.¹⁰⁴ Their resistance was not connected to any spiritual reasons as was the case with Rengwe's resettlers, but it was based on tangible effects of government policies which greatly affected and turned around the Madheruka's livelihood activities. Among the Tonga, resistance to forced movement has been linked to nationalist influence, especially from the north across the Zambezi River. Other researchers like McGregor have argued that opposition to forced removal was not provoked by nationalist influence, but was simply caused by the fact that "people did not want to leave their homes and fertile lands by the river to move to arid tsetse- and game-infested hinterland They saw no benefit in the scheme for them."¹⁰⁵

Of course, McGregor acknowledged that resistance was strongest in those areas of the valley that were better connected to Northern Rhodesian (Zambia) political centres.¹⁰⁶ Scudder and Colson have illustrated that some residents of a number of Gwembe Tonga villages (Northern Rhodesia) attempted to resist removal by charging at the police armed with spears and axes. The police in turn opened fire killing eight people and wounded many more and that subsequent action shocked the Gwembe Tonga into the reality of the situation and cowed them into submission.¹⁰⁷ In Rengwe, a better sense of resistance seemed to have been shown by people removed from *Gota* and not those from *Gowa*. Opposition to removal was plainly indicated in *Gota* narratives and was rooted in lion spirits and nationalist politics.

Unlike Dandawa's forced resettlers, Tonga had had an opportunity to move around looking for land to settle and with enough pastures and water for their livestock. During these searches, they discovered that the highlands where they were supposed to resettle were arid and tsetse-infested compared to their fertile and well-watered Zambezi Valley. Rengwe's forced resettlers did not choose where they wanted to resettle. Rather, it was the colonial

¹⁰⁴ Nyambara, 2005: 270

¹⁰⁵ McGregor, 2009: 113

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Scudder and Colson, 1982: 272

government that earmarked this territory for them. Thus, they could not resist because they did not have any knowledge about the proposed new land and the opportunities it offered. Although there is no record for Chief Dandawa's objection or resistance to movement, other chiefs did raise queries with regards to the new lands they were being given. Chief Nyamhunga, for example, is reported to have raised objections to the area that was proposed for his resettlement but according to the NC, his people raised no objections. Some of his councillors were believed to have remarked that he was old and had fixed ideas, but they themselves were prepared to follow the directive.¹⁰⁸

On the Zambezi Escarpment two evident developments happened: the increased arrival of white farmers after 1946, and the forced slaughter of African cattle in 1952 due to increased cases of trypanosomiasis. The two foreshadowed the relocation that followed in 1958 as perceived today.¹⁰⁹ What is surprising is that these developments did not trigger any noticeable panic among the population of the areas surrounding the affected parts of the district. In Rhodesdale Estate, the tenants resisted and opposed forced destocking, but in the Zambezi Escarpment it went unchallenged, neither did it help to provoke opposition to forced removal which followed in a few years later as it did for the Madheruka. Cattle were not as many compared to those owned by Rhodesdale tenants, hence the slaughter of the few should have provoked opposition or at least some form of organization to fight the colonial authorities' position.

In *Gota*, cattle were not slaughtered but were forcibly bought from Africans at ridiculously low prices. There was no trypanosomiasis in Sipolilo as was the case in the Zambezi region and the explanation to that lay in the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) of 1950 which limited herds of cattle that could be owned by Africans. Another consideration was the impending relocation to Urungwe District where cattle were not allowed on account of tsetse fly and could not be transported. At least in *Gota* the work of *chigovanyika* (land pegger) was a clear indication that forced removal was a practical reality.

¹⁰⁸ S2827/2/2/3 Vol. 1, Urungwe, 1955: 3

¹⁰⁹ Interviews with: Lina Mavhura, Fuleche, 22 June 2011; Muchareva Kenani, Fuleche, 21 June 2011; Edina Nyahuma, Fuleche, 29 June 2011

According to Josphat:

Before we knew anything about removal, *chigovanyika* (land pegger) came demarcating the land for farms. In 1954 we were told the lines meant that we were to be removed from *Gota* to Urungwe White farmers came and occupied the pegged farms and we were moved to this place.¹¹⁰

The big difference between *Gota* and *Gowa* removal stories is that the former knew for certain that eviction was coming and it was only a matter of time, whereas the latter only woke up from their slumber when they saw government-hired trucks arriving to transport them to Rengwe. *Gota* had been set aside mainly as an African purchase area and surrounded by White farms. *Gowa*, on the other hand, had been designated as Crown Land and only the escarpment had been created as an African purchase area and for White farms [refer to Maps 3 & 4, pages 44 & 45].

Recalling Removal: Relating Memory to What Happened

Women's description of the movement was very vivid, at times capturing even the minutest of details, whereas that of men was shallow because the majority of them were at work and did not experience the process of movement. Men's stories were based mostly on reported speech and hearsay except for those who were employed in the construction of Karoi-Kariba-Chirundu road, who created stories according to what they saw as trucks passed-by. For instance, Martin and Chiriyoti talked about relocation as they narrated their working history because they were not involved in the actual movement.¹¹¹ Martin had to request for leave of absence from his work to visit their new home. Chiriyoti had the privilege of seeing the lorries carrying people pass at Makuti where he was working for the road department.

Whilst men in Rengwe played nothing significant before the movement serve for those who were employed in the preparatory work of constructing roads, it was a different situation

¹¹⁰ Interview, Josphat Penyai, Rengwe, 8 July 2011

¹¹¹ Interviews with: Martin Matengaifa, Chidamoyo Business Centre, 5 August 2011; Chiriyoti Nyoka, Dzimaihwe, 1 October 2011 - There were a lot of such cases that were noted in discussions with: Manganja Mudzongachiso, Alaska Dolomite, Chinhoyi, 23 July 2011; Stefani Ziwoyo, Mtirikati, 3 August 2011; Phineas Mupfurutsa, Fuleche Business Centre, 26 June 2011

among the Tonga. According to Tremmel, Tonga Chiefs were actively involved in finding places for their people, places with some kind of water source or river or where they already had grazing rights for their cattle.¹¹² Simpongo Munsaka narrated that, “we walked long distances to the places where we were going to resettle. When we found our new place, we built temporary shelter of poles and thatch to show others that we had chosen the area....”¹¹³ For the Tonga, forced removal consisted of two separate processes which was not the case with Dandawa’s forced resettlers.

The Tonga first went on foot to find a place of their choice before they were ferried by the government hired trucks as was stated by Sinamugulu Muchimba: “We were ferried by lorries from the river including all our belongings.... When we first went to find a place to resettle, we had to go on foot....”¹¹⁴ By contrast, Rengwe’s forced resettlers were not involved in choosing their places for resettlement, neither were they asked to go and prepare temporary shelters before movement. Only village heads from *Gota* were brought to tour the Rengwe Valley just to have an appreciation of the place they were to be resettled. The colonial authorities had to take it upon themselves to make ready poles and thatching grass for the evictees in Rengwe. At least the Tonga had been forewarned a year before and had had the opportunity to construct make-shift shelter and most importantly, their minds were made ready to embrace the change despite disliking the idea of leaving their homes. It was a near traumatic experience for both former *Gota* and *Gowa* inhabitants because they were dumped in the middle of thick forests and in most cases at night. The experience was unbearable as wild animals, especially hyenas, gave them torrid times.

The Tonga were placed at an advantage compared to their Dandawa counterparts because they went straight into their prepared shelter and had no problems such as those faced by new Rengwe settlers. In addition, whilst Rengwe’s new settlers struggled to prepare their shelters in a time meant to be readying fields for the planting season, the Tonga only focused on one task of preparing their fields for farming. What emerged similar in *Gowa* and Tonga removal

¹¹² Tremmel, 1994: 30

¹¹³ *Ibid*: 34

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*: 35

narratives is that they were both transported with all their belongings. Apart from that, the government appeared to have been less involved in preparing the Tongas' new place other than engaging Tonga labour to build roads to necessitate the smooth movement of people to their respective areas and spraying tsetse flies. In Rengwe Special Native Area (RSNA), the colonial government was involved in preparing the area by constructing roads, delineating villages putting them in lines, sinking boreholes and spraying tsetse flies.

The process of removal was described differently by those who suffered eviction. McGregor has indicated that the Binga Tonga term for removal is *kulonzegwa* which refers to being moved by force.¹¹⁵ Across to the north of the Zambezi River, Colson described the movement of the Gwembe Tonga as "chaotic." Her perception represented an assessment of the colonial planning and not what the Gwembe Tonga described or perceived as forced removal. Among Rengwe's forced resettlers, Siyana's analogy that, "... people were chased away like grasshoppers" very well captured their emotions and perceptions of the removal. The analogy illustrated their helplessness and inability to resist the government directive. Looked at from another angle, it silently contests and challenges male chauvinistic tendencies which failed to stand up against White power and force to protect their land, women, children and, the weak and elderly who were defenseless. Even the Tonga expressed in their narratives the presence of such helplessness and fear, as stated by Elena Mumpande: "When the chiefs heard the message about the forced removal, they did not resist. They were afraid of being harassed by the police. All the police had guns.... We were all afraid of them."¹¹⁶

Siyana then followed this analogy with a vivid description that attempted to reveal the nature of the force that was meted on them. She narrated that, "lorries came very early in the morning and did *gukurahundi* (sweep) in our village whilst others proceeded to other villages and did the same."¹¹⁷ The term *gukurahundi* is of interest in this narrative. *Gukurahundi* is a phenomenon experienced during storms that mark the crossover from autumn to spring/summer. It is scary, violent, ruthless, and totally sweeps away chaff on the surface of

¹¹⁵ McGregor, 2009: 113

¹¹⁶ Tremmel, 1994: 33

¹¹⁷ Interview, Siyana, 2011

the earth. Streams and rivers are not spared either as they are used as channels to dispose away the chaff leaving the landscape clear and ready for a new beginning, new life and new season. It also refers to whirlwinds that serve the same purpose of clearing the land of chaff and are dangerous, deadly and destructive. Relocation is thus perceived in the image of *gukurahundi* which means it was not only destructive, violent and ruthless, but it also meant change that brought a new chapter in their history. *Gukurahundi* is a common term which has been used in Zimbabwean history in different contexts. During the liberation struggle, 1979 was referred to as *gore regukurahundi* (the year of the people's storm) by the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). It was also used to refer to the civil war in the Midlands and Matebelaland regions between the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) rebels and the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) the early 1980s as a period of *Gukuruhundi*. It meant to weed out dissidents, mainly in Matebeleland provinces culminating in the massacre of hundreds of thousands of civilians.

The Native Affairs Department's perspective about the process was too simplistic, claiming that the movement went on smoothly with no opposition, arguing that children climbed onto the lorries before loading of goods had been completed.¹¹⁸ If reference was merely to the conduct of the movement of people, the observation stood correct because even Scudder acknowledged that the physical removal itself in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) was carried out efficiently compared to Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia).¹¹⁹ On the other hand, the action of climbing onto lorries should not be taken at face value. Scudder admitted that when they did their research in 1956 among the Gwembe pending their removal, they underestimated the Tonga's awareness of the threat of removal and were later proven wrong.¹²⁰ Actions of children should be treated separately from those of the parents because children did not notice the difference caused by removal, neither did they endure the stress and pain of leaving their ancestral land.

¹¹⁸ Annual Report, Urungwe District, S2827/2/2/6 Vol. 1, NAZ, 1958: 2

¹¹⁹ Scudder, 1993: 136

¹²⁰ *Ibid*: 139

Certainly, children might not have been adversely affected by removal. In fact, it might have presented adventure on their part, and since their parents or elders were there, nothing mattered to them. Scudder has stated that, studies of refugee children suggest that children can cope “as long as they are not separated from those to whom they look for protection.”¹²¹ Therefore, climbing speedily into government trucks was not an indication of absence of opposition from the villagers. On the contrary, there were some people who ran away and crossed the Zambezi River to the Zambian side and some have until now not returned to join their relatives or villages. Danger Chingoma narrated how he was not interested in relocating and thus went to work in Lusaka in Zambia until the 1970s when he decided to visit his parents before later deciding to come and settle in Rengwe.¹²² Such action by targeted relocatees represents disapproval and opposition in its own right.

An interesting aspect is how the former *Gowa* people emphasized the idea that they were told to carry **ALL** their belongings.¹²³ As narrated by Sedina, “the Whites told village heads to assemble people and to pack their belongings. We left nothing behind, we carried everything of ours.”¹²⁴ Another female participant reiterated the same:

We were ordered to carry everything: nothing was left behind. The lorries ferried us together with our grain bins, fire stones etc. Our homes were left empty....¹²⁵

The idea of carrying all their belongings saw a lot of credit being given to the colonial government despite the people having been forced to move. A former *Gota* participant recalled how they were mesmerized at seeing people from the valley bringing with them material things such as fire stones, grain bins and thatching poles as if these could not be found in Rengwe.¹²⁶ By way of speculation, the colonial authorities possibly gave that directive because, firstly, these valley people owned nothing “substantial” by western standards, as they had no cattle and goats, and judging by their stories, their belongings included spears, clay pots, playing drums, axes, hoes, clothes, fire stones and grain bins.

¹²¹ *Ibid*: 132

¹²² Interview, Chingoma Danger Nyamahwe, Badze, 21 September 2012

¹²³ Interviews with: Mairoso Manyembere, Badze, 5 October 2011; Isaac Chiwara, Musukwe, 26 June 2011; Edina, 2011 – The Tonga also made a similar point see Tremmel, 1994: 35

¹²⁴ Interview, Sedina Charehwa, Karoko, 23 June 2011

¹²⁵ Interview, Magwadi, 2011

¹²⁶ Interview, Chapo Mushoshoma, Rengwe, 19 September 2012

Secondly, it was a way of buying off their opposition or possible resistance to their physical removal, by promising to carry all their belongings as a gesture of supporting their claim that the government was concerned with the *Gowa* dwellers' welfare and safety. That action should be seen as a carrot that was dangled to quell and avoid opposition to the process. However, this idea of belongings should not be taken in the western sense of property, at least according to claims by participants.

This idea of carrying everything has caused the existence of a positive image of NC Dawson who was the official in charge of removal arrangements. For instance, Patsikadova was a fishing village that owned a fleet of six canoes on the Zambezi River and these canoes were their "cattle" - the providers of food.¹²⁷ Authorities arranged for the transportation of one but smallest canoe together with the people and resettled them closer to Sanyati River so that they could continue with their livelihood as before. The example defeats the emphasis that "all belongings were carried" because only one out of six canoes was carried. Thus the positive image of the NC did not go beyond the matter of belongings as he was also accused of masterminding forced removal of people from their ancestral lands and homes. Former *Gota* participants emphasized what they lost due to removal as did Madheruka in Gokwe. According to Bhauza:

We were forced to sell our cattle and donkeys because they were not going to be transported with us. Cattle were not allowed in Rengwe due to tsetse fly. We were forced to sell our cattle at unfair prices like \$2, \$3 and donkeys at 50c, 25c. We did not sell goats because they were allowed into Urungwe.¹²⁸

By the time the former *Gota* people were moved in 1957, the NLHA was already operational. Bhauza's narrative fitted the provisions of NLHA and the few that remained were lost during their movement to Rengwe because cattle were not allowed there due to the presence of tsetse flies. Like Madheruka, former *Gota* people lamented not only the loss of livestock, but also the impoverishment that came with movement. However, they were not as entrepreneurial as the Madheruka some of whom had become very successful and rich. The same can not be said of the *Gota* although they were better than their former *Gowa* counterparts.

¹²⁷ Annual Report, Urungwe District, S2827/2/2/6, Vol. 1, 1958: 2

¹²⁸ Interview, Bhauza, 2011

In describing the experience of physical removal, Siyana's narrative captured what happened at the point of loading, during transportation and at the point of offloading in Rengwe. According to her:

Lorries came very early in the morning, some stopped in our village, while other lorries proceeded to Kanyare. People were carried according to their villages and in my village I was the first one to be ferried. Our clay pots were broken, but no one complained because no one cared. When we arrived at *Urongonora* (Makuti), lorries were fumigated to detect and capture tsetse fly.¹²⁹

Urongonora was significant in narratives of removal and it was the prime point of expressing the meaning of "all belongings." The name emerged during the movement and it has remained until now. It acts as a mnemonic device in the reconstruction of what happened during removal because it has its own stories to tell. A tsetse flygate was located at Makuti and it is what became known as *Urongonora*. *Urongonora* referred to the offloading, fumigation and reloading of lorries that happened at Makuti flygate. For Siyana and other research participants, it was not the offloading and reloading that interested them, but the funny scenes that happened after fumigation was done. *Urongonora* was recalled because of the discovery of witchcraft items in the transporting trucks. It represented not only offloading, but also revealed people's hidden bad paraphernalia. Whether this was true or not is not of major concern but why the story was included and was so widespread.

Siyana narrated that:

My grandmother Mareba arrived at the flygate and immediately after fumigation *zvivanda* (birds-like trades of witchcraft) romped out flying away. Since we carried all our goods, *zvivanda* were put inside clay pots. My friend! A lot happened at the flygate (laughing). Workers there left tongue-tied saying that 'Gowa is full of witchcraft.'¹³⁰

Lina reiterated the same story stating that;

¹²⁹ Interview, Siyana, 2011

¹³⁰ *Ibid*

We left nothing; even peoples' snakes and witchcraft were carried. Snakes, hyenas, all kinds of witchcraft were caught at the flygate because of fumigation.¹³¹

These stories carried two points: they narrated the adventures of relocation, and they also exposed the bad practices found in their society. Undeniably, it is part of the memories, and witchcraft is believed to be a widespread practice in the chiefdom in general. However, its inclusion raised the question; why did they tell such stories? There should be a meaning behind it; one way is to argue that the story was used to explain what "carrying everything" meant to this group of people. Such stories were not recorded by Tremmel or do not exist among the Tonga who also received the same instruction to carry all their belongings.

Another way of looking at such narratives is to argue that they were told to possibly point to the tensions and divisions that existed (or exist) among the former *Gowa* people. In Rengwe no one dares to point a finger at or even implicate someone as a witch although stories of witchcraft are common and even names of witches are sometimes whispered. Thus removal became an avenue to express and debate tensions and regrettable practices that exist within the Rengwe society. It is believed among Rengwe's Korekore group that trades of witchcraft are kept either in clay pots or in grain bins, both of which were carried along during the movement. As such, it actually meant that clay pots and grain bins assisted to transport such things like snakes, owls, *zvivanda* and hyenas - the imagined items used in the practice of witchcraft. The reality of carrying snakes or hyenas is beyond any human imagination, but suffice it to say that belongs to the world of mysteries and it is therefore hard to explain.

A point that emerged central in the narratives of removals was the idea of being dumped in dense forests or bushes, in most cases at night. There were two revealing stories by Sedina and Siyana respectively regarding what they went through upon arriving at their designated areas in Rengwe. According to Sedina:

We were brought by lorries and dumped in the bush at night. We had to protect our grain from wild animals. It was real trouble, we were not relocated in peace and we

¹³¹ Interview, Lina, 2011

didn't even know where to sleep. We had left our homes; we didn't know this place. It's only now that we have built brick houses.¹³²

Siyana first shook her head before giving her story:

My husband and I were left at the borehole here. Those *masawu* trees to the west of the borehole are mine. The drivers advised us to move a little bit away from the borehole because wild animals would come to drink water. They instructed my husband to make a fire and keep it lit throughout the night to keep away wild animals.¹³³

Similar experiences were also found among displaced peasants in Mozambique and the Gwembe Tonga in Zambia. According to Isaacman, "... the displaced peasants were simply deposited on empty lands and told to build their own residencies. In other instances, the government provided simple mud and wattle huts"¹³⁴ Stories of removal among the Gwembe Tonga in Zambia focused more on the experiences of riding open trucks. Colson revealed that:

They rode the swaying, open lorries for a hundred miles, over rough roads, in the blazing sun of the hottest period of the year ... to reach an unknown land they dreaded The misery of the trip was increased by nausea They emerged exhausted and sick to find themselves in what they regarded as a wilderness Next day they rose to the task of turning a strange land into home.¹³⁵

Memories of what is recalled to have happened are varied but at the end they emphasize the same point relating to the suffering they endured. Such a scenario is caused by the fact that the majority of memories are reconstructed from personal experiences though they are set in a shared context. For instance, the new homes were regarded as wilderness and as strange land by the Tonga in Binga, the Korekore in Rengwe and the Gwembe Tonga in Zambia.

Forced removal, according to oral narratives, happened between July and September after people had processed and stored their harvested grains. Unfortunately, there were no crucial social services in place in the designated new homes. As indicated earlier, the Tonga had to

¹³² Interview, Sedina, 2011

¹³³ Interview, Siyana, 2011

¹³⁴ Isaacman, 2005: 218

¹³⁵ Colson, 1971: 44

survey and to choose places close to a water source or river on their own while the colonial government tasked itself mainly with building roads. In Rengwe, the colonial authorities did a bit more in terms of readying the new places because they sunk boreholes as part of creating planned settlements and also made available poles and thatching grass, something they did not do for the Tonga. Comparatively, the colonial Zimbabwean government had done very little to improve areas that were meant for resettlement whereas in Zambia substantial social services and structures were put in place.¹³⁶ In Rengwe, only thatching grass was supplied at borehole sites.¹³⁷

Reasons for Removal: The Colonial Government's Perspective

The reasons for forced removal of the *Gowa*, *Matinhari* and *Gota* dwellers should be seen from two angles. Firstly, it was due to specific situations in particular regions and secondly, it was located within the general context of the racial division of land as was espoused by the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. For instance, Madheruka were removed from Rhodesdale Estate mainly because Lonhro had sold its estate in 1947 to the government thereby turning African residents living on it into squatters.¹³⁸ Their continued occupation of Rhodesdale ended in the post war period as the colonial state was in need of resettling ex-soldiers as well as accommodating the increase in European immigration into the colony.¹³⁹ Similarly, the Tonga were removed from the banks of the Zambezi River to make way for the hydroelectric project at Kariba Dam. This situation was peculiar to them in as far as it is looked against the time of removal but the grand plan, with or without the dam project, required the Tonga to be moved into African designated areas.

In the case of the Dandawa *Gowa*, the idea to remove them from the banks of the Zambezi River into the interior was mooted by the Native Affairs Department as early as 1910. In 1904, Chief Dandawa's request to move to the banks of Zambezi River to plant winter gardens was not supported by one Mr. Bowker who believed it was better to move Dandawa

¹³⁶ Scudder, 1993: 136, 138

¹³⁷ Annual Report, Urungwe District, S2827/2/2/6 Vol. 1, 1958: 2 - this point was also made by research participants.

¹³⁸ Nyambara, 2005: 271; 2002: 293

¹³⁹ Nyambara, 2002: 293

out of the valley altogether, a suggestion concurred with by the NC.¹⁴⁰ The potential of the Zambezi River and its vicinity was noticed as early as 1912 because of the availability of some fine stretches of land that were perceived to be “good for growing sugar or cotton or such like crops.”¹⁴¹ The idea to remove people from the valley was further strengthened by the presence of wild animals such as buffaloes, elephants, antelopes and lions, among others, that teemed in the Angwa forests and Zambezi Valley. The Zambezi Valley was a potential region for game ranching and various NCs continued to emphasize this idea of turning the valley landscape into a game reserve in their correspondences.

One should also read into the administrative problems posed by the Zambezi Valley (see Chapter 4) in order to put the idea of removal in a larger context. There were various competing concerns and views. At first, Lomagundi was a large and sparsely populated district whose NC was stationed at Sinoia (now Chinhoyi) and coping with the administration of such a huge territory was a difficult task. Before Urungwe became a standalone district, it was a sub-station, but that too did not assist that much in coordinating administration, because more often than not, it was closed and without operations. In 1918 the NC lamented the absence of an official at Urungwe Sub-station saying, “I of course being there only temporarily for tax collection, and being unable to return there,” made it difficult to organize relief for these parts in circumstances of hunger, particularly where villages were located in hills, or separated by huge distances.¹⁴²

The removal of *Gowa*, *Matinhari* and *Gota* dwellers can best be explained by looking at the colonial land policy. The change of government in colonial Zimbabwe in 1923 from the British South Africa Company (BSAC) to settler government marked a shift in policies.¹⁴³ The BSAC government had mining interests, thus it remained less strict with the activities of Africans, except obtaining cheap African labour for the mines. The Settler government came

¹⁴⁰ Monthly Report, Lomagundi District, N9/4/18, NAZ, May 1904: 204

¹⁴¹ Monthly Report, Lomagundi District, N9/4/25 Vol. 2, NAZ, September 1912: 551

¹⁴² Monthly Report, Lomagundi District, N9/4/35, Vol. 2, NAZ, November 1918: 311

¹⁴³ For a background on the colonial occupation of Zimbabwe see R. Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, Heinemann, London, 1977; T. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and the Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study*, Z.P.H., Harare, 1985; and *Voices From the Rocks: Nature, Culture & History in the Matopos Hills of Zimbabwe*, Baobab, Harare, 1999; and J. Alexander *et al*, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the “Dark Forests” of Matabeleland*, James Currey, Oxford, 2000

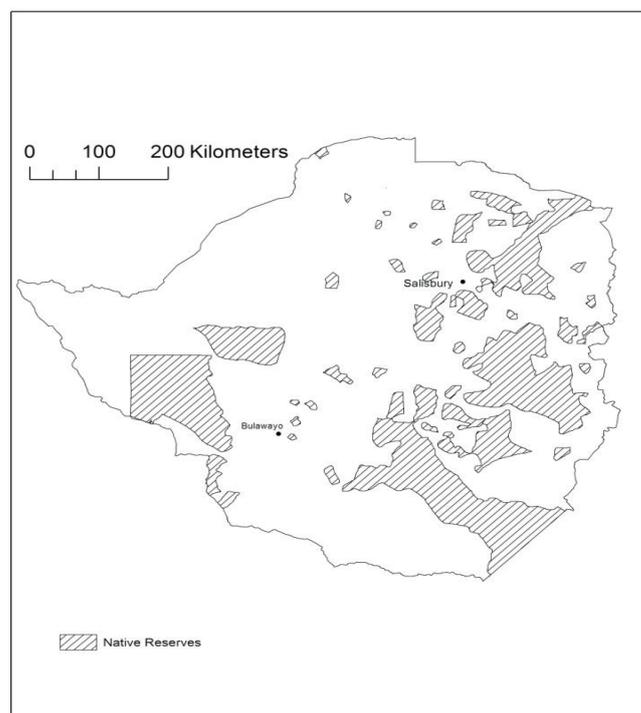
with a different policy thrust which emphasized more on farming. In order to achieve its objective, the Settler government crafted policies that supported its actions on the ground. Prior to 1923, the BSAC government had created African reserves but the idea was not strictly observed and implemented. African reserves had been established by 1910 throughout the country [refer to map 2, page 57].

In Lomagundi District, for instance, there were ten small scattered reserves that had been created by the 1900s. These were: Sipolilo (48,000), Tsheninga (19,840), Zwimba (25,600), Magondi (23,680), Tshanetsa (12,800), Bepura (22,400), Kashankarara (17,280) Tshimsimbi (25,600), Gunduza (16,000) and Dandawe (38,400).¹⁴⁴ Major alterations had to be done to these reserves in 1913 resulting in the abolition of Sipolilo, Tsheninga, Zwimba, Magondi and Bepura. These were replaced by two big reserves namely Zwimba and Sipolilo and the other remaining five small reserves were abolished in 1914 and 1915 culminating in the creation of two new reserves, Urungwe and Magondi.¹⁴⁵ These amendments were done as a strategy to set aside the best land for European farms while the poor soils were left for Africans.¹⁴⁶ Thus, the idea of exclusion of Africans was long there before the ascendance to power of the Settler government, and what they only did was to buttress it with exclusivist legislation.

¹⁴⁴ Palmer, 1977: 259

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*



Map 2 African Reserves, 1910 (adapted from Christopher, 1971)

A commission of enquiry was quickly constituted in January 1925 - the Morris Carter Land Commission – which Palmer has described as “the most renowned of all Rhodesian commissions of enquiry.”¹⁴⁷ Its objective was to look into the question of land division between Africans and Europeans. The findings of the Morris Carter Commission supported a policy of separate land purchase areas for Africans and Europeans.¹⁴⁸ The recommendations reinforced Premier Coghlan’s perspective that was carried in his 1927 address to the settler legislative assembly that:

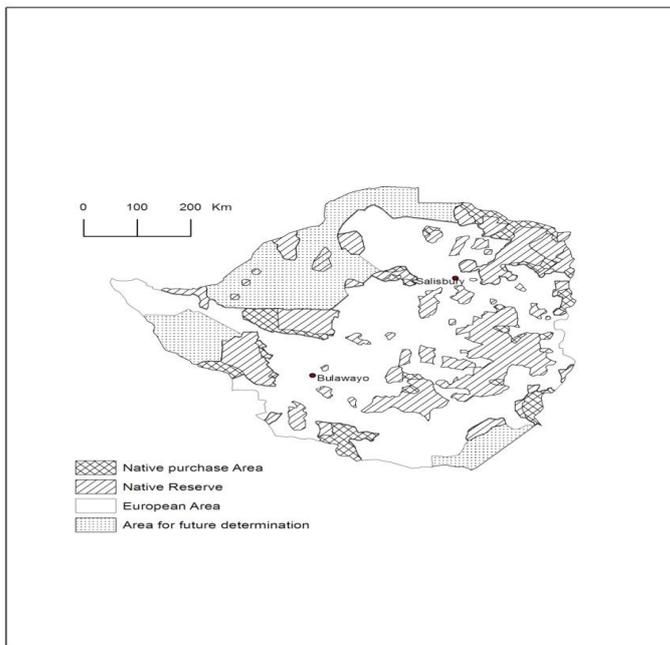
This is essentially a country where the White man has come and desires to stay, and he can only be certain of doing so if he has certain portions of the country made his exclusively.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*: 160

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁴⁹ V. Machingaidze, “Agrarian Change from Above: The Southern Rhodesia Native Land Husbandry Act and African Response”, in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 24, no. 3, 1991: 558

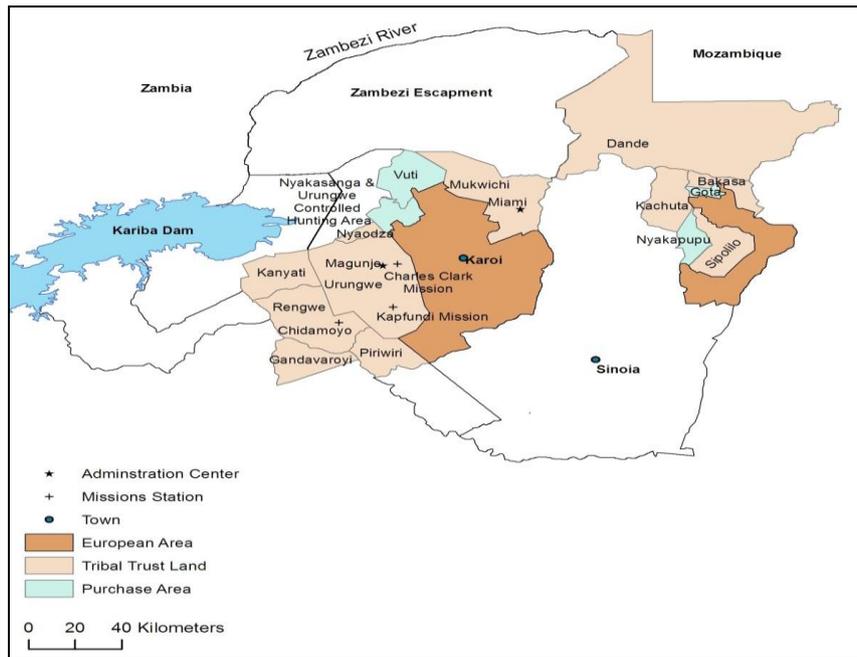
Consequently, these recommendations led to the creation and enactment of the Land Apportionment Act (LAA) in 1930. Machingaidze has described the LAA as the “magna carta,” the cornerstone of the settlers’ society while Palmer has described it as “the most contentious piece of legislation ever passed by a Rhodesian government.”¹⁵⁰ Moore has used it to discuss “racialized dispossession,” whereas for Alexander it created the concept of “unsettled land” in Zimbabwe.¹⁵¹ The removal of dwellers of the Zambezi Valley and its Escarpment and *Gota* should therefore be seen within the context of this larger picture. The objective was not only about exclusion of Africans, but it was also about state-making, place-making and authority. As a result, the country got divided into four land categories: European land, African reserves, Native Purchase Areas (NPAs) and Crown Land or areas for future determination [refer to map 3 below].



Map 3: Land Apportionment 1931 (adapted from Christopher, 1971)

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*; Palmer, 1977: 178

¹⁵¹ Moore, 2005; Alexander, 2006



Map 4: European & African Areas- (Adapted from Surveyor General, Rhodesia, 1975)

Others have perceived the removal of Africans as representing the “second colonial occupation” in British Africa from the 1940s onwards.¹⁵² The “second colonial occupation” described the overall restructuring of British Africa that started around the 1930s. It was a phase supported by the availability of development funds from the World Bank (established only in 1944, as International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) and other international banking houses (the funds came first from United Kingdom),¹⁵³ which in the case of Zimbabwe resulted in the construction of Kariba Dam and its hydroelectric scheme. According to Tischler the construction of Kariba Dam represented the “triumph” for the international world of technology and finance.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, the second colonial occupation aimed at “detrribalizing” Africans and colonial governments were to assume the social welfare functions to be performed within the “tribes.”¹⁵⁵ It was also within this context that the removal of Africans in colonial Zimbabwe, particularly *Gowa* dwellers, can be partly explained.

¹⁵² Low and Lonsdale, 1976: 13

¹⁵³ *Ibid*; Colson, 1971: 4

¹⁵⁴ Tischler, 2010: 3

¹⁵⁵ Low and Lonsdale, 1976: 13

Reasons for Removal: Rengwe's Forced Resettlers' Perspective

Narratives of forced relocation did not only focus on telling how and what happened, but also on why it happened, which was then contrasted with what they claimed were official explanations. The why question addresses how the memories of Rengwe's forced resettlers related to what happened and what was explained as the causes of removal. What emerged as the major reason for removal was the Kariba Dam narrative. It was surprising to learn that people who were nowhere near Kariba Gorge stuck strongly to this perspective. Listening to their narratives, it turned out that the colonial authorities had used the Kariba Dam narrative to convince Dandawa's *Gowa* dwellers into moving out of the Zambezi Valley. One would be tempted to assume that strong opposition to removal should have existed thereby forcing the colonial officials to resort to the Kariba Dam narrative as a way of selling the unpopular idea of removal and thus circumvent fierce resistance. If this assumption is true, then it defeats the impression presented in NC reports which emphasized the absence of opposition to removal among the valley inhabitants. Relocation narratives by research participants revealed that the colonial authorities played the cat and mouse game with the Dandawa valley dwellers as a way of cowing them into submission and eventually agreeing to move.

It is no secret that the relocation of some Urungwe Chiefdoms in the late 1950s was done within the context of the general call for the removal of Africans by the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland due to the Kariba hydroelectric project. In 1955 the Prime Minister of the Federation announced the decision to construct a dam at Kariba, rather than on the Kafue and, together with this decision, came the issue of resettling those Africans affected by the dam.¹⁵⁶ W.T. Nesham has noted that:

In August 1955, the Minister of Native Affairs (Southern Rhodesia) accompanied by the Native Commissioner, the Director of Native Agriculture and the Under-Secretary for Native Affairs toured the whole of the area which would be inundated by the future lake and met all the Tonga and Korekore chiefs and tribal elders who would be involved in the resettlement.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Colson, 1971: 4

¹⁵⁷ Nesham, 1961: 22

During this tour and meetings with various traditional chiefs, colonial authorities took the opportunity to sell the idea of removal to the highlands to those affected.

The movement of Chiefs Mudzimu, Nyamhunga, Dandawa, Chundu and Kazangarare and their people was planned to spread over five years beginning in 1956.¹⁵⁸ Chiefs Nyamhunga and Mudzimu occupied what is now Kariba District and were moved in 1956 due to the Kariba Dam scheme,¹⁵⁹ but the removal of Chief Dandawa that was scheduled for 1957 had to be cancelled at the last minute.¹⁶⁰ The movement was halted to allow for the resettlement of Africans from *Gota* in Sipolilo District which had been brought forward from the scheduled date of 1960 to 1957.¹⁶¹ At least the colonial authorities did not cook reasons for *Gota* inhabitants as they did for *Gowa* dwellers. They never beat about the bush as was narrated by Josphat:

We were told in 1954 that we were to be removed from *Gota* and be resettled in Urungwe. Some of the village leaders were brought to Sanyati to see the place first. They were fed with wild game meat and consequently, they approved the area to be good for settlement because it teemed with wild game.¹⁶²

Two other former *Gota* dwellers emphasized the same point that:

One village head, Chishato, disagreed with the others saying the land was not good. Others stressed the land was good because they envied wild game, but did not consider its lack of potential in agriculture.¹⁶³

However, not everyone understood why they were being removed from their homelands. Female participants, for instance, were ignorant of the reasons why they were forcibly moved to Rengwe. Milda said that; “our parents were the ones who knew why we were removed and resettled here in Mtirikati....” Rusika also stated that; “I do not know the reasons for our removal. The reasons were known by the Whites because they wanted that country”¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁸ Annual Report, Urungwe District, S2827/2/2/3 Vol. 1, NAZ, 1955: 3

¹⁵⁹ Annual Report, Kariba District, S2827/2/2/4 Vol. 2, NAZ, 1956; White, 1971: 48, 50

¹⁶⁰ Annual Report, Urungwe District, S2827/2/2/5 Vol. 3, NAZ, 1957: 1

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*

¹⁶² Interview, Josphat, 2011

¹⁶³ Interviews with: Tapiwa Gwaze, Musukwe, 1 October 2011; Mathias Utotso, Rengwe, 8 July 2011

¹⁶⁴ Interviews with: Milda Nyamaromo, Chidamoyo, 6 July 2011; Rusika Manatsa, Fuleche, 21 June 2011

The first participant indicated that she was too young at the time of relocation to have understood what was actually happening. She believed that their parents and elders were better placed to explain why the movement took place. The second participant claimed, and rightly so, that removal was a decision made by the colonial authorities and therefore only they could satisfactorily explain why relocation happened. However, looking back now, *Gowa* evictees are totally convinced that whatever the authorities told them at the time were all lies. Another female participant claimed that she did not know why they were displaced, but stressed that only men could probably give the reasons.¹⁶⁵ Such observations by women point to the patriarchal nature of the colonial system which marginalized the involvement of women, and thereby kept them largely uninformed. However, females from *Gota* proved that they were quite informed about the reasons behind their forced removal which they attributed to their land being turned into farms. They had witnessed *chigovanyika* pegging farms on their lands and it was no secret or treated as rumour that they were going to be removed because the writing was clearly on the wall.

For former *Gowa* inhabitants, the story of Kariba Dam was the prime reason which colonial officials gave for their forced removal. According to them, the authorities said:

... you know that there is dam construction at Kariba Gorge. The situation is somehow tricky. In the event that the water body destroys the dam walls, that would mean the Zambezi River and your area will be flooded which will then cause heavy losses of human life and destruction of your homesteads. The government is therefore not prepared to take such a risk. It respects people's lives and property hence it has decided to move you to a safer place where you can also practise better farming....¹⁶⁶

Colonial authorities used this reason to convince Chief Dandawa and his people to move. The same explanation was also given to Ziden Nutt by Chief Dandawa in the 1960s as the main reason why they were removed from *Gowa*.¹⁶⁷ It was not necessarily a story of fact, but it was presented merely as a protective measure to make the idea of removal acceptable, thereby averting opposition. Generally, the LAA had created areas for Africans and the Zambezi

¹⁶⁵ Interview, Lina, 2011

¹⁶⁶ Interviews with: Kamurosi, 2011; Chiriyoti, 2011; Stefani, 2011; Isaac, 2011

¹⁶⁷ Ziden Nutt, personal communication, 25 January 2014

Valley had been designated as Crown land while the Zambezi Escarpment had been earmarked for European and African farms. Looking back in time, the participants asked retrospectively why wild animals were not removed if, in sincerity, they cared about protecting living creatures from the effects of flooding. They now perceive the officials were keen on safeguarding wild animals and the economic benefits they would draw from them. Thus, former *Gowa* inhabitants believe that this was the real reason behind their removal.

NC reports only made reference to the idea that Dandawa *Gowa* dwellers were resettled as part of the Kariba scheme in 1959.¹⁶⁸ However, in reports created between 1956 and 1958 it was stated categorically that the Zambezi Valley was Crown land hence should be cleared of African occupation. The idea that Chief Dandawa and his people were moved as part of the Kariba scheme did not directly connect them to the consequences of dam building in the same way it did for Chiefs Nyamhunga and Mudzimu who lived around Kariba Gorge, or the Tonga whose area was submerged by Lake Kariba. However, the connection with the Kariba scheme was possibly for relocation budgetary costs, in which case Chief Dandawa himself could probably have been included. As a result, the colonial authorities could have relied on the Kariba narrative only as a collateral reason to justify the removal of Dandawa *Gowa* dwellers as their movement cost was catered for by the Kariba scheme budget.

Conclusion

Relocation created a new Dandawa Chiefdom, a merged chiefdom to be precise. In other areas such as Binga, it was only a matter of bringing scattered villages into nucleated settlements but their composition was largely unaffected. Gokwe which seemed to have a less similar case to that of Rengwe only witnessed the addition of immigrants who came more as successful African farmers than claiming traditional legitimacy. Already in Gokwe, the Shangwe were the autochtons and they therefore easily identified with and laid claims of legitimacy to the land. The Rengwe forced resettlement scheme brought two groups with diverse socio-historical backgrounds from different regions to create a new chiefdom. Ethnically, they seemed to be the same, but their different backgrounds acted strongly against

¹⁶⁸ Annual Report, Urungwe District, S2827/2/2/7 Vol. 3, NAZ, 1959: 1

perceiving themselves as one ethnic group. Nonetheless, as time went on, their shared experiences made them to see themselves as one group, but it was only after a new wave of migration occurred in the 1980s in Rengwe. Resultantly, forced resettlement caused the creation of new territories that were embedded with new concepts of space and the formation of new groups or identities. A significant point made in this chapter is that shared experience does not produce a homogenous popular memory. Rather, divided memories dominate and such memories are told for various reasons and above all, these diverse memories represent the gender and age divisions in these communities.

Chapter 3: Displaced Memories: Exploring Human-Environment Relations Before Relocation

Introduction

Studies on the colonial period in Zimbabwe focusing on land have emphasized histories of violent land seizures. There has been less focus on understanding the people's skills in relation to the environments they occupied before relocation and to the agro-ecosystems that resulted from them.¹⁶⁹ Such questions, in contrast, are exactly what have interested researchers since the 1980s, following the line of "ecological history," at least for Eastern and Southern Africa. In this context, environmental determinism has been discredited for its cause and effect approach with scholars giving more attention to interaction between human beings and their environment.¹⁷⁰

The aim of this chapter is to draw on the memories of the displaced, memories which appear to be somewhat displaced themselves by resettlement to explain the different perspectives. The chapter adopts the human-environment relations approach which it uses to analyze what happened before relocation. Chapter 5 raises similar questions for the time after relocation. The ecosystem of the middle Zambezi Valley presented particular challenges to its occupants who included the Dandawa *Gowa* dwellers occupying Marongora, Mana Pools, (Nyakasikana, Rukomeshi, Kanyare, Nyakasanga), Sapi Hunting Area, and Chewore Safari Area [refer to map 5, page 66].

¹⁶⁹ Scudder, 1962; McGregor, 2003a and 2009

¹⁷⁰ Beinart and McGregor, 2003: 4-5; J. Fairhead and M. Leach, *Misreading the African Landscape: Society and Ecology in a Forest Savanna Mosaic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996: 6, 15



Map 5- Zambezi Valley & Escarpment, (Surveyor General, 1975)

The ecosystem did not support good agriculture, and livelihood within the confines of the Zambezi Valley and its escarpment was difficult. However, the way former valley dwellers talked about life in the Zambezi Valley sidelined any perception of it as a land of hardship, but only as a land of plenty and opportunities. It is the same environment that was regarded as unfit for human occupation by the colonial state but whose former inhabitants considered a landscape of home. For them, the ecological difference between the mountainous Rengwe, and the hot, dry Zambezi Valley and its escarpment is a crucial point of comparison.

Similarly, Australian aborigines and some of the “native” Americans had the same kind of stressful environments. Among them, managing life in stressful environments seemed to produce a sense of pride and heroism. It meant they carried unique skills and knowledge that differentiated them from peoples in “easier” environments. The Tonga people of Northwestern Zimbabwe are one such group that took pride in their skills and knowledge of crossing the Zambezi River which was not only very wide but was also infested with crocodiles and powerful water currents. Some groups from outside the Zambezi Valley such

as the Ndebele, who carried out raids in the valley, were at times left stranded on the Zambezi River islands unable to cross the river in pursuance of the fleeing Tonga.¹⁷¹ Tonga oral traditions expressed that the name Zambezi derives from the phrase *kasambavesi* which means “crossing depends on knowledge.”¹⁷² Knowledge of the Zambezi River gave the Tonga the ability to navigate the dangerous and fast flowing river, connecting with landscapes and peoples across it whilst those who lacked its knowledge viewed it as a barrier. McGregor has revealed that there is much to be studied about the Zambezi Valley which goes beyond mere focusing on the inhospitable environment to studying its relationship with its dwellers.

This chapter therefore attempts to take a fresh look at the environmental history of the Dandawa *Gowa*, who formerly inhabited the Zambezi Valley (*Gowa*) and the Escarpment (*Matinhari*), by listening to their displaced memories. These memories are not only about life in the Zambezi Valley, but also relate to the composition and legitimacy of the Dandawa Chiefdom. The chapter examines concepts of livelihood and human-environment relations by ascertaining how the Dandawa *Gowa* related to and understood *gowa* ecology before forced relocation. Consequently, it addresses the question: What memories have the Dandawa *Gowa* retained about their former life in the Zambezi Valley? It begins by discussing the composition of the Dandawa Chiefdom today. It does this to explain why primary focus here is given to the former valley dwellers.

The chapter relies on memory as a source of information about a real past. Memory is used to assist in establishing the relationship to, and knowledge about the land. Isaacman, from whom the concept of “displaced memories” is borrowed, used memory to denote the way dominant narratives have dislodged and silenced those of African groups that were victims of certain colonial developments.¹⁷³ This chapter deals with memories that relate to a situation that has subsequently been superseded by other situations. Therefore, the memories are based on imagination as well as imagined mental maps. The chapter also brings together memories of two displaced groups which have been forcibly combined and can therefore no longer be seen

¹⁷¹ McGregor, 2009: 3

¹⁷² *Ibid*

¹⁷³ Isaacman, 2005: 206

as being independent from each other. Thus, displaced memories stand for recreations of a past that is now spatially distant and with which interactions are no longer possible.

Such an approach, however, is fraught with constraints, particularly in terms of reliability and validity, because there are few published documents relating to the area and people under study, serve only for colonial reports. There are also problems of amnesia, limited factual data and telescoping of events due to particularly stressful conditions. The resultant gaps are mitigated, as far as possible, by using material from other groups that shared a similar environment and past and can therefore be compared to or contrasted with what was obtained from former Dandawa *Gowa* dwellers.

Rengwe: A Merged Chiefdom

The territory known as Rengwe Communal Land is also known as Dandawa Chiefdom. During the colonial period, it was first known as Urungwe (or Rengwe) Special Native Area (SNA) and later as Rengwe Tribal Trust Land (RTTL). The former Dandawa Chiefdom before forced removal in 1958 was comprised of people who identified themselves as MaKorekore who occupied the Zambezi Valley (Nyakasikana, Mana Pools, Nyakasanga, Kanyare) and the Zambezi Escarpment (Nyamakati, Hwiyo, Chitake, Urungwe Mountain) [refer to map 5, page 66]. By the beginning of the 1950s the Native Affairs Department in Urungwe was not yet ready to implement the plan to resettle the people who occupied the Zambezi Valley and its Escarpment under Chiefs Nyamhunga, Mudzimu, Dandawa and Chundu, and Headman Matau. It was only after the decision to build Kariba Dam in 1955 that hasty preparations to move the people of Dandawa and other chiefdoms from the Zambezi Valley were done. In the new territory, Dandawa Chiefdom was located between Kanyati TTL to the northwest, Urungwe TTL stretching from the north to the northeast, Piriwiri TTL to the southwest and Gandavaroyi TTL to the south [refer to map 4, page 59].

Rengwe is found in Urungwe District and is located 100 km to the southwest of Karoi town. Although it had been developed for the resettlement of Chief Dandawa and his people from the Valley, it emerged in 1955 that Sipolilo District could not find enough land to

accommodate its African population. As a result, the “excess” African population that occupied the *Gota* area in Sipolilo which had been declared European farming area was also moved to Urungwe and resettled in Rengwe SNA in 1957 even before Chief Dandawa and his people joined them in 1958.¹⁷⁴ Thus, Rengwe which was originally meant for the sole resettlement of Chief Dandawa and his people, came to include other Africans from Sipolilo District. Both groups considered themselves MaKorekore. Rengwe therefore became a merged chiefdom due to the 1957 and 1958 resettlement programmes which brought people from different chieftainships under a combined chiefdom.

Villages comprised of either *Gowa* or *Gota* people settled on either side of Mtirikati range, Musukwe River, Badze River, Fuleche River and Chidamoyo Mission according to the Lands and Agriculture Department settlement plan. *Gota* people occupied the area between Musukwe River and Mtirikati Mountain Range stretching to Sanyati River. A total of 1298 people comprising 344 men, 318 women and 636 children were moved in 1957 from *Gota* to Rengwe Valley.¹⁷⁵ An estimated Dandawa population of 2412, comprising of 448 men, 687 women and 1277 children, was moved in 1958 from the Zambezi Valley and west of Karoi-Chirundu Road to Rengwe SNA.¹⁷⁶ Of these villages, only Patsikadova was placed near the Sanyati River because they were considered “fishing folk” who owned a fleet of six canoes on the Zambezi, but of this fleet, only one canoe was transported with them to Sanyati River.¹⁷⁷

Patsikadova was moved to the Sanyati River because it was believed their livelihood depended on the river and the canoes were regarded as their “cattle” and providers of food. The delineation exercise of 1968 noted that Dandawa Chiefdom was made up of 57 villages, of which 9 villages came from Sipolilo and 48 villages from the Zambezi Valley and its escarpment.¹⁷⁸ However, the delineation exercise did not give the population figures of the chiefdom as of 1968, while it also wrongly presented some of the people’s totems. For example, Chidoma village was identified as *Tembo Mazvimbakupa* (Zebra) whilst it identifies

¹⁷⁴ Annual Report, Sipolilo District, S2827/2/2/4 vol. 3, NAZ, 1956: 1

¹⁷⁵ Annual Report, Sipolilo District, S2827/2/2/5 vol. 3, NAZ, 1957: 1

¹⁷⁶ Annual Report, Urungwe District, S2827/2/2/6 vol. 1, NAZ, 1958: 1

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*: 2

¹⁷⁸ Delineation Report, Urungwe District, S2929/2/9, NAZ, 1968: 30-31

itself with *Nyangu Bere* (hyena). These two groups, the *Gowa* and *Gota*, are considered the firstcomers in Rengwe.

Although the environs of Rengwe had now been opened to human settlement, Rengwe remained unknown and regarded as an outskirts or backward countryside. Between 1957 and 1980, Rengwe continued to be a sparsely populated region. Whereas other African reserves such as Gokwe had started to participate in the country's economy through the agricultural market, selling crops such as maize, groundnuts and cotton, very few of the Rengwe inhabitants farmed beyond subsistence. The Karoi region developed into a successful farming area of Urungwe District after the establishment of the K-Block farms that were owned by White ex-servicemen of the Second World War. Before the Second World War, only two farms were found in Karoi and these were; the Grand Parade and the Nassau Estate owned by Jack Goldberg and W.J. Leask respectively.¹⁷⁹ By 1975, Karoi had developed into a "bustling town as a farm settlement scheme" and it "remained one of the leading agricultural districts in Rhodesia proving despite the setbacks of Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) that almost any crop can be grown successfully..."¹⁸⁰ The success of Urungwe as the agricultural region of the country was mainly due to the activities on white farms in Karoi and Tengwe.

The African majority, especially those settled in Rengwe, did not contribute much to this agricultural success before 1980. Their standard farming practices utilized hoes and remained mostly streambank cultivation. Arable land set aside for agriculture remained largely unexploited. The NC encouraged the demonstrator staff in the resettlement areas to "show utmost patience, for these valley people have never had agriculture instruction and their methods are wasteful and the majority are, to put it bluntly, lazy."¹⁸¹ The NC's perception of the former valley dwellers as "lazy" was misplaced and exaggerated because they had been sedentary agriculturalists before.

¹⁷⁹ C. Black, *The Legend of Lomagundi*, Art Printopac, Salisbury, 1976: 42

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*: 28

¹⁸¹ Annual Report, Urungwe District, S2827/2/2/4 vol. 3, NAZ, 1956: 2

The isolation of Rengwe continued until 1980, and was worsened by the movement restrictions instituted by the Rhodesian regime during the liberation war (popularly known as Second Chimurenga) against the White Settler regime. However, soon after Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, movement restrictions were outlawed. Africans were encouraged to find areas of settlement anywhere in the country. Consequently, this opened up Rengwe Communal Lands to new immigrants looking for land to settle on and farm, the same way it opened up Binga, Gokwe and Shangani. Chimhowu has described this new wave of migration into Rengwe as "spontaneous resettlement" which intensified in the early 1980s.¹⁸² Although lacking the actual Dandawa population figures of 1958, Chimhowu's study gave a critical analysis of the socio-economic changes that were caused by the migration of the 1980s. He noted that by 2000 the Dandawa population had increased to 25,000, representing 5,234 households and that in the years between 1992 and 2000 the population almost doubled - with population density rising from 4 people per square kilometer in 1958 to 37 people per square kilometer in 2000.¹⁸³ The new immigrants were allowed to clear and occupy the lands that had remained marginalized and unoccupied in the Sanyati River frontier and tsetse fly control zone. These latecomers are identified as *Mavhitori* (plural) because the majority of them came from Masvingo. In reality however, not everyone is a *Muvhitori* (singular).

This immigration of the post-1980s turned Dandawa into a chiefdom of a hybrid nature. Interestingly, the non-*Gowa* groups, that are the former *Gota* and *Mavhitori*, described former *Gowa* dwellers as people who initially did not know "modern" methods of agriculture preferring instead to stick to hunting and following their cultural traditions. The former *Gowa* people, on the other hand, still speak very highly of their former homeland. It is on this basis that the next section examines how life in the Zambezi Valley is remembered, and also analyzes the kind of land practices the *Gowa* dwellers followed and how they understood the *Gowa* ecology.

¹⁸² Chimhowu, 2002: 557

¹⁸³ *Ibid*: 560

Recollection of Life in Gowa

Compared to the Zambezi Valley, the Zambezi Escarpment features less prominently in oral memories of the local population and in reports by the colonial NCs. However, both sources described and judged the valley landscape differently because they perceived it differently. The most remembered and narrated areas of the valley were Mana Pools Game Reserve and areas surrounding it. This was perhaps because it seemed to have been the portion of the valley floor that was inhabited by the majority of the Dandawa population. However, there were also other areas that were occupied by the Dandawa *Gowa* dwellers such as what are now Nyakasanga and Sapi controlled hunting areas.

According to the colonial government's land division, this section of the middle Zambezi Valley fell under Urungwe Unassigned Area "A" and covered approximately 521,000 acres, bounded on the south by the Zambezi Escarpment, on the west by the Chewore River, on the north by the Zambezi River and on the east by Angwa, Mkanga and Mwanja Rivers.¹⁸⁴ Most of the valley floor section to the east of Rukomechi River was included in the Urungwe non-hunting reserve in 1960 (Wildlife Conservation Act 1960 Schedule 2) and in 1963 the Urungwe non-hunting reserve was divided with the area between Sapi and Rukomechi becoming Mana Pools Game Reserve with its southern boundary being about 25 km south of the Zambezi River (Southern Rhodesia proclamation No. 179).¹⁸⁵ Mana Pools National Park was gazetted in 1975 (Parks and Wildlife Act Schedule 1). Its size is 2,196 km² and it is located in the north of Zimbabwe, just south of the Zambezi River which forms the Zimbabwe/Zambian border [refer to map 3, page 58].¹⁸⁶

Lan has observed that the heat in the Zambezi Valley is fierce, "a remorseless 90° or 100°F in summer before rains come", and the rain is less reliable, with an annual average of 650mm.¹⁸⁷ In Mana Pools the mean annual temperature is 27°C, July being the coldest month with mean

¹⁸⁴ Report on Unassigned Area: Sipolilo and Urungwe Districts, S3402, NAZ, 20 April 1954: 5

¹⁸⁵ "Mana Pools National Park: Management Plan - First Draft", Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management, Zimbabwe, 1988: 1

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁸⁷ D. Lan, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe*, James Currey, London, 1985: 9; see also G. Pwiti, "Settlement and Subsistence of Prehistoric Farming Communities in the Mid-Zambezi Valley", in *South Africa Archaeological Bulletin*, Vol. 51, No. 163, 1996: 3

minimum temperature 11°C and November being the hottest with mean maximum temperature 39°C.¹⁸⁸ Dande, Lan's area of research, shares the same ecosystem with Mana Pools as they are both located in the Zambezi Valley. It is characterized by poor soils with few fertile tracts and unreliable rain, conditions that suffocate agricultural production.

Despite the uncomfortable weather conditions, the Zambezi Valley boasts of a high concentration of large mammals such as elephants, buffaloes, wild dogs, cheetah and antelopes. Cultivated areas in the Dande are always at constant risk of destruction from elephants, baboons and wild pigs.¹⁸⁹ Scudder has noted that:

... to enter the valley from Zambian plateau side, one has to descend the escarpment by travelling about 15 or more miles of deeply dissected broken country of the plateau margin losing between 1,000 to 1,500 feet of altitude to reach the outer margin of the valley floor and the same pattern is experienced when approaching the valley from the Zimbabwean side although the plateau margin here is less sharply defined and has a wider belt of broken country before reaching the valley floor.¹⁹⁰

In 1927, J.R. Desmond Evans visited Mana Pools and luckily got a lift to the top of the Zambezi Escarpment, but his carriers had to be given four days' start in order to meet with him where the road ended on the escarpment. He also observed that the valley was very dry and hot, with vast stretches of Mopani and large patches of Jesse bush.¹⁹¹ Nicolle, the Townships' Officer, held the perception that the Zambezi Valley had limited possibilities for "native" settlement; it was infested with tsetse fly and had little permanent water except in the Angwa and Chewore Rivers.¹⁹² Lancaster has defined the Zambezi Valley as "a low-lying, flat-floored rift valley which is enclosed by steep escarpments of rugged mountains and much dissected country," and this terrain proved a major obstacle to communications during the colonial era.¹⁹³ Unfortunately, they did not comment about the escarpment, preferring rather to stick to the valley, its conditions and the dwellers' perceptions.

¹⁸⁸ Mana Pools National Park, 1988: 2

¹⁸⁹ Lan, 1985: 12; "Mana Pools National Park", 1988: 3

¹⁹⁰ Scudder, 1962: 7

¹⁹¹ Black, 1976: 43-44

¹⁹² S3402, April 1954: 5

¹⁹³ C. Lancaster, *The Goba of the Zambezi: Sex Roles, Economics and Change*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1981: 23

These were the ecological and physical descriptions of the Zambezi Valley and its Escarpment by outsiders. By mere consideration of these descriptions of the Valley environment, it leaves one convinced that the environment was inhospitable and unfit for human settlement. However, that was not the perception of the people who used to occupy it. The observation of this chapter is based on the understanding that African environment is culturally constructed and perceived, and therefore agrees with Tuan's and Pwiti's position that different people or cultures read or perceive the environment in different ways.¹⁹⁴ For instance, soon after the removal from the Kariba basin, Chiefs Nyamhunga and Mudzimu complained of stomach trouble, coughs and other ailments and impressed on the NC that they did not like their new home and preferred the Zambezi Valley in spite of its heat, tsetse fly and remoteness.¹⁹⁵ These responses indicated the different ways of seeing and appreciating the Valley environment.

The importance of memories of the valley was impressed on the author by former *Gowa* people's continuous references during interviews such as "if it was in *Gowa*..." Other groups of people who have settled in Rengwe since the 1980s also gave their own perceptions about these former valley dwellers which stimulated the desire to find out more about what life was like in *Gowa*. One research participant from among the latecomers stated his impression of the former valley dwellers at the time of their first contact as:

These Korekore people liked hunting and practised little farming. They interacted more with the forest and did stream-bank cultivation. When we cleared large tracts of land, they panicked thinking forests were being destroyed, but we told them that this is how farming is done.¹⁹⁶

Removal from the valley landscape did not mark an end to the people's former land use practices and some are still practised to this day. Despite the challenges offered by the *Gowa* ecosystem, former *Gowa* dwellers still recall the good old days to which they dearly crave to return to those beautiful times. The Tonga, who lived on the southern shore of Lake Kariba, claimed the same saying that "in the valley life was good, much better than it is today, that

¹⁹⁴ Tuan, 1979: 5; Pwiti, 1996: 4

¹⁹⁵ S2827/2/2/5 vol. 3, Urungwe: 3

¹⁹⁶ Interview, Calisto Matavire, Mutore, 17 September 2012

they always had plenty of food and that they were never hungry....”¹⁹⁷ *Gowa* was described by its former Dandawa dwellers as “the land of plenty, milk and honey” where people lived at liberty, feared nothing and kinship relations were highly valued. These retrospective perceptions are critically analyzed in Chapter 7, ascertaining the extent to which they have been shaped by the hardships of resettlement and the present socio-economic conditions.

The concept of *nyika* (land) was the prime reference in talking about and describing *Gowa*. The concept carried different meanings or perspectives. At some point it identified territories while at other times it referred to the environment, ecology or land, but it was never used to denote a political boundary. The physical outlook was captured in descriptive expressions such as “the soft land” and “the flat and even country.”¹⁹⁸ The former description of “soft” contradicted the real known ecological conditions and the latter emphasized a particular physical outlook. The valley, according to Lancaster, has three main soil types which are escarpment soils, soils developed on Karroo sediments and alluvial soils.¹⁹⁹

In 2012, in the company of some elders, we visited Mana Pools and surrounding areas. Our two and half hours’ drive from the Marongora gate through Nyakasikana gate to Mana Pools on the Zambezi River proved that the country is flat and has loose soils. Wild animals, especially elephants, wild pigs, antelopes and zebras were a common feature as we toured part of the valley floor. The baobab trees were also common and their presence indicated that the territory was dry and an area of low rainfall. Around Mana Pools, the huge *Mitsangu* trees dominated that section of the valley floor. During discussions with participants, narratives about *Mitsangu* trees were common. The tree produces *tsangu* seeds (beans of *Acacia Albida*). These were relied on, the elders emphasized, during hunger, famine or drought periods. Apart from *tsangu* seeds, they also gathered *manyanya*, *musonde*, *chiriya*, *honey* and various wild fruits and roots.

¹⁹⁷ Weinrich, 1977: 19

¹⁹⁸ Interviews with: Kenani, 2011; Rusika, 2011

¹⁹⁹ Lancaster, 1981: 28

Memories about their livelihood indicated that valley dwellers had a mixed economy of gathering, hunting, fishing and agriculture. Because of the nature of the valley economy, they generally developed an intimate relationship with its ecology. The Zambezi Valley enjoys two seasons, that is, *zhizha* (summer/rainy) and *chirimo* (dry). The dry season is long, stretching from April to December, which causes the valley dwellers to rely substantially on hunting and gathering to compliment the harvest of their subsistence farming. Women also told stories of abundant yields from small acreages of sorghum and millet.²⁰⁰ Memories relating to agriculture and the challenges caused by locusts, wild pigs and baboons among other animals that destroyed their fields were obtained mostly from women's narratives. They frequently compared and contrasted today's agriculture with what they did in the valley. They noticed changes in their livelihood as impacting their economic role as women and providers for their families. Their failure, as they explained, was associated with the forced relocation which removed them from a "land of plenty" to a land that requires much more attention and value addition in terms of fertilizers and manuring. Women emphasized that in Rengwe one requires many hectares, apply fertilizer and remove "witch weed" in order to get a good yield, and without that hunger affects households constantly. Nonetheless, this may also have to do with the changing agricultural economy and gender division of labour as much weight and importance are being placed on cash cropping which tends to be a conflation of the effects of resettlement and of the ailing economy.

In *Gowa*, people relied on *temwa* (singular) or *mitemwa* (plural) form of cropping which is known as the slash-and-burn method of cultivation which allowed them to practise shifting cultivation for subsistence. These *temwa* fields were common among most, if not all, of the Zambezi Valley dwellers as has been described by Lancaster and Scudder for the Banamainga *Goba* and Gwembe Tonga respectively.²⁰¹ *Temwa* fields were found either on the main land, where they relied on summer rains, or along streams and rivers where they benefited from both the alluvial soils and moisture absorbed from the river or stream flooding. These fields were harvested between May and June. *Temwa* fields were solely tilled using hand hoes, a practice known as *kutema makaha* (tilling using the hoe). Among the Banamainga, Lancaster

²⁰⁰ Interviews with: Rusika, 2011; Siyana, 2011; Edina, 2011; Sedina, 2011

²⁰¹ Lancaster, 1981: 61; Scudder, 1962: 42-43

has observed that they maintained two types of agricultural plots, that is, the *temwa* which was planted on large but irregular clearings which depended on summer rains, and smaller gardens watered by natural rivers and streamside flooding.²⁰²

This agricultural system created problems for the colonial state which desperately needed cheap African labour. The NCs complained about few lowlanders coming up to offer their labour and this was mainly because from September onwards they would be busy with clearing their *temwa* fields in anticipation of summer rains lasting until May when the yields would be harvested.²⁰³ From June until September, winter gardens were maintained in the rich alluvial banks of the Zambezi River. This agricultural cycle and other economic activities absorbed much of the valley dwellers' time and prevented them from rendering much of their labour to the colonial economy.

These Dandawa *Gowa* dwellers distinguished themselves as follows: those who were closer and relied on the Zambezi River, and those who were located more into the interior of the valley floor. Streambank cultivation and *temwa* fields were practised by these interior groups of Dandawa *Gowa* dwellers. As a result of depending on the hoe, they preferred cultivating loose soils and small acreages, a situation totally opposed to and untenable in Rengwe. Rengwe soils are dry and hard and require the use of draught power. Thus, forced removal greatly affected women together with children who previously supplied much of the labour in the fields. Furthermore, in Rengwe, agriculture has become market-focused, hence it meant clearing and cultivating large tracts of land.

In the early years after relocation, women's positions were badly affected because they did not own any cattle. Hoe tillage became an unfavourable practice in Rengwe because it also entailed repeated weeding; something they claimed was never the case in *Gowa*. The only challenge they faced in *Gowa* was protecting their fields from birds, locusts and large mammals. Lan and Scudder have noted with concern the damage and destruction on the fields

²⁰² Lancaster, 1981: 61

²⁰³ Annual Report, Urungwe District, S1563, NAZ, December 1934: 2; Monthly Reports: Urungwe District, S1619, NAZ, January 1936: 1 and N9/4/44 Vol. 2, NAZ, May 1923: 489-490

caused by birds and wild animals like elephants, baboons, vervet monkeys and wild pigs.²⁰⁴ In Dandawa's area, for example, seven elephant bulls were reported in 1936 to have caused excessive damage and permits had to be issued to kill them,²⁰⁵ and the same happened in 1937 and 1946.²⁰⁶

Surprisingly, this damage and the destruction of fields were not presented as a matter of serious concern by research participants. In fact, their talk on birds and locusts focused on how they relied on them as relish or a snack. However, the same could not be said of elephants. The Dandawa people's livelihood now depends extensively on farming but unfortunately, men have literally taken over farming which used to be the preserve of women. Women have continued to be sidelined and no longer have control over their economic roles and this partly explained their fond memories of the *Gowa* ecology. Firstly, their memories seemed to lament and protest against the suppression of their potential and secondly, they debated change and the uncertainties of the future.

During the dry season, some villages were privileged to maintain gardens on the banks of Zambezi River. The gardens, known as *matoro*, were fertile because of the alluvial soils that were deposited on the banks of the Zambezi River during its flooding. The river had pronounced seasonality flows with flooding reaching its peak in February and March, then receding slowly until November, thereby impacting positively on Zambezi riverine communities.²⁰⁷ However, only a few villages of the Dandawa *Gowa* dwellers benefited from these fertile banks of the Zambezi River during the dry season. For instance, Patsikadova, a renowned village of fishers on the Zambezi River and skilled manufacturers of canoes, benefited tremendously. Others included Goremusandu and Chidoma who were found in Kanyare, Nyamahwe on the Zambezi River, and villages located at the confluence of Rukomeshi and Zambezi Rivers.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴ Lan, 1985: 12; Scudder, 1962: 23

²⁰⁵ Monthly Report, Urungwe, S1619, January 1936: 2

²⁰⁶ Annual Reports, Urungwe, S1563, December 1937: 4 and December 1946: 7

²⁰⁷ Isaacman, 2005: 208

²⁰⁸ This spatial description of villages on the *Gowa* landscape is based on discussions with research participants and reports by NCS.

This picture contradicted the generalized argument that former Dandawa *Gowa* dwellers relied on two seasons,²⁰⁹ because it was only a few villages that could do so. Even NC's reports identified specific villages that engaged in winter gardening. People who lived at the foot of the escarpment - in the village of Nyakasikana - argued that to reach Goremusandu village in Kanyare on the Zambezi River, they had to start their journey as early as 5 o'clock in the morning in order to arrive there by midday.²¹⁰ Our research team took approximately three hours' drive to Mana Pools on the Zambezi River from Marongora gate on the Harare-Chirundu highway, justifying to some extent the above argument by the former *Gowa* dwellers. In that context, it was impossible for people in the interior of the valley landscape to own *matoro* gardens on the Zambezi River but nonetheless, they benefited from alluvial soils deposited along rivers, streams or the valley floor for their subsistence agriculture.

Villages that did not practise recession agriculture supplemented their diet mostly by gathering and hunting during the dry season. Plants, grasses, wild roots, tubers and fruits, honey and hunting of mammals such as antelopes and bush pigs contributed significantly to the people's diet during the dry season. The valley landscape had a variety of plants that were eaten as vegetables and wild fruits that were gathered by women and children while men collected honey and hunted wild animals. In times of hunger, famine or drought, the NCs emphasized the same; that although the Zambezi Valley usually suffered from shortage of cultivated food crops, it was fortunate that the people had a wide choice of wild fruits, grasses and roots on which to rely, averting the effects of serious food shortage.²¹¹ Although some of the plants were poisonous, many were medicinal and contained vitamins and minerals that were crucial to the people's health.

Similarly, Lancaster's detailed anthropological study of Banamainga *Goba* has revealed two points about the valley agricultural economy and settlement patterns, which have also been

²⁰⁹ Chimhowu, 2002: 556

²¹⁰ Interviews with: Siyana, 2011; Stefani, 2011; Chiriyoti, 2011

²¹¹ Monthly Reports: Urungwe District, S1619, August 1937: 20; Lomagundi District, N9/4/25 Vol. 2, NAZ, August 1912: 485 - in 1912 the NC stated that he saw women scouring the country away from their homes looking for wild fruits.

supported by Pwiti's archaeological research in mid-Zambezi Valley. Former *Gowa* dwellers perceive valley soils to be fertile, contradicting agro-ecological classification which puts the Zambezi Valley in Natural Region V. According to Pwiti, early farming communities' settlement sites were located on river or stream banks, an observation that was also made by Lancaster among the Banamainga *Goba*.²¹² Rivers or streams were favoured sites of settlements because of two things, namely, as sources of water for domestic use and the availability of alluvial loam soils. Lancaster has observed that, "such largely political population movements and redistribution always depend on ample supplies of good *temwa* soils and the availability of sufficient all-year round drinking water."²¹³ Similarly, Pwiti's archaeological research has emphasized that the early farming communities' settlement sites revealed the importance of water for domestic use on the one hand, and the occurrence of suitable agricultural soils, alluvial sandy loams on the other, in the local decisions of such communities.²¹⁴ Pwiti further observed that the general distribution of sites was rarely more than one kilometer from sources of water, allowing the dwellers to exploit both water and alluvial soils within convenient daily walking distances, as also indicated by Lancaster.²¹⁵

Undoubtedly, research participants possessed an enormous knowledge of *Gowa* ecology, much broader than what they possess of Rengwe. The ecological cycle of everything that mattered to their livelihood, whether in the wet or dry season, proved to be the kind of knowledge they still carry on their fingertips. The most talked about things included *tsangu* [beans of *Acacia Albida*], grasses like *mhande*, *musonde*, and tubers like *katunguru*, *hona*, *tsitsi*, *manyanya*. Seeds from grasses like *mhande* and *musonde*, for instance, were pounded to produce a cereal that was used to prepare hard porridge. *Tsangu* were regarded as poisonous and so they had to be shelled and boiled the whole day, emptying the cooking water three or four times to remove the poison, before they were cooked for consumption. Among the Gwembe Tonga, wild food plants served not only as a cereal substitute during hunger and famine periods, but also an important source of vitamins and minerals.²¹⁶ Wild food supplies

²¹² Pwiti, 1996: 4; Lancaster, 1981: 97

²¹³ Lancaster, 1981: 76

²¹⁴ Pwiti, 1996: 4

²¹⁵ *Ibid*: 4-5; Lancaster, 1981: 97

²¹⁶ Scudder, 1962: 209

were resorted to in order to cover the time between the exhaustion of grain supplies and the next harvest.

Another way to mitigate stressful conditions was to rely on a fruit known as *masawu/masao* (*ziziphus mauritiana*). The fruit played a critical role both in stressful and normal years. *Masawu* were mostly obtained from the north, across the Zambezi River because it was claimed that on the Zimbabwean side elephants uprooted the tree hence it could not grow very well.²¹⁷ Both *masawu* and the Zambezi River connected peoples on both sides of the Zambezi who saw themselves not as divided but united by the river. The significance of *masawu* was acknowledged in NC reports which explained how the fruit was crucial in hunger periods. In October 1912, it was reported that:

In the valley food is very scarce, Dandawe's [sic] and Chiundu's [sic] people are in a bad case, the former because even their crop of green mealies is already eaten, the latter as they have only the masao fruit to fall back on.²¹⁸

And in 1916 it was again remarked that:

The macao [sic] has again saved the situation in the Zambezi Valley, natives from across the river come over in canoes and gather large quantities of this fruit, which grows thickly along the river banks.²¹⁹

Masawu fruit is endowed with nutrients and vitamins and thus is very important to the human body. It can be eaten as raw fruit or it can be pounded, mixed with water and left to ferment a bit and then be served as dessert or some kind of beer. *Masawu* is one fruit that was carried along during forced removal and it has since grown to become an important feature on the Rengwe landscape and most significantly, a source of income in this rural economy.

Apart from gathering, fishing also proved a crucial economic practice in rivers like Rukomeshi, Chewore, Nyakasanga, Chemutsi, and Zambezi. It seems fishing was to a larger extent done by women, children and men alike because homesteads were located closer to or along riverbanks. Fish seemed to have been plenty in perennial flowing rivers like Rukomeshi

²¹⁷ Interviews with: Siyana, 2011; Chiriyoti, 2011

²¹⁸ Monthly Report, Lomagundi, N9/4/25, vol. 3, October 1912: 617

²¹⁹ Monthly Report, Lomagundi, N9/4/31, vol. 1, August 1916: 102

and Zambezi but unfortunately, the research did not enquire about local knowledge of fish species. The displaced peasants of Mozambique recalled that there were approximately sixty species of fish that were found in the Zambezi River before Cahora Bassa Dam was built which then destroyed fish's breeding spaces, thereafter causing a massive decline in the number of species.²²⁰ Fishing was done by anyone because villages were situated next to rivers and therefore were readily accessible to anyone compared to forests that were quite dangerous especially for unarmed women and children.

Jesse, which thickly forested the area, was also very crucial in that they formed a good habitat for various kinds of birds, nestlings and small species of wild animals. Birds, wild meat and plants contributed significantly to the Dandawa *Gowa* dwellers' diet. The ability to rely on the ecology has become limited and in some instances has been lost because certain practices like fishing and hunting have been outlawed by the parks and wildlife department. Thus, no matter how harsh the *Gowa* environment was, or how intense hunger, famine or drought proved to be, *Gowa* ecology had the potential of providing a much larger variety of foods, and thus prevented hunger in times of crisis, but the same cannot be said of Rengwe ecology. Today, relief in stressful periods has to come from the government or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); there are no locally based strategies to mitigate hunger, famine or drought as was the case in *Gowa*.

Demystifying Perceptions About *Gowa*

Eventhough the people tried to downplay the serious challenges offered by the *Gowa* ecology, contemporary records by NCs emphasized that drought and famine caused serious consequences on the valley dwellers that included Chiefs Dandawa, Chundu, Mudzimu and Nyamhunga. Reports indicated that no three years passed without a drought, famine or hunger. The causes of hunger were varied; either it was due to damage of fields/crops by elephants, locusts or birds, or due to erratic or failure of rainfall. Annual reports for 1934, 1937 and 1947,²²¹ and monthly reports for January 1936 and April 1938²²² lamented the

²²⁰ Isaacman, 2005: 213, 233

²²¹ Annual Reports, Urungwe, S1563: 1934: 2; 1937: 3; 1947: 3

²²² Monthly Reports, Urungwe, S1619: January 1936: 1; and April 1938

shortage of food in the Zambezi Valley due to drought, too much rainfall or destruction by elephants, baboons or locusts. For instance, in April 1938 crops were destroyed by two large swarms of locusts.²²³ Research participants acknowledged that drought or hunger did occur, but only after further questioning, following relentless emphasis that Rengwe was a “land of hunger” and *Gowa* was a “land of plenty.” Chimhowu has also observed that former Dandawa *Gowa* dwellers have never liked Rengwe, viewing it as *nyika yenzara* (land of hunger).²²⁴

Nonetheless, even after submitting to the idea that drought and hunger did occur in *Gowa*, research participants were quick to refute assumptions expressed in the NC’s reports that drought and hunger were a constant threat in the valley. I want to critically analyze and make an attempt to demystify this positive perception of *Gowa* as a “land of plenty, of milk and honey.” According to Chiriyoti:

Drought or famine did happen in *Gowa* but it was a non-event because there were many things to mitigate its effects which included, among others, honey, tubers and roots. If the government would okay our return to the *Gowa*, I will be the first. Our only problem was that we didn’t have clothes.... Whites’ argument that *Gowa* was a land of drought was just their way of denigrating us....²²⁵

His claim here was that the availability of alternatives to the problems posed by drought or hunger made people to disregard it as a matter of serious concern. But these positive memories could be coming from frustrations with the present economic circumstances where money is the medium of exchange. In fact, Chiriyoti saw lack of clothing as a bigger problem than drought, while perceiving reliance on poisonous plants not as a critical matter. Firstly, the argument about the availability of alternatives to mitigate drought failed to acknowledge that some of the alternative foods were poisonous, which meant they were not friendly to the human body. Secondly, relying on poisonous plants was in itself a sign that the situation was severe and improper which meant that the drought, famine and hunger were being misrepresented in the narratives.

²²³ S1619, April 1938

²²⁴ Chimhowu, 2002: 556

²²⁵ Interview, Chiriyoti, 2011

Tuan has claimed that no two social groups or persons make the same evaluation of the environment. While this is true, there is also a possibility that different perceptions could be manufactured in retrospect to defend a certain position. The difference between the Dandawa *Gowa* dwellers' and White officials' perceptions could be caused by the fact the former still hold grievances that are related to their forced removal. Nevertheless, some research participants regarded their present status as far much better when compared to their previous lifestyle in *Gowa* which they described as "a life of suffering." Such are people who have managed to construct modern-style brick houses, have given their children an education and some even boast of having well-paying jobs and are also counted among the better performing peasant farmers.

Despite general claims that *Gowa* was not a "land of hunger," participants recalled a number of stressful periods that occurred in *Gowa*, either those they witnessed or those that were told to them by their parents. Such stressful periods were easily remembered because they were being given names when they occurred. These names served the purpose of differentiating the hunger or droughts on causes and effects. Women remembered these droughts or famines more vividly possibly because they were the worst affected due to their role as providers for their families particularly children.

According to Magwadi:

I experienced the hunger caused by swarms of locusts called *kahomo*. *Kahomo* darkened the sky and covered the ground; they were everywhere. We temporarily stayed at the fields to protect our sorghum known as *rongwe* but nonetheless, the crop was destroyed. Even some trees were destroyed. Our parents called it "the year of *kahomo*." *Kahomo* left some eggs behind which were then hatched and that started another menace which destroyed the remnant crop. We caught the locusts and ate them. It was only after the Whites had sprayed pesticides that *kahomo* was destroyed. Another swarm of locusts called *matanhau* (grasshoppers) came when I had reached puberty, about four years after *kahomo*. After that came a famine called *mandota*. It destroyed our sorghum when it was pollination time and the crop wilted. We were on the Zambian side so we came to the Zambezi River to plant *matoro* gardens; that was the year when Chirundu Bridge was being built [1938]. We had to survive by eating the poisonous *tsangu* beans....²²⁶

Another participant recalled that:

²²⁶ Interview, Magwadi, 2011

At times hunger was caused by locusts called *kamhikite*. Small boys and girls would go to the fields singing, “*kamhikite* go away from our fields.” They would catch *kamhikite* and roast it. But there were big locusts called *dzomba*, but I didn’t witness the first one... [Interjection from Gamazhura: I witnessed it, it covered and darkened the sky and the sun completely and by the time it passed-by crops had been damaged]. Ah that one came in 1939, but the first one came in 1930, I didn’t see it. My mother was not yet married then, and it caused hunger known as *kabura*.²²⁷

Names that were given to these famines or droughts, that is, *nzara yaKabura*, *gore raDzomba*, *gore raKahomo* and *nzara yaMandota*, among others, are crucial mnemonic devices and are therefore critical sources of analysis. Descriptive naming of droughts, famines or disasters seemed to have been a widespread practice in the Zambezi Valley because a similar practice existed among the riverine communities in Mozambique. According to Isaacman, torrential waters were descriptively named in a way that kept memories of a world gone awry.²²⁸ For instance, the torrential waters of 1952 were named *Cheia M’bomani* and were remembered as the floods that destroyed everything, then *Cheia N’sasira* 6 years later was recalled as “the rushing waters that forced people to live on top of termite mounds” and *Cheia Nabwaririr* in 1969 when water remained above the flood stage level for 222 days causing considerable hunger and destitution.²²⁹ Droughts, famines and disasters were given descriptive names for the major reason of distinguishing them from such others and for purposes of recollection and telling others about them.

That stressful periods were a common feature in *Gowa* is not anything secret as indicated in the two excerpts above. This actually demystified the idea that *Gowa* was not a land of hunger. In the first excerpt, the participant concluded by saying they ate *tsangu* which were poisonous, a clear indication that the situation had reached serious levels. The narrative by Magwadi indicated that the famine called *mandota* was induced by crop failure between 1937 and 1940, while the second mentioned the hunger which was caused by locusts, *dzomba* and was dated 1939. Already we have two different scenarios, dated around the same time, and this was evidence proving that hunger, famine or drought occurred frequently and was a

²²⁷ Group discussion, Fuleche, 26 September 2011- [Mupuwa- with interjection from Gamazhura]

²²⁸ Isaacman, 2005: 208

²²⁹ *Ibid*: 208-209

menace in the valley defeating the perception of *Gowa* as a land of milk and honey. Thus, in as much as *Gowa* was positively described, the few illustrations above reveal that stressful periods were a constant feature in the Zambezi Valley and that sometimes they went beyond the usual, culminating in people resorting to eating poisonous plants. These perceptions of *Gowa* were purposefully and carefully crafted and were certainly not a result of amnesia.

Other features which were significant in describing *Gowa* ecology and in the reconstruction of memories included mountains and rivers. These two proved indispensable in mapping social networks, kinship relationships, livelihoods and in the description of the distribution of villages on the *Gowa* landscape. It was through the acts of walking across and dwelling on the valley floor that knowledge of the *Gowa* ecological setup was gained. Questions relating to the spatial distribution of villages were answered with reference to rivers or mountains. Female participants did not only name and locate villages, but they also networked the villages, rivers and mountains with social ties.

Siyana recalled that:

In our area we had *Mudzongachiso*, *Chagadama*, *Matengaifa*, *Zunza*, *Nyamhandu* and *Manzungu*. We were surrounded by Rukomeshi and Chitake Rivers, Chitake was the tributary of Rukomeshi. Mudzongachiso was close to Muunga River, and Dzvukwa was near the local bridge. These villages were in the same locality but separated by rivers. Across the river lived my aunt, sister to my father, where Nyangaire lived. After that river you went to Goremusandu [Dandawa] village and you passed through Mangwavava, where Gaya (a White hunter) was killed by an elephant. Then there is Chisuku River at the other side of Goremusandu village where this lion spirit lived uhm [name forgotten]... who healed my cousin Peturu, whose wife was from Kanyare. I travelled to all these places even to *matoro* gardens in the Zambezi River, where my aunt was killed by a crocodile while fetching water from the river.²³⁰

The knowledge of both the *Gowa* ecology and landscape grew out of a strong process of socialization and movement across the breadth of the valley floor. The result of that has been the production of interactive memories in hindsight. The spatial distribution of rivers in the valley also represented the spatial distribution of villages, and with this information one can

²³⁰ Interview, Siyana, 2011

estimate the distance that existed between villages. It was this distribution that was also used by NCs to argue that the Zambezi Valley was sparsely populated. This description of the distribution of villages matched what was diarized by the Assistant NC of Lomagundi in 1901 as he visited villages situated in the Zambezi Valley. He recorded his journeys as follows:

... 4th (July 1901) left Nyamkaiwa's (village) travelling 8 miles South-Southeast through palms and tropical growth reached Tshidoma's (sic) kraal on the Chiwawa river... left again and going 7 miles South-Southeast reached Dandawa's kraal on the Rukomitchi (sic). 5th left Dandawa at 8 am and travelling 18 miles South-Southwest reached Nyagasigana's (sic) on the Rukomitchi(sand) [sic]. 6th left Nyagasigana's (sic) and proceeding for 13 and half miles Southeast along Chitaki River reached Gandawi's (sic) kraal. 17th left for Dandawa's kraal at 8 am proceeded 12 miles North-Northwest along Chitaki to its junction with the Rukomitchi (also junction of footpath with path leading to Nyagasigana's) the 13 miles North-Northwest along the old footpath to Dandawa's kraal.²³¹

Such a closer interaction between rivers and villages created a strong aid to memories of the valley ecology and landscape. It also has come to assist greatly in describing people's movement patterns as well as their social ties. As indicated in the NC's movement diary, there was no doubt that villages were scattered across the valley landscape. It also revealed the importance of water and rivers in creating nucleated settlements. Although villages seemed to have been physically separated by the rivers, they were in actual fact connected by them.

As a result of this intimate interaction between *Gowa* ecology and its inhabitants, it produced a strong socialization which Tonkin has described as "the ways and means by which we internalize the external world" where the ability to remember is developed interactively.²³² The excerpts used here were not only telling the story of the spatial distribution of villages, but also implicitly suggesting that the country was dry and rivers were the only possible sources of water, as has also been stressed in researches by Lancaster and Pwiti. It is plausible to argue that memories of rivers have remained vivid because of two things; firstly, the act of dwelling along or closer to rivers, and secondly, due to the central position played by fishing. Both aspects combined to extend the platform for recollection.

²³¹ Diary kept by Assistant Native Commissioner (ANC) Lomagundi while on around North and Northwest portions of Lomagundi District, N3/1/9, NAZ, 30 August 1901: 7-8

²³² Tonkin, 1992: 105

Rivers also served wild animals especially during the dry season. In times when water shortage was critical, the situation was so severe that people and wild animals had to share and scramble for the same waterholes. In 1946, for example, the NC noted that “there are times when the elephant share the same kraal waterhole and heave over the grain bins within the kraal.”²³³ Thus, the people had to monitor not only their movements, but also understand the movement patterns of wild animals, especially elephants and buffaloes, by studying and understanding their drinking and grazing times. Chiriyoti narrated that, “each and every animal had specific time of coming to the Zambezi River to drink water, and they usually left the river around 5 o’clock (late afternoon)....”²³⁴ Not every homestead or village was located along perennial flowing rivers such as Zambezi, Rukomechi or Nyakasanga, among others, but others were situated near small rivers that were seasonal with small catchments or along springs, similar to findings by Pwiti regarding early farming communities in mid-Zambezi Valley.²³⁵ During the dry season, water was scarce to the extent that some villages or homesteads had to rely on water retained in sand-beds for survival. It was in these sand-beds that *Gowa* dwellers and wild animals competed to get water.

Apart from sharing waterholes, animals and people also shared forest paths. Through these forest paths human beings came into contact with tsetse flies, because the flies, according to research participants, were not found close to homesteads. While White officials regarded tsetse flies as dangerous to the human body because they caused sleeping sickness, the valley dwellers never regarded them as a threat arguing that they were used to them and their immune systems were strong enough to fight the danger it posed. Similarly, J.R. Desmond Evans, a White farmer from Sipolilo who visited the Zambezi Valley in 1927 acknowledged that, “it is amazing, however, after months of wandering in the valley, how one became immune to their [tsetse fly] bites.”²³⁶ Despite these many years of dislocation, former Dandawa *Gowa* dwellers still maintained strong and vivid memories of *Gowa* ecology.

²³³ S1563, 1946: 7

²³⁴ Interview, Chiriyoti, 2011

²³⁵ Pwiti, 1996: 3

²³⁶ Black, 1976: 44

Conclusion

Memory, in this chapter, has been treated in two interlinked contexts; firstly, as a source of information about the past, and secondly, through assessing them as displaced memories. In the first context, narratives were viewed as vividly describing and assessing past experiences and what life was like in *Gowa*. These memories yielded the perception that *Gowa* was not a land of hunger but of plenty, which contradicted the fact that the Zambezi Valley has always been a dry land. This chapter has also shown how people were attached to their environment and how they have become overenthusiastic about their past. What emerged central has been the question of reliability and validity of these displaced memories. “Displaced” has been used to mean being removed or detached from the real situation in both spatial and temporal senses. Displaced memories produce contested memories because of the physical removal of the people from the environment due to the emergence of different perceptions about the past. On the other hand, displaced memories due to forced removal tended to present a positive image of the past. Possible reasons why the *Gowa* environment is remembered so positively, against the evidence, are discussed in Chapter 7.

Chapter 4: Extending Colonialism to the Margins

Introduction

The colonial state introduced structures, both economic and political, that caused radical changes in colonial Zimbabwe. These changes created a new kind of relationship between the state and the African population. The colonial state created and left deep impressions in most memories of the Africans. Drinkwater made this critical point that:

It is beyond dispute, therefore, that the impact on indigenous societies of the structures of the modern state and capitalist economy has been immense.... This means the indigenous population was forced into a particularly intimate relationship with the colonial state.²³⁷

This chapter traces the extension of colonialism to the mid-Zambezi Valley. It examines the interaction and relationship that developed between the colonial authorities and the local population before resettlement. It is attempting to serve two purposes. Firstly, it introduces the actors involved in the bilateral relationship to the land or environment. Secondly, it connects the pre- and the post-resettlement phases. It perceives forced removal as the peak of colonial expansion to Urungwe District in general. It should, however, be noted that the extension and impact of colonialism on African societies was uneven, neither were colonial authorities a homogenous entity. As such, relations between them and Africans were varied, complex and fluid.

Most historical narratives have given much attention to the colonial officials' role as an extension of the oppressive political centre, but focused less on them as individuals. A former NC lamented in his memoir that, "too little is known by the public about these men [NCs] who lived among the 'tribes' as their 'fathers'...."²³⁸ Here the chapter draws on perceptions and assessments arrived at by African populations, in this case those found in Rengwe, who interacted with the colonial authorities and their structures at the local level. This approach

²³⁷ M. Drinkwater, *The State and Agrarian Change in Zimbabwe's Communal Areas*, Macmillan, London, 1991: 2

²³⁸ H.N. Hemans, *The Log of a Native Commissioner: A record of Work and Sport in Southern Rhodesia*, Books of Rhodesia Publishing Company, Bulawayo, 1971 - refer to the publisher's introduction to the book - see also page 7.

aims at moving away from colonial documents which centered more on the colonial system, its administrative roles and also on the personal perspectives, memories and lives of the colonial administrators²³⁹, to give focus on those who were regarded as “subjects.” Nationalist discourse has emphasized resistance on a broader scale, tracing it back to epic events such as the 1893 Anglo-Ndebele war and the First Chimurenga 1896-97. It strongly criticizes colonialism for creating a skewed relationship between administrators and the administered or the exploiter and the exploited. Relations between individual administrators and Africans were uneven and ambivalent, thereby calling for critical interrogation.

Cooper has argued that the concept of African resistance to colonialism is generally accepted and seen as unproblematic, but as a concept it might narrow our understanding of African history rather than expand it.²⁴⁰ The weakness is that its emphasis on resistance has caused the proliferation of many tales focusing on men, producing a male-centric view of history. It has largely excluded both the participation of women and contestations among Africans themselves.²⁴¹ In light of this, this chapter attempts to move away from the resistance discourse to ask questions about how the local African population, herein, former Dandawa *Gowa* dwellers, recalled their interaction with colonial authorities. Africans, as Cooper has argued, should not only be perceived as resisters or adaptors to colonial initiatives, but as initiators whose actions and ideas also forced Europeans into forms of adaptation.²⁴² Thus, this chapter seeks to address two questions: what stories do the former Dandawa *Gowa* dwellers tell about their relations with White officials and settlers? What images did the colonial authorities create of themselves among the Africans?

The NCs, as was observed by Hemans, tended to see themselves as “fathers” in their districts, but nothing concretely proved that they held that role, and neither was it supported by the views of former *Gowa* dwellers. A fatherly figure respects his folk, but decisions made by the NCs, except for a few, fell short of that role because their sympathy was with the colonial

²³⁹ See Hermans, 1971

²⁴⁰ Cooper, 1994: 1532

²⁴¹ *Ibid*: 1523

²⁴² *Ibid*: 1531

establishment than with Africans' interests. Popular memories were therefore used here as a methodological tool to obtain more information and assess the relationship between the two social actors from a bottom-up perspective and, thus, critically analyze the perception of NCs as “fathers” among the African population. These memories are relied on, but cognizant of the limitations they offer in order to avoid reproducing stereotypes of the NCs.

The Creation of Urungwe District

Urungwe District was created within the context of the establishment and expansion of the Native Affairs Department after the colonization of Zimbabwe as a whole. Urungwe covered 7,500 square miles [12,070 km²] and located south of the Zambezi River [refer to Map 6, page 96]. It was made up of two physical landscapes, the plateau or escarpment and the low-lying Zambezi Valley.²⁴³ It was bounded on the north by the Zambezi River for 100 miles [161 kilometers] below the Kariba Gorge, on the east by the Angwa River and on the west by the Sanyati River.²⁴⁴ Sporadic archaeological excavations have shown that Urungwe area was home to sophisticated metal work. Ceramics and copper ingots excavated in Urungwe matched those of Ingombe Ilede discovered by Chaplain and Fagan in 1960-62 on the Zambian bank of the Zambezi below the Kariba Gorge.²⁴⁵ On the Urungwe plateau, copper ingots and ceramics were found in 1967 at Chedzugwe Hill near Rydings Farm, at Muyove, 35 miles [56 kilometers] northwest of Chedzugwe and at Nyarinde River, 35 miles [56 kilometers] east of both Chedzugwe and Muyove.²⁴⁶ According to Beach, it is believed the *VaMbara* were responsible for this culture and that they formed the biggest villages of people on the Urungwe plateau which included Chidzere, Nechirundu, Nechidzurwi and Nendorosha, among others.²⁴⁷ Besides this distinctive historical culture, Urungwe remained largely marginal until its inclusion into the colonial administrative system in the twentieth century.

²⁴³ P.S. Garlake, “Iron Age Sites in the Urungwe District of Rhodesia”, in *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, vol. XXV, 1970: 25; Beach, 1980: 1

²⁴⁴ Garlake, 1970: 25

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*: 26

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*: 26-34

²⁴⁷ Beach, 1980: 73

The creation of the Native Affairs Department in 1894 started the process of colonial expansion to marginal areas. The NC's office was then tasked with overseeing, controlling and administering the activities of the Africans in the colony of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). According to Hemans, the first NCs appointed in 1894 were sent out to establish stations often only with compass directions, a horse and a wagon and with one administrative instruction, "get to know your people and do not worry [about the] head office."²⁴⁸ The NCs literally represented the image of the colonial government among the Africans. They represented two images, namely, their individual image as white settlers on the one hand, and as government officials on the other. However, the establishment of the Native Affairs Department did not immediately translate to total administrative control, as some regions such as Urungwe, continued largely unaffected until 1910, and even much later for the Zambezi Valley.

Urungwe, which started as part of Lomagundi District, was founded in northwestern Zimbabwe. Black has commented that "the unsung heroes of the early days in Lomagundi were undoubtedly the men of the Native Affairs Department."²⁴⁹ Black's statement, when juxtaposed to stories by research participants and reports by NCs, is to some extent correct. Administering Lomagundi in the early years of the twentieth century was a mammoth task because it was very huge and extensive. This was further compounded by the spatial distribution of settlements which were scattered all over the Zambezi Valley landscape. It was hardly possible for a lone NC to manage such an expansive district. As early as 1899, complaints were raised about the impossibility of one official managing such an expansive district from Sinoia. The Acting NC for Lomagundi regrettably noted in 1899 that:

A large extent of the country near the Zambesi has not been visited and another Native Commissioner will have to be appointed to this part of the district for the administration to become at all effective as it is absolutely impossible for one Native Commissioner to supervise this huge tract of country.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Hemans, 1971: 6

²⁴⁹ Black, 1976: 17

²⁵⁰ Annual Report, Lomagundi District, N9/1/5, NAZ, April 1899: 44

Lomagundi District, headquartered at Sinoia (Chinhoyi), was officially established on 19 January 1899 as Lo Magondi with its boundaries defined in Government Notice (GN) 13/1899 and then renamed Lomagundi on 28 November 1908 and its boundaries redefined in GN 245/1907. A permanent police camp and fort was erected in Sinoia in September 1898 which meant the administration of Lomagundi before 1899 remained largely *ad hoc* and without proper boundaries. This slow start meant, in principle, that outlying territories like the Zambezi Valley continued largely marginalized and unexplored. The British South Africa Police (BSAP) penetrated Urungwe and erected a temporary fort most probably in 1898. This is because the first reference to Urungwe was made in November 1898 when the NC stated that, “the police fort at Hurungwe was abandoned for the wet season on the 9th of the month, the men stationed there arriving at fort Sinoia on the 16th.”²⁵¹ The fort could only be maintained during the dry season because during the rainy season, Urungwe was completely cut off from the district headquarters in Sinoia.

It is not clear how the district got named Urungwe. Possibly, the presence of Urungwe Mountain which was famous and perceived to be sacred by the Africans influenced the adoption of the name. In 1899, the BSA police erected a camp and fort at Urungwe with the assistance of Africans who were then exempted from paying tax that year on account of the labour they had rendered.²⁵² It was also in the same year that the NC clearly stated that Africans around Mount Urungwe were officially visited for the first time. And also for the first time, reference was also made to seven Urungwe Chiefs in 1900. These were, “Dandowa [sic] in the northern part as far as the Zambesi River. Tshumsimbi [sic] the western part, Shanetsa [sic] about the central part...” and then “the big Chief Mzimu [sic], Zankarara [sic], Mtombo [sic] and Nyamunga.”²⁵³

In spite of the erection of the police fort, Urungwe was rarely visited to the extent that it was almost non-operational between 1901 and 1910. Urungwe could have been ignored largely because of the fear that engulfed officials based at Sinoia Fort. According to Kinsway

²⁵¹ Monthly Report, Lomagundi District, N9/4/1, NAZ, November 1898: 68

²⁵² N9/1/5, NAZ, April 1899: 46

²⁵³ Annual Report, Lomagundi District, N9/1/6, NAZ, March 1900: 26; Monthly Report, Lomagundi District, N9/4/6, NAZ, October 1900: 58

Fairbridge, “the officers and men of Sinioa Police Camp said Urungwe was a death trap. A camp had been stationed there for a year, but as all the men died, it had been abandoned.”²⁵⁴ Unfortunately, Fairbridge did not state whether the fear and deaths of officials were related to the sacredness of Mount Urungwe as was believed by local populations or it was merely due to diseases and unhealthy environment. The Acting Chief of Staff noted that there were communication problems compounded by the health problems of the district that caused Urungwe Fort to be only tenable during the dry season and this situation forced police operations to be withdrawn during the rainy season.²⁵⁵

After several years of closure, the Urungwe Station was eventually re-opened in 1910. The NC for Lomagundi lauded the development stressing that “the re-opening of the Urungwe Station where Mr. Palmer was stationed for four months afforded us knowledge of a remote part of the district, which is rarely if ever visited by officials or police.”²⁵⁶ This marked the first serious attempt by the Native Affairs Department to get an intimate knowledge of the region and to know its people. Until 1910, information about Urungwe and its population remained scanty because of its inaccessibility. The presence of Mr. Palmer saved the situation as he conducted a comprehensive registration of Africans for purposes of population statistics and tax collection. It also allowed the transfer of Chiefs Dandawa and Chundu from paying their taxes at Kanyemba to the newly founded Urungwe office.

However, things did not work out as expected for Urungwe because five years after the re-establishment of the Station, authorities still lamented that, “Urungwe is more scattered, presents greater difficulties, but I hope with steady application Mr. Hulley will get the confidence as he has already won the respect of the valley natives.”²⁵⁷ Authorities further described the valley people as “still wild, and in some cases quite suspicious of White people....”²⁵⁸ Such perception of the Africans as “wild” reduced them to the status of animals which also suited the other description of being “backward and primitive.” In 1913 the

²⁵⁴ Black, 1976: 19

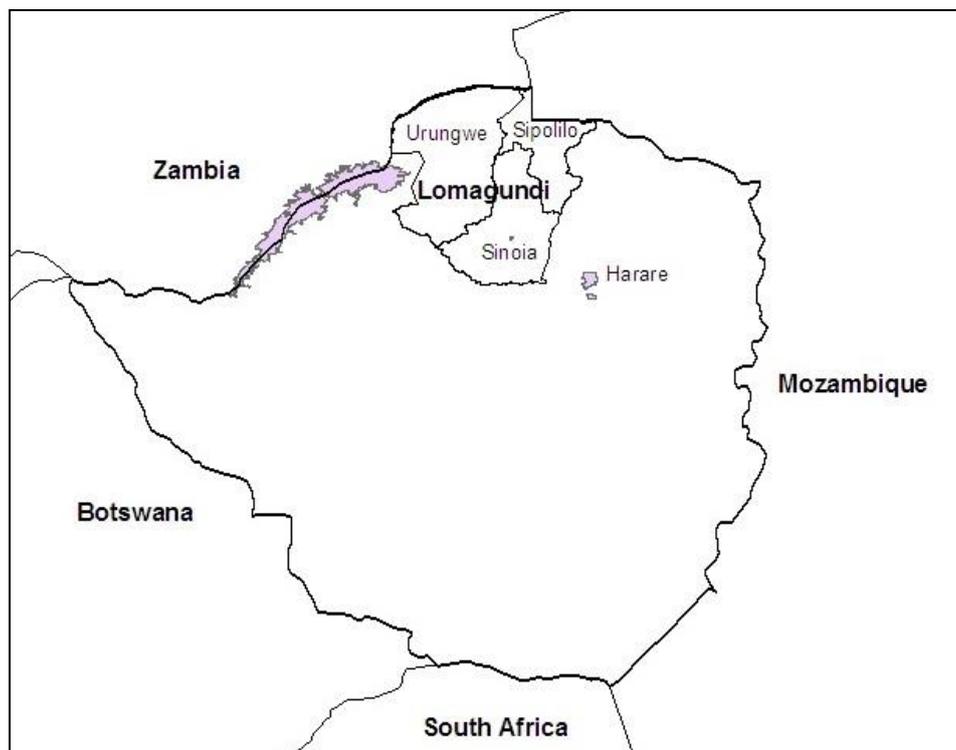
²⁵⁵ *Ibid*

²⁵⁶ Annual Report, Lomagundi District, N9/1/13, NAZ, 1910: 88

²⁵⁷ Annual Report, Lomagundi District, N9/1/18, NAZ, 1915: 67

²⁵⁸ *Ibid*

division of Lomagundi District into three sub-stations was finally approved. The sub-stations were Sipolilo, Magondi (Sinoia) and Urungwe [refer to map 6, page 96]. It was not until 1929, according to Black, that a Native Affairs Department office for Urungwe was established at Miami (Munyame).²⁵⁹ It was also not until 7 December 1945 that Urungwe was defined as a district and its boundaries proclaimed in GN 687/1945. The resettlement programme of the 1950s caused Urungwe to be further divided to create Kariba District on 31 August 1956. GN298/1956 redefined the boundaries of Urungwe District and those of Kariba.



Map 6: Sub-divisions of Lomagundi District, (adapted from Surveyor General, Rhodesia, 1975)

The division of Lomagundi opened a new chapter in the history of the district and in the expansion of colonialism to marginal territories. By 1915, Mr. Hulley, who was now in charge of Urungwe Sub-station, had made progress after visiting and earning the respect of Zambezi Valley dwellers. Africans, as has been argued in other studies, were viewed as subjects and inferior but narratives from former *Gowa* dwellers revealed that they were

²⁵⁹ Black, 1976: 21 - Miami (locally known as Munyame) is located northeast of the town of Karoi, refer to map 4, page 59

crucial actors in the affairs of the colonial government. For instance, during the early years of colonial expansion, Africans carried and escorted NCs during their tours of the Zambezi Valley. It was even claimed that, in some cases, White officials consulted spirit mediums during their hunting expeditions.²⁶⁰ All in all, Africans played a significant role in the creation of records for the colonial government through tax payment or evasion, labour provision, population statistics and crimes, among others. According to Bastian, record keeping emphasized first and foremost the functional use of records for administrative and commercial purposes, but it should also be seen as representing an extended memory of the society.²⁶¹ She has argued that both the subjects and the creators of the records must be seen “as active participators in a process in which record creating is defined as much by place, people and community as it is by the act of creation itself.”²⁶² These records, when carefully analyzed, speak for those whose voices are silent.

Perceptions of Native Commissioners in Urungwe

Critically looking at the unstable state of the Native Affairs Department in Urungwe District, one is left wondering what the department really achieved in the first twenty years of the twentieth century. Urungwe Sub-station was more often than not non-operational until the 1920s. When operational, it was not well-resourced both in terms of human capital and finance. Until the 1920s, the NCs always regretted the limitations that caused the department to fail in its duties in Urungwe, particularly in the Zambezi Valley. Due to the ruggedness of the landscape, remoteness, tsetse flies and absence of communication networks, the Zambezi Valley landscape remained largely unexplored. As a result of these challenges, the colonial state lacked anything like a detailed “map” of its terrain and people.”²⁶³

The colonial state’s limited knowledge of the local populations manifested itself in the creation of grand identities which in some cases were simply invented or imposed. A case in point was the adoption of *Gowa* to represent an ethnic identity. The colonial state used *Gowa*

²⁶⁰ Interviews with: Chiriyoti, 2012; Isaac, 2011

²⁶¹ J.A. Bastian, *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost its Archives and Found its History*, Libraries Unlimited, Westport, 2003: 4

²⁶² *Ibid*: 2

²⁶³ Scott, 1998: 2

as a “tribal” appellation for Chief Dandawa and those people of the *Tembo Mazvimbakupa* totem.²⁶⁴ On the contrary, there was no ethnic group known as *VaGowa* and its use proved that the authorities were ignorant of their subjects’ identities. For instance, in 1934 the NC for Urungwe stated that “the indigenous population of this sub-district is made up of the following tribes: *madzuwe, makorekore, atonga, mumbiri, mdamba and mugowa*, the latter predominating.”²⁶⁵ *Gowa*, in actual fact, was not an ethnic identity.

According to Lancaster, who lived a long time among the Banamainga of the Zambezi Valley, “the name *Goba* [*Gowa*] has been a locational term of reference for those living in low-lying areas.”²⁶⁶ It was also applied to other groups scattered through the Shona-speaking world which included those in lowland southern Mozambique, the Limpopo Valley, lowlands of Lake Ngami, the Makorikori Depression and the Caprivi Strip west of the Zimbabwe highlands and the Zambezi Lowlands, southeast of Victoria Falls.²⁶⁷ Jane Vlahakis Nash, who was born and grew-up in the Zambezi Valley, stressed the same saying “*Goba* is not a tribal name... but a locational term which was given to various groups scattered throughout the Shona-speaking world...”²⁶⁸ As Lancaster has indicated, “the term has never been exclusively attached to a specific ethnic group, ‘tribe’ or political unit in the history of Shona speaking peoples,”²⁶⁹ whilst Nash has stated that “in the central region of the valley lived the Korekore, also referred to as the *Goba*, who spoke a dialect of the Shona people of Zimbabwe.”²⁷⁰

Research participants critiqued the use of *Gowa* as an ethnic identity arguing that “*Gowa* just meant valley; it referred to the territory and not to the people.”²⁷¹ It was clear that *Gowa* specifically identified the physical landscape but colonial authorities did not understand or simply chose to ignore it. Research participants explained that their “world” was composed of two physical spaces, that is, *gowa* (the valley floor) and *kumakomo* (escarpment, highlands or

²⁶⁴ S2929/2/9, 1968: 28

²⁶⁵ S1563, 1934: 1

²⁶⁶ Lancaster, 1981: 11

²⁶⁷ *Ibid*

²⁶⁸ J. V Nash, *Born and Bred in the Zambezi Valley*, Athena Press, London, 2009: 52

²⁶⁹ Lancaster, 1981: 11

²⁷⁰ Nash, 2009: 52

²⁷¹ Interviews with: Ndumeri Mupezani, Mtirikati, 8 August 2011; Siyana, 2011, Stefani, 2011

plateau). Generally, these physical features were used to distinguish valley dwellers from those who occupied the escarpment, like *vanhu vekuGowa* or *VaGowa* (*Gowa* dwellers) and *vanhu vekumakomo or matinhari* (Escarpment dwellers). These appellations were just temporal identities. Unashamedly, the colonial authorities proceeded to label Chief Dandawa and his Mazvimbakupa lineage as *VaGowa* “tribe” because of the need to create documents and registration of people.

The naming of African ethnic groups, as has been argued by Worby, “was bound up with an imaginary knowledge of the relationship between ethnic identities and socio-geographic space.”²⁷² He further argued that “the instrument of that knowledge was a practice we may now call ethnic mapping or ethnocartography, that is, the use of tribal maps to represent relations of political power over social space.”²⁷³ Worby’s argument illustrated what the delineation exercise actually did for Chief Dandawa. The *Gowa* identity made Dandawa an entirely new homogenous grouping and thus became the overall traditional authority over the Zambezi Valley which also explained why Rengwe was created solely for Chief Dandawa. Consequently, this colonial action excluded other influential totems such as the *Nzou Samanyanga*, *Nechinanga*, *Soko*, and *Nhari*, among others, from claiming traditional legitimacy because only the *Tembo Mazvimbakupa* of the *Mugowa* “tribe” were made the officially recognized and eligible traditional leaders. These other groups took the recognition of *Gowa* as an ethnic identity to refuse and to deny to be named as such. Instead, they insisted they were *Makorekore*, a position particularly held by those of the *Nzou Samanyanga* totem.

However, it was not very clear at what point the *Korekore* ethnic identity became deepened. On close analysis, it seemed that the denigration that was given to *Gowa* as being synonymous with backwardness and primitiveness should have caused this shift. Immigrants to Rengwe after the 1980s looked down upon those who originated from *Gowa* and saw them as opposed to modern ways of life. Apart from dissociating themselves from the *Gowa* identity, that allowed them to make particular claims to the *Gowa* landscape linked to land

²⁷² E. Worby, “Maps, Names and Ethnic Games: The Epistemology and Iconography of Colonial Power in Northwestern Zimbabwe”, in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 20, no. 2, 1994: 371

²⁷³ *Ibid*

ownership and thus relied on that to legitimize their role in the traditional affairs of the Chieftdom before and after removal. This fitted very well into Worby's argument that the practice of ethnicity comprises not only the power to name, but also the power to refuse to be named.²⁷⁴

Africans and the Colonial Labour Economy

The colonial labour economy was central in the way colonial authorities and Africans related and interacted. There was a marked distinction between how the *Ngosi*²⁷⁵ imagined their relationship with Africans and vice versa. Colonial authorities emphasized the image of the ruler and subjects or master and servant. In radical instances, Africans were perceived as backward, wild and primitive while they viewed themselves as civilized, modernized and advanced. Africans were seen as lacking aesthetic values of the landscape and as engaged in destroying it whereas white settlers were admirers, developers and conservationists of the environment. Despite admitting to the authority held by the *Ngosi*, participants' narratives underscored the repressive nature of the colonial system. As a result, the image of the *Ngosi* has been included in narratives as part of the people's social memories and also to reveal its powerful nature and juxtaposed to how the local population varyingly detested and cooperated with it.

Research participants referred to the NC as; "our *Ngosi* in *Gowa* was ..." or simply prefixed the name, "Dawson was our *Ngosi*."²⁷⁶ The power given to the *Ngosi* was seen in the context of respect and to this day that respect has not waned even in the wake of changed political situations. Nonetheless, this perception of the *Ngosi* as powerful, and as an extension of the oppressive political centre should be approached critically to avoid reproducing stereotypes associated with it. The *Ngosi* was viewed as belonging to the local population, thus he was presented in a way that acknowledged his power over them, the *Gowa* dwellers. However, that did not mean they accepted it, because in many instances participants reiterated that

²⁷⁴ *Ibid*: 372

²⁷⁵ This is a derived word from the Ndebele term *Nkosi* which means king or lord.

²⁷⁶ Interviews with: Boyisi Mhukayesango, Fuleche, 23 June 2011; Siyana, 2011; Martin, 2011; Chiriyoti 2011; Kamurosi

“White officials used force” which they resented in various forms in spite of being cowed into submission.

Cheap African labour was the mainstay of the colonial economy and in the formative years of colonialism, this labour was obtained through force. It became fundamental during Southern Rhodesia’s reconstruction period from 1903 onwards. The labour economy required less skilled white workers, particularly miners, and increased cheap and unskilled African labour. More fundamental, according to van Onselen, was the reduction in labour costs; hence it was imperative to ensure adequate supply of cheap labour.²⁷⁷ As a result, the largest mines in the colony joined together and formed the Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau (RNLB) in 1903 to address the shortage of cheap labour by recruiting immigrant labour. Local Africans’ participation in the labour economy was seasonal and unreliable because in the early days it was offered to meet tax obligations.

The unavailability of cheap labour resulted in the creation of legislations to force local Africans to sell their labour. In 1899 it was suggested to have a pass law that would control desertions and to make it “a crime for any ‘nigger’ to be without a certificate and the punishment would be three months work at the mines for free.”²⁷⁸ This was followed by the Masters and Servant Ordinance of 1911 that relegated Africans to conditions comparable to slavery which caused Africans to describe the contract system of recruitment as *chibharo* or *cibalo*.²⁷⁹ *Chibharo* was a descriptive term that captured the inhumane treatment and harsh conditions of service found at the mines coupled with a compound system that degraded Africans to policing by overzealous “Native Policemen.” Forced labour recruitment in the districts was done by the *Ngosi* who then sent it to mines, farms and to road construction.

Chibharo, as a practice, was most popular in descriptions about how the NCs, in cohorts with the “Native Policemen,” recruited labour in the Zambezi Valley. It was not only the force that

²⁷⁷ O. van Onselen, *Chibharo: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia 1900- 1933*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1980: 23, 25 *Chibharo* is simply a derisive word.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid*: 80

²⁷⁹ *Ibid*: 98-99

characterized *chibharo*, but also doing work that did not interest the recruited person. Similarly, the Tonga portrayed the work of building roads in preparation for removal and inadequate remuneration as *chibharo*.²⁸⁰ *Chibharo* was characterized at four levels, namely: the methods of recruiting, the force, inadequate remuneration and lack of choice of work. According to Kenani:

Chibharo referred to the forceful capture by the ‘native’ police. They confiscated our identity documents and gave us a date to come to the NC office. On arrival we were sent to forced work. They took our documents so that we couldn’t desert work and we only got them back after completing *chibharo*.²⁸¹

Confiscating identity documents was one way of getting forced labour. Such labour was then sent to the mica mines in Munyame in the 1930s and 1940s, into road construction in the 1930s onwards or to White farms in the 1940s. At times the “Native Policemen” failed to recruit men for *chibharo* because they ran away and hid themselves; in such circumstances, they raided villages at night.²⁸² The late 1930s, 1940s and 1950s witnessed a marked increase in *chibharo* in the Zambezi Valley due to the construction of the Karoi-Kariba-Chirundu road, access roads in African reserves and the establishment of the White farming community in Karoi in the late 1940s. One participant said that:

I witnessed *chibharo* before I got eligible to work. This Kariba road was constructed using *chibharo*. My father was captured for *chibharo* while my brothers were at work on the farms. Despite my young age, I couldn’t let my aged father go for *chibharo*. So I offered to work on his behalf on Kariba road. We were given *sadza* (hard porridge), dried kapenta, beans and fish but no money.²⁸³

It also turned out that any work that people were engaged in and received no monetary payment was regarded as *chibharo*. The fact that they did not choose how long they wanted to work but were forcibly given three months was viewed as tantamount to *chibharo*.

²⁸⁰ McGregor, 2009: 113

²⁸¹ Interview, Kenani, 2011 - the point was also made in interviews with Boyisi, Mairosi and Isaac

²⁸² Interview, Boniface Macheke, Karoko, 23 June 2011; Group Discussion, [Mupuwa], 2011

²⁸³ Interview, Mairosi, 2011

Although *chibharo* was presented as a male dominated phenomenon, it did not mean women were not involved. Women were not taken for *chibharo* because the system was male-centric. They did not have passes (*paso*) or identity documents as was required of men. Apart from being affected by the participation of their husbands in forced labour, women also claimed that they participated in *chibharo* at the village level. They were forced to make access roads and local bridges in *Gowa*. Men would fell trees and remove bushes whilst women cleared the way using hoes. This was considered *chibharo* because the access roads were being designed for unwanted purposes for the local population. They were forced to leave their household duties and daily chores to concentrate on making village roads.

So outstanding in narratives about *chibharo* was the image of the “native” police which, nonetheless, was conspicuous by its absence in NC reports. Stories were told of good and bad “native” policemen. Some advised the people on how best to conduct themselves whilst others ill-treated their fellow Africans. Those who were most remembered among the “native” policemen included Hondoma, Kunzekutema, Chavhunga and Gundani who accompanied *Ngosi* Rukweza during his patrols.²⁸⁴ Siyana described Kunzekutema as the most senior amongst the ‘native’ policemen who wore a different police uniform from the others.²⁸⁵ According to her, there was discord between some senior “Native Policemen” and their juniors. The name Kunzekutema was a nickname given by his juniors because he used to wake them up very early to patrol villages, either to get men for *chibharo* or assembling people in preparation for the arrival of the *Ngosi*. Not much information was recorded about these Native Policemen. Only in 1956 was reference made to Sergeant Hondoma’s retirement. The NC reported that Hondoma had loyally served the “native” police for thirty-six years and that “towards the end of his career he was too old to take on patrol” and that he was considered a possible successor to the Nematombo Chieftainship.²⁸⁶ Hondoma was recalled for his cruelty and ill-treatment of local populations despite being a resident of the district.

²⁸⁴ This was the NC’s locally given-name. It will be explained in a later section that looks at names as narratives.

²⁸⁵ Interview, Siyana, 2011

²⁸⁶ S2827/2/2/4 vol. 3, 1956: 22

Chibharo was not only used to recall forced labour but also to situate, describe and explain changes that shaped and reshaped Urungwe District. Such changes included gaining knowledge of the world or environment outside *Gowa* and the creation of communication networks between *Gowa* and other areas in Urungwe District. It described how Urungwe emerged from an unknown peripheral territory to become renowned in the production of mica-bearing pegmatites during the Second World War (WWII). Urungwe also emerged a sophisticated district in agricultural production following the establishment of a White farming community after WWII and the creation of African reserves.

Mica-bearing pegmatite was the first mineral to be discovered in Urungwe in 1901 but its commercial exploitation only started in 1919. Jack Goldberg owned the mica mine as well as the Grand Parade farm which was one of the first two White farms in Urungwe, the other one being W.J. Leask's Nassau Estate.²⁸⁷ Goldberg's mica mine featured prominently in narratives basically for two reasons. Firstly, it absorbed most of the labour in the district such that almost all of the male research participants from *Gowa* worked at that mine at some point. Secondly, it was also where the Native Affairs Department was situated. The June 1923 report stressed the idea that the Grand Parade (Mica) Mine employed the largest number of labourers in the district.²⁸⁸ The presence of these two institutions culminated in a township and lively settlement emerging around Munyame.

The name Goldberg, pronounced *Gorobheki* by research participants, very much illuminated their memories. Mica mine was never mentioned in relation to *chibharo* because it appeared as if those who sought employment there did so voluntarily. It was established at Munyame before the Native Affairs Department was founded there. It seemed that local Africans had gotten used to working there before *chibharo* came in full force after 1929. This could have deceived their memories because *chibharo* was also used to recruit labour for the mine. The same June 1923 report noted with concern that the mine was "short of natives" especially local labour.

²⁸⁷ Black, 1976: 15, 41-42

²⁸⁸ Monthly Report, Urungwe District, N9/4/45, NAZ, June 1923: 33

Before the establishment of White farms in the district, mica mine was the main source of employment for the local population. Its presence impacted on the social lives of African workers through the introduction of new languages for communication purposes. According to Black, mica mining became of strategic value during the 1939-1945 war as the mineral was required for war purposes.²⁸⁹ Local populations', specifically men's, involvement in the mine's activities made them to partially understand what was happening in the outside world and to connect it with changes that were taking place in Urungwe District especially due to WWII.

A new language for communication purposes developed at the mine and later at the farms. It was known as *chiroo-roo* or *chirapa-rapa*²⁹⁰ which was like "kitchen kaffir" in colonial South Africa or *kanakalo* for the mines. The opportunities offered by Mica mine differentiated the narratives told by men and women in terms of how they grappled with and understood the changes that were happening in the colony and elsewhere. Male participants knew about WWII as opposed to their female counterparts. This difference was as a result of men's exposure and interaction at their workplaces. The Second World War was well-remembered by men as *hondo yaHitler* (Hitler's war).

Memories of *hondo yaHitler* were not so much about the fighting itself, but its impact on Urungwe District. It caused the emergence of a White farming community. Interestingly, in their lack of knowledge about the land apportionment exercise, male research participants used *hondo yaHitler* to explain changes in the land tenure system. There was a very clear link between an increased settler presence in Urungwe and the end of WWII. On top of that, it also accelerated the implementation of the LAA that had been on paper since the 1930s. Research participants narrated that:

The war of Hitler caused Whites to flock to Urungwe. After it ended, Whites came in numbers, established farms and chased the local people away.²⁹¹

²⁸⁹ Black, 1976: 15

²⁹⁰ Interview, Kenani, 2011

²⁹¹ Interview, Boniface., 2011

Immediately after Hitler's war ended, Whites who had served in it were allocated farms in Karoi and the first beneficiaries were Eveness, Kamupanya, Chezemu²⁹²

... first was the German war which brought the mines. Hitler's war brought maize and tobacco farming until we got to Smith. Hitler's war lasted until 1948 [sic] and was followed by the establishment of farms known as K-14²⁹³

These three excerpts indicated that WWII impacted very much on the Africans to the extent that they related the increased presence of White farmers with it and subsequently led to their forced relocation thereafter. Similarly, NC reports revealed the same connection between the end of WWII and the establishment of K-14 or K-Block farms in Karoi as told by research participants. Some of the beneficiaries of the farms were easily recalled because they were given Shona names such as *Eveness, Kamupanya, Chezemu, Chibodzi, MaBanana, Vhani, Bhuka, Chimutashu* and *Kent*.

An accelerated arrival of Whites as well as increased occupation of farming land was witnessed in Urungwe especially around Karoi from 1946 [refer to map 4, page 59]. It was the same scenario in Rhodesdale Estate which also saw an accelerated arrival of ex-soldiers as well as many more migrant workers into Rhodesdale villages in the postwar period.²⁹⁴ With the continued increase in European immigration to the colony, the colonial state, as Nyambara has argued, became anxious both to resettle ex-soldiers and to accommodate European immigrants which resulted in the eviction of Africans who were regarded as "squatters" from Rhodesdale crownland.²⁹⁵ In Urungwe, white settlers most of them ex-soldiers, began to arrive in the district from 1946 onwards. It was reported that about 16 new white settlers on Karoi block were desperately short of labour in 1946 and a further 45 white settlers were expected to come and settle.²⁹⁶ By 1947 there were 70 ex-servicemen on farms and a similar

²⁹² Interview, Boyisi, 2011

²⁹³ Interview, Phineas, 2011

²⁹⁴ Nyambara, 2002: 293; 2005: 272

²⁹⁵ Nyambara, 2002: 293

²⁹⁶ Quarterly Reports, Urungwe District, S1618, NAZ, 31 March 1946: 28

number was expected to be given farms in 1948.²⁹⁷ As of 1948 it was indicated that “the district is opening up rapidly and there are now 103 returned soldier settlers on the K farms....”²⁹⁸ In three years, farms in Urungwe increased from less than 5 to 103 which matched the idea of “flocking” as was expressed by one of the research participant.

Discussions on the arrival of White farmers and the labour demands of the colonial state also brought into discussion the construction of the Karoi- Chirundu road between 1937 and 1939 and Chirundu Bridge known as Otto Beitbridge between 1937 and 1938. These two developments came into discussion at two levels; firstly as part of the history of the colonial labour economy and secondly, as part of contextualizing the occurrence and remembrance of WWII. True to that, stories of research participants matched what was recorded in NC reports. Messrs Dorman, Long and Company began constructing a road bridge across the Zambezi River in 1937 and it was expected to be opened for traffic early in 1939.²⁹⁹ In 1938, it was observed that African labour that was entering the colony via Urungwe was being absorbed en route by the bridge construction operations and the road construction gangs.³⁰⁰ Thus, memories of forced removal went beyond just recollection the events to giving various developments that were associated with it, particularly the arrival of White farmers who opened up the district to European penetration and settlement.

Names as Historical Narratives: Another Site of Memory

NCs were representatives of the colonial government at the local level, but they were in most cases perceived as the government itself by the local population and in this case by former valley dwellers. They were highly respected and seen as powerful as was reflected by the title *Ngosi*. *Ngosi* represented unchallengeable or undisputable authority. It, however, did not mean they were accepted. This perception possibly emerged from early experiences with the *Ngosi* who instead of traversing the valley landscape on foot, asked and ordered able-bodied men in the villages to carry him from one village to the next. As has been indicated in Chapter

²⁹⁷ S1563, 1947: 7

²⁹⁸ S1563, 1948: 5

²⁹⁹ S1563, 1937: 14

³⁰⁰ Monthly Report, Lomagundi District, S1619, May 1938: 17

3, villages in the Zambezi Valley were scattered and located faraway from each other. For instance, the recorded distance between Nyamkaiwa and Chidoma was 8 miles [12.8 Kilometers], Chidoma and Dandawa was 7 miles [11.2 kilometers], Dandawa and Nyakasikana 18 miles [28.9 kilometers], and it was 13 miles [20.9 kilometers] between Nyakasikana and Gandawa. In the absence of transport and horses, it was difficult for the *Ngosi* to travel the whole of Urungwe District on foot, especially descending the escarpment to collect taxes and to register villagers.

Colonial authorities did not very well record how they managed their journeys into the valley. They only indicated that they left such a village in the morning, then gave the date and distance covered but without stating the means of travelling. Such are the gaps that were filled by narratives given by research participants. Their narratives were very vivid and they gave insights into the history of the Zambezi Valley during the colonial period. Two White persons were outstandingly talked about during interviews, namely the *Ngosi* and a White hunter only identified as *Gaya*. Visits by the *Ngosi* were very well recalled by men and women alike because each group performed a specific task during the process of welcoming him into the village. These were performances that were done and they have helped a great deal in retaining the image of the *Ngosi*. Men recalled visits by the *Ngosi* because they either witnessed or participated in carrying him on their shoulders whilst he lay on locally made mats. According to participants, the *Ngosi* was left at Marongora from whence he was carried by male villagers of the next village to their village, the next village carried him to the next and so on until he reached Chief Dandawa's Goremusandu village on the Zambezi River³⁰¹ [refer to fig. 1, page 109].

³⁰¹ Interviews with: Kenani, 2011; Mairosi, 2011; Chiriyoti, 2011

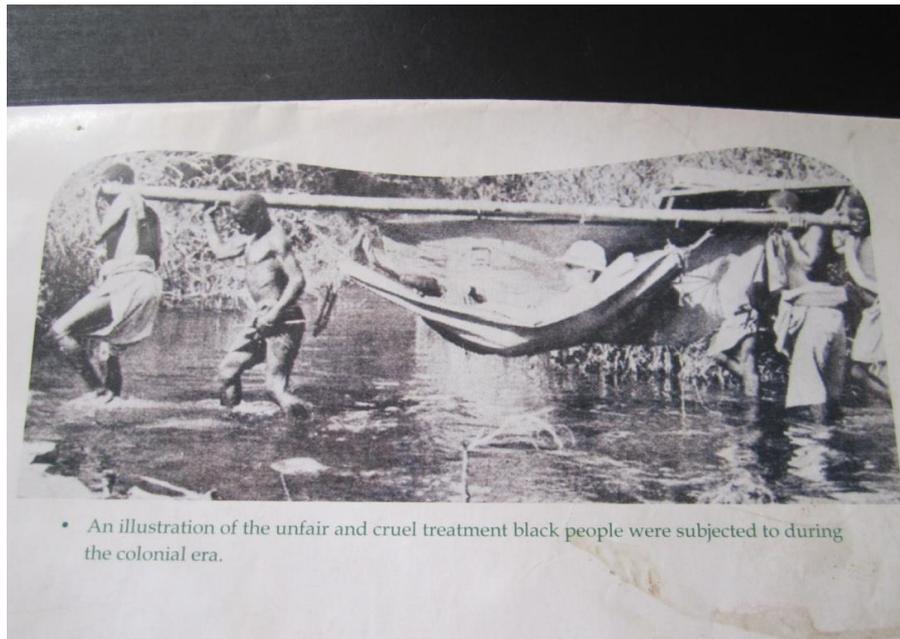


Fig. 1 – Africans Carrying a European (Adapted from ZANU-PF Election Handbook, June 2008)

His visit was not treated as ordinary but was extraordinary and was pomp and fun and accompanied by a traditional performance. Visits by the *Ngosi* tended to be so special because they occurred once in a year. The welcome ceremony was led by women who sang and performed a dance known as *mafuwe*. *Mafuwe* was a traditional dance meant to interact, party and share cheerfully locally brewed beer. This traditional performance carried no spiritual significance. “Native Policemen” assembled villagers to perform the *mafuwe* dance in anticipation of the arrival of the *Ngosi*. The *mafuwe* dance was accompanied by a song which went as follows:

Our *Ngosi* has come, he has come to see us
Our *Ngosi* has come, he has come to see us.³⁰²

The performance was accompanied by ululation from women and clapping from men. The phrase “our *Ngosi*” in the song seemed to convey a sense of a fatherly figure. However this perception requires critical analysis in order to avoid reproducing stereotypes. Undeniably, it was used to show respect and to recognize the *Ngosi*’s role as the representative of the political centre but that did not mean he was accepted. In fact, village-heads received

³⁰² Interviews with: Lina, 2011; Siyana, 2011

notification about the coming of the *Ngosi* well in advance. The “Native Police” were a crucial factor here as they were the ones who arranged, assembled people and monitored preparations for the arrival and welcome of the *Ngosi*. As such, *mafuwe* were a must and were performed whether one liked or disliked it; it was procedural to welcome the *Ngosi* that way.

Thus, women were also an integral part in receiving the *Ngosi* during his patrols. As a result, the image of the *Ngosi* became that of a respectable and powerful individual and government representative. At this point, this study became mainly interested in how the *mafuwe* performance has emerged as a significant factor to remembering. *Mafuwe* emerged as a prime point in recalling what NCs did, what “native” policemen did, and in narrating the participation of the villagers during visits by the NCs. One thing that needs mention is the methodological challenge that is met in studying stereotypes. This study is no exception because the image of *Ngosi* was created and reproduced by many actors namely: the NCs, “Native Policemen” and local villagers. The *Ngosi* played a central role in creating the fatherly figure image among the local populations as was illustrated in the song, but the nicknames given to them by local populations tell a different story.

Research participants very well recalled those *Ngosi* who served in Urungwe. They did this by making use of their Shona-given names (nicknames). This made it difficult, nonetheless, to ascertain who-was-who and the time he was in charge of the district with the only exception being *Ngosi* Dawson. These were not just names or nicknames but ones that carried stories and meaning regarding the person. They captured and described the kind of relationship that existed between the *Ngosi* or White farmers and the African,s as well as the perception the latter had about the former. For instance, *Nyamambishi* [uncooked meat] was recalled as the *Ngosi* a skillful hunter who killed elephants for the former Dandawa valley dwellers. Others included *Pondombiri* [Two Pounds (£2)³⁰³], *Rukweza* [Sorghum] and *Tamei* [Relocate], whereas for white farmers were names such as *Chibodzi* [One] *Chimutashu* [Grasshopper] *MaBanana* [Bananas], *Kamupanya* [Rigid/Strict] and *Chayamatako* [Buttocks Spanker]. Such names carried descriptive meanings of the character of the individual. They were given on the

³⁰³ Africans earned two shillings per month, but when said in the local language it would translate to mean two pounds.

basis of behaviour, practices, activities and attitudes. Commenting on meanings of Shona names, Pongweni has argued that:

Any list of Shona names is a palimpsest, whether one studies the telephone directory, a graduation programme at the University of Zimbabwe ... or reads an old novel, one cannot be struck by the wealth of information, historical, descriptive, picturesque and human which certain names provide about the people who bear them.³⁰⁴

Naming as a practice was widespread as it went beyond families or ethnic groups to even name strangers. Likaka has quite correctly observed that “naming of strangers was a long-established naming convention in Central Africa which Africans adapted to colonial situations to identify individual Europeans and groups of Europeans.”³⁰⁵ These names proved beyond any doubt that they are narratives and that they carry social meanings and therefore should be seen as commentaries about the circumstances in which they were given. According to Kahari (1972), cited in Pongweni, *zita remadunhurirwa* (nickname) is descriptive of character or inclinations and is given to a grown-up person in addition to their original name.³⁰⁶ These nicknames were not only given to White persons because Africans could not pronounce English names, but it was a common practice to nickname people or strangers in a way that captured and described their behaviour, character, or flaws among other things. Such names, as Pongweni has argued, demand the interpreter to have knowledge of the circumstances under which they were coined.³⁰⁷

In the case of nicknames given to Europeans, Likaka has argued that they are “an ethnographic and linguistic source that yields valuable evidence of African colonial experiences.”³⁰⁸ He gave the example of his grandmother who named his younger brother Lomelile *Ikeso* because he was thought to be different from the other grandchildren. Likaka discovered that the name *Ikeso* carried memories of one European official in Colonial Congo who was remembered for lashing men naked, taking women hostage and collecting taxes in

³⁰⁴ A.J.C. Pongweni, *What's in a Name? A Study of Shona Nomenclature*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1983: 1

³⁰⁵ O. Likaka, *Naming Colonialism: History and Collective Memory in Congo, 1870-1960*, University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin, 2009: 3

³⁰⁶ Pongweni, 1983: 2 - see also Likaka, 2009: 3 - he states that such names described the physical appearance, behaviour, cultural practices, moral qualities and flaws of the person.

³⁰⁷ Pongweni, 1983: 54

³⁰⁸ Likaka, 2009: 4

the villages.³⁰⁹ The tales by Likaka's grandmother about *Ikeso* contextualized and explained its multidimensional meanings in the broader picture of colonialism in Congo.³¹⁰ Similarly, names that were given to *Ngosi* in colonial Zimbabwe carried multidimensional meanings and revealed Africans' shared experiences of colonialism. Some *Ngosi*, it was claimed, accepted and maintained their nicknames despite being transferred to other districts.

Names, just like other objects, are important traces of the past that can assist in historical reconstruction. Vansina has argued that "every object we use, nearly everything we say, everything we do, and almost everything we think and feel carries the imprint of the past."³¹¹ By studying meanings attached to the names, we can partly understand and partly explain the story of colonialism from the indigenous peoples' perspective. These names were also used to distinguish and to contrast one *Ngosi* or White farmer from the others. For example, *Ngosi Pondombiri*, which literally meant two pounds (£2) – which, in actual fact meant two shillings - got his name because he was strict with tax payment. Participants claimed that *Pondombiri* fined tax defrauders and forced them to pay £2 instead of £1.³¹² Such experiences were easily recalled because of the descriptive nature of the Shona given names, which also revealed in a small way the kind of relationship that existed between the *Ngosi* and the local population.

Names such as *Rukweza* (sorghum) and *Nyamambishi* (uncooked meat) drew conflicting explanations from participants as they struggled to describe their origination and what they meant. It was said that these two NCs brought with them these names from the districts they had administered before coming to Urungwe. As a result, it became difficult to ascertain the circumstances of their emergence. However, one participant claimed that *Rukweza* used sorghum grains to punish people who committed crimes or to push suspected offenders into admitting their guilt.³¹³ In the early years the *Ngosi* acted in different capacities which included being administrators, judges, agriculturalists, civil engineers, and many others. *Rukweza*, it was said, threw sorghum grains to the soiled ground and ordered the accused to

³⁰⁹ *Ibid*: 5

³¹⁰ *Ibid*

³¹¹ Vansina, 1990: 8

³¹² Shillings and not pounds (£) were the correct reference.

³¹³ Interview, Chigure Mashereni, Fuleche Business Centre, 22 June 2011

pick them up as part of administering instant justice. Another participant was not certain about the name but he claimed that possibly it had to do with the *Ngosi*'s brownish beards and his stature that resembled the sorghum plant.³¹⁴ Based on physical descriptions given by participants, it appeared *Rukweza* was a stout and tough official whose toughness matched that of sorghum which is resistant to stressful periods. A female participant narrated that:

There were *Ngosi* such as *KaRukweza*, *Nyamambishi*; others like Dawson (*Tamei*) came towards our last days in *Gowa*. *Nyamambishi* was uncooked for sure. People nicknamed him according to what he did. He would make people eat half-roasted meat if they took long to prepare it. Because of that people nicknamed him uncooked meat, (*nyamambishi*). *KaRukweza*, uhm! That one! A clever and restless White man!³¹⁵

Ngosi Tamei (relocate) was the only one whose real English name, Dawson, was recalled. His nickname, *Tamei*, emerged within the context of forced removal which stands as the prism of remembrance for the former *Dandawa Gowa* dwellers. *Tamei* was also well remembered by women compared to the other *Ngosi* because he enforced the regularization of marriages. During his term, women frequently visited *Munyame* to register their marriages and to obtain marriage certificates. He seemed to have mastered the Shona language and also understood Shona customs very well. Because of that he expected African couples to meet their customary marriage requirements before registering their marriages with his office. Most importantly, he was held responsible for the forced removal not only of Chief *Dandawa*, but also of Chiefs *Mudzimu* and *Nyamhunga* and Headman *Matau*.

Conclusion

The colonial state was seen at the local level through the person of the NC and the activities of the "Native Policemen." These were the two most important persons whom local populations feared and respected. The "Native Policemen" strengthened the authority and image of the *Ngosi*'s within the local population. Nonetheless, there existed competing and conflicting images of the *Ngosi* as indicated by the varied nicknames that were given to them. The "Native Police" popularized and pushed for the recognition of the title of *Ngosi* within the local populations during their patrols. Thus, the image of the *Ngosi* was not developed at

³¹⁴ Interview, Boniface, 2011

³¹⁵ Interview, Siyana, 2011

the local level but it was imported from above. Such images that were created by the *Ngosi*, “Native Police” and local populations carried stereotypes. However, this chapter has observed that the nicknames that were given to the *Ngosi* present us with an alternative narrative to the one obtained in colonial documents that presented them as shrewd administrators. They do not give an umbrella description of the different *Ngosi* but they treat them as individuals according to their attitudes, behaviours and activities.

Chapter 5: Responses to Involuntary Resettlement in Rengwe

Introduction

The significance of forced removal and its subsequent impact was, in the Rengwe perspective, not derived from the process of movement as such, but in the changing perceptions to and relations with the land. Forced removal implied two things: firstly, it meant people were moved against their will, despite the apparent peacefulness that shrouded the whole movement process. Secondly, people were put into new relationships with the environment and their actions were regulated by laws that were promulgated without their consent, which also amounted to a hidden kind of force. Consequently, both sides; the colonial state and the forced resettlers actively participated in the processes of involuntary resettlement which required new approaches to place-making and meaning-making, which processes are still on-going.

Discourse on forced removals has tended to limit the image of Africans to that of victims of colonial policies coupled with the Nationalist discourse that has emphasized resistance as the direct response by Africans. This chapter attempts to move away from the resistance discourse since it has also been covered elsewhere, to focus on how Rengwe's forced resettlers shifted their focus soon after resettlement to coping with change and adapting to their new environment. Ways of coping with involuntary resettlement in Rengwe included, *inter alia*, inscribing new meanings into the land, developing "portable landscapes," and superseding those meanings attributed to the land by colonial officials.

Two questions are addressed in this chapter and these are: How did Rengwe's forced resettlers come to terms with resettling in a new place? How did forced relocation change the people's attitudes to land and land practices? Although these questions focus more on the Africans, the discussion begins by describing how Rengwe Tribal Trust Land (RTTL) was "created" by the colonial government and how they imbued it with their own meanings in the process.

The Creation of Reserves in Urungwe District

The Land Apportionment Act (LAA) of 1930 did not immediately result in the removal of Africans from lands defined as European or unassigned. Its practical implementation required that certain developments be carried out first before it could be enforced. Such developments included the improvement of resettlement areas in the form of provision of water and construction of roads before Africans could be settled on these lands. The most critical undoing of forced removal on the part of Africans was the loss of their rights and claims to land. White settlers usurped their power and established new centres of colonial control that undermined local systems of political power.

Forced removal touched on two key aspects that focused on debates regarding space and territory. Territory, according to D. Storey, refers to “a portion of geographic space claimed or occupied by a person or group of persons or by an institution.”³¹⁶ This was supported by inscribing sharp boundaries onto space because that was central to territorialization. The assignment of territories to races or groups of people through the LAA represented the beginning, though theoretically, of the initial stages of place-making. The intention was not merely racial segregation, but also encompassed issues of political power, state making and control. Division of space was not peculiar to LAA as a policy because it was something visible in everyday practice such as urban and rural spaces, residential, grazing, farming and ritual spaces. Colonial divisions of space were politically and socio-economically oriented. Storey has noted that “territorial strategies are used by individuals or groups to attain or maintain control and this control of space is used to affect, influence or control resources.”³¹⁷

The practical implementation of LAA in Urungwe District seemed to have begun in earnest in the 1940s. Spaces that were created were defined either as European, African or unassigned/Crown Lands. Such spaces played a critical role in constructing or strengthening and deepening ethnic identities, whether real or stereotype. Worby has examined the use of the Shangwe identity in Gokwe and has argued that the mapping of territories represented

³¹⁶ D. Storey, *Territory: The Claiming of Space*, Pearson Education Ltd, Harlow, 2001: 1

³¹⁷ *Ibid*: 6, 14

some kind of tribal attachment to land as natural and relations as eternal.³¹⁸ Territorialization thus contributed immensely both to the categorization of, and inscription of socio-political meaning into space. Resettlement thus, brought radical changes in the countryside because the process involved much more than just moving people, but also included taming of the environment by the different actors to suit their perceptions and everyday activities.

Rengwe did not exist as a defined territory until sometime in the early 1950s. Rather, it was just a rugged, mountainous and heavily forested territory of the Sanyati Valley that teemed with wild animals of all kinds. Before 1950, Rengwe fell under unassigned land according to the divisions of the LAA [refer to map 4, page 59]. Unassigned lands, such as the Sanyati and Zambezi Valleys were considered inhospitable and uninhabitable. The Sanyati Valley was largely unoccupied but that did not mean there were no claims to it. Chiefdoms that occupied the Zambezi Valley strongly contested the idea that it was inhospitable and not conducive to human habitation. However, a few have changed their views over the years and were now agreed that the valley was unlivable. During a group discussion, participants were torn apart regarding whether *Gowa* was inhabitable or not. Gamazhura described *Gowa* as, “a *shatini* (untamed), a wild environment” whilst Mupuwa and Kenani disagreed saying, “No! It was not a *shatini*; we had our homesteads and village-heads just like here. But if you (Gamazhura) had said there were lots of wild animals that would be correct.”³¹⁹ These contrasting perspectives lie “not between alternative views of the world but between ways of apprehending it” as has been argued by Ingold.³²⁰

Forced removal was carried out in line with the policy of centralization which emphasized the division of the land into three categories which were: residential, arable and grazing. Moore has observed that “this triad became the holy trinity of colonial land-use planning.”³²¹ The creation of African reserves in general was more than racial segregation, but also intended to connect the periphery with the political centre. Centralization focused on agricultural and

³¹⁸ Worby, 1994: 373

³¹⁹ Group discussion [Gamazhura - with interjection from Mupuwa and Kenani], 2011

³²⁰ Ingold, 2000: 42

³²¹ Moore, 2005: 80

socio-political development which ensured that Africans were settled in straight lines.³²² It was implemented, for instance, in Insiza District, southwest of Zimbabwe, and Chimanimani District, east of Zimbabwe (in colonial Zimbabwe),³²³ and in the Kaerezi Resettlement Scheme in post-colonial Zimbabwe.³²⁴ All these changes were based on a particular way of seeing the landscape, as well as fulfilling a specific socio-economic vision. However, it should be stated that what emerged out of the process of forced removal were competing views about and meanings inscribed into the Rengwe landscape.

Urungwe District offered a complex scenario because it was isolated from most colonial developments because of tsetse fly. The tsetse fly narrative was used by the colonial authorities to explain both the slow pace of development and the involuntary resettlement of Africans in the district. The Native Affairs Department concentrated firstly on developing Urungwe Reserve so that it provided basic social services. Their efforts resulted in the establishment of a Salvation Army School - Charles Clarke; an African healthcare centre - Magunje Clinic, and a thriving African Township.³²⁵ An urgent need to remove Africans deemed “squatters” on European farms pushed the colonial authorities into hyper-action to give serious attention to Urungwe Reserve and to put critical social services in place in the shortest possible time.

Surely, by the late 1940s Urungwe Reserve had become the headquarters of operations for African reserves and SNAs in the district.³²⁶ It was imperative for Native authorities to give serious attention to Urungwe Reserve because it was adjacent to European farming areas and was considered a serious threat because of the growing prevalence of tsetse fly in the 1940s. The NC for Sinoia remarked in 1950 that:

Urungwe Reserve is dangerously near to the thickly populated farming community of Karoi, unless the [trypanosomiasis] outbreak is checked at once there is further grave risk of spreading to this area with disastrous results. The Karoi settlement is rightly

³²² Alexander, 2006: 1

³²³ See Alexander 2006

³²⁴ See Moore, 2005

³²⁵ S1563, 1947: 4 and 1948: 1, 4; Annual Report, Urungwe District, S2403/2681, NAZ, 1952: 2, 6; Monthly Report, Urungwe District, S1618, March 1948: 23

³²⁶ S1563, 1947: 4

regarded as one of the outstanding successes of the present government and a threat of this nature should be met with the greatest energy.³²⁷

The efforts that were put in the creation and development of Urungwe Reserve in the 1940s accounted for the different socio-economic developments that were/are found in the district.

Rengwe Special Native Area: The “Fly Country”

This section focuses on the creation of Rengwe Special Native Area (SNA) which was also referred to as Rengwe Tribal Trust Land (TTL). After Rengwe had been designated as a SNA, colonial authorities engaged in specific land practices to prepare the land for the resettlement of Africans. These land practices, themselves part of the process of place-making, inscribed certain meanings into the Rengwe landscape. Rengwe, just like the Sanyati and Zambezi valleys, was regarded by colonial authorities as unfit for human habitation because of the presence of tsetse fly which caused sleeping sickness in human beings and trypanosomiasis in animals.

Rengwe was remote and dry and therefore fitted very well into the colonial perception of such areas as “wilderness,” the same way they perceived the southeastern Zimbabwe lowveld landscapes. The “wilderness” vision in the case of Rengwe emerged from the abundance of tsetse fly and the dryness that characterized its physical environment. Binga and Gokwe that had the same physical environmental characteristics as Rengwe had their wilderness status not emphasized. The colonial perception of Rengwe was aptly expressed in its description as the “fly country.” Absence of human inhabitants in the Sanyati Valley further strengthened that view. What that meant was that the Rengwe environment needed to be turned from a “fly country” into a livable land, and this thinking was not peculiar to Rengwe alone, but also applied to Binga. As a result, the colonial state embarked on and pursued particular land practices that were aimed at changing the negative perceptions of such areas into positive ones in line with the newly created divisions of space.

³²⁷ Trypanosomiasis: Urungwe Reserve, NC Sinoia to Provincial NC, Northern Mashonaland, S2391/3302, NAZ, 29 June 1950

This perception of equating the presence of tsetse fly and the dryness of the land to “wilderness” was, however, not shared by the Africans. For instance, former occupants of the Zambezi Valley, the Tonga and Dandawa *Gowa* viewed these tsetse flies just like any other flies and did not perceive them as a threat in any way. Tsetse bites never worried them because they had become immune to their bites, and coupled with that, flies were not found at homesteads. Flies were highly concentrated along elephant treks and those who lived in such areas avoided these treks.³²⁸ This view was shared by Desmond Evans who visited and experienced life in the Zambezi Valley in 1927. He acknowledged that “it is amazing, however, after months of wandering in the valley, how one became immune to their [tsetse fly] bites.”³²⁹ What is rather not clear from Evans’ analysis is whether people developed immunity to sleeping sickness or it was mere physical resistance to tsetse fly bites. In spite of that, however, it was true that the dwellers’ perspective was more informed than the colonial authority’s view.

Some kind of contradiction existed in the Rengwe resettlement project between the colonial authorities’ perception of the environment and the actual of settling Africans. Whilst in the lowveld, the Shangaan and other ethnic groups were removed to make way for developments that suited the “wilderness” vision, in Rengwe it was actually the opposite as people were removed from *Gowa* and *Gota* areas and moved into the “fly country.” Admittedly, colonial officials regarded the Rengwe resettlement exercise as a way of quashing the spread of tsetse fly by using Africans as cannon fodder. In simple terms, they regarded it as a purely tsetse fly resettlement exercise as was openly stated by the NC for Urungwe³³⁰. Such a move was based on the assumption that intensified land use and increased human population would eventually lead to a decrease in wild animals thereby combat tsetse flies increase.³³¹ The Native Administration did not relent on the idea of pushing Africans into the interior of tsetse infested zones to act as buffer for European activities. African families that had been removed from *Gota* in Sipolilo were due to be resettled near Chiroti gate in Urungwe Reserve but

³²⁸ Interviews with: Siyana, 2011; Chiriyoti, 2011; Isaac, 2011; Kamurosi, 2011

³²⁹ Black, 1976: 44

³³⁰ S2827/2/2/5 vol. 3, Urungwe, 1957: 13

³³¹ Spierenburg, 2004: 28 – the argument was cited from Derman, 1995

“because of the need to settle people in an area where tsetse fly was prevalent, instructions were given to put them in the Rengwe Valley in the Urungwe Special Native Area.”³³² Reasons for doing this were twofold: to curb the spread of tsetse fly to European farms further north and to turn the environs of Rengwe from “wilderness” to livable land.

The allocation of tsetse-infested and dry areas for African resettlement was nothing unique to Urungwe District. It had been done in Matebeleland in 1894 following the creation of Gwai and Shangani Reserves. For instance, the Shangani Reserve was described as remote, forested wilderness, disease-ridden and also imagined as “dark and threatening.”³³³ Notwithstanding this kind of perception, the colonial government’s decision to remove and resettle Africans was not impeded by the state or physical outlook of the landscape. What mattered more to them was its transformation into habitable land than anything else. As a result, in areas such as Rengwe and Binga, the colonial state embarked on a programme aimed at eradicating tsetse flies and that marked the beginning of concentrated efforts in place-making.

In Urungwe Reserve alone, nearly twenty years were committed to tsetse fly operations.³³⁴ Colonial documents indicated that tsetse was on the increase in the 1920s. Its threat forced the colonial government, as has been argued by Ford, to treat it as a matter of national security and political dispute.³³⁵ A national conference had to be convened in April 1929 to deliberate on ways of combating the spread of tsetse fly. In attendance in this conference were security personnel. Colonel Carbutt remarked that “tsetse fly was a matter that affected the whole colony and that some coordinated scheme must be threshed out to control the spread of the fly which is rapidly extending,” while Mr. Jack added that “the fly was eating up the country and its spread must be checked and the only method... was the destruction of game.”³³⁶

³³² S2827/2/2/5 vol. 3, Urungwe, 1957: 13

³³³ Alexander *et al.*: 1, 11

³³⁴ Resettlement of Natives - Urungwe 1941-1951, circular No. 7: Removal of Natives from European Area, LS100/36/50/1, NAZ, 21 August 1950

³³⁵ J. Ford, *The Role of the Trypanosomiasis in African Ecology: A Study of the Tsetse Fly Problem*, Clarendon, Oxford, 1971: 320

³³⁶ Tsetse Fly Control 1927-1930, Chief Native Commissioner (CNC) to the secretary, department of agriculture, S138/66, NAZ, 26 April 1929: 2

The conference was a “no-holds barred” as colonial officials sought to come up with a lasting solution to the spread and rapid increase of tsetse fly. They tried to draw clues from Tanzania’s experiences in the 1920s where the menace of tsetse fly resulted in the forced removal of people who occupied the environs of Ugalla River as a public health measure.³³⁷ Earlier in 1905, the Germans had discovered that 2000 people had died in Musoma District due to sleeping sickness.³³⁸ The danger posed by tsetse fly was enormous and its consequences were unbearable. In Urungwe, the situation was near to desperate as there were only three health centres: a dilapidated clinic at Munyame, an African Clinic at Magunje and Karoi Clinic which only served white settlers.

The Rhodesian tsetse fly situation required a different approach to the Tanzanian case. In Urungwe District, the fly was widespread in areas that had been set aside for African occupation whereas in Tanzania it was somehow isolated. The 1929 conference resolved to “arm natives and concentrate them on the confines of tsetse fly areas to clear and keep clear the surrounding bush to as great a depth as possible.”³³⁹ It was agreed that preferential treatment were to be given to Sinoia and Urungwe Districts of Lomagundi among others [refer to map 6, page 96]. As for Urungwe, it was stated that “natives along the Sanyati to Tengwe Rivers be armed, and that the natives in the western and northern boundaries of Urungwe be also armed.”³⁴⁰ Rengwe was part of the western territory.

The tsetse fly case was treated as a matter of urgency and centres were set up to train Africans in gun use as well as what was expected of them in this tsetse eradication programme. In Urungwe District, African hunters known as *magocha* were trained at Magunje Ranger’s Camp. These were the people who were found in Rengwe by the new-comers in 1957 and 1958, who included, among others, Mutuhwi, Maheberu, Ziwome and Nyamutora.³⁴¹ The Rengwe environment, with its timber and bushes, created a thicket and provided excellent

³³⁷ E. Fisher, 2002: 120

³³⁸ Shetler, 2007: 37

³³⁹ S138/66, April 1929: 5

³⁴⁰ *Ibid*: 8

³⁴¹ Interviews with: Chinhema Mutuhwi, Fuleche, 2011; Siyana, 2011; Mathias, 2011; Mairoso, 2011 - some of the *magocha* eventually joined some villages and lived among the Dandawa after completion of their duties.

cover and habitat for both tsetse fly and wild animals, especially elephants, which were the hosts of the fly.

Fears were that Africans would get armed and as a result measures were instituted to guard against the accumulation of ammunition by *magocha*. NCs were therefore tasked to keep a register that detailed the recipient, ammunition issued, returned used cartridges and tails of killed animals before giving out new supplies to *magocha*.³⁴² Rifles given to *magocha* were stamped “FLY” and not more than 20 rounds of ammunition were to be issued at one time and empty cartridges were to be destroyed to prevent them from being re-loaded by Africans with “native-made powder.”³⁴³ Below is a tabulation of figures found in NC reports about tsetse fly operations in Urungwe District starting from 1932:³⁴⁴

Month & Year	Number of Guns Operating	Ammunition Expended	Game Killed (of different types)
February 1932	30	140 rounds	70
June 1932	30	134 rounds	49
August 1932	30	357 rounds	128
September 1932	30	294 rounds	119
October 1932	30	323 rounds	114
November 1932	30	256 rounds	115
December 1932	30	213 rounds	82
January 1933	30	188 rounds	83
February 1933	30	145 rounds	74
January 1935	73	903 rounds	425

³⁴² Tsetse Fly Control, S138/66 - No. F. 2038/443/T, NAZ, 21 June 1929: 3; Prevention of Spread of Tsetse Fly, S138/66, No. K 4032/29, 31 October 1929: 2

³⁴³ S138/66 - No. K 4032/29: 2

³⁴⁴ Tsetse Fly Operations, S138/66 - NO. 28/181/30, NAZ, 20 August 1930; S1619, January 1935 to May 1938 - tabulated from selected monthly returns.

January 1936	84	904 rounds	486
January 1937	86	1140 rounds	448
February 1937	83	1088 rounds	470
March 1937	82	1171 rounds	493
April 1937	85	1064	389
April 1938	66	622 rounds	316

Fig. 2 - Tsetse Fly Operations - Data Compiled from NC Monthly Reports

Decisions to move Africans into tsetse infested areas were contested within the rank and file of the colonial administration. Authorities at the local level at times disputed decisions from their superiors even though more often than not their views were not taken on board. For instance, the movement of Africans into Rengwe Valley drew different opinions between the NC and his superiors. The Assistant Native Commissioner (ANC) regretted the idea of putting Africans who could not be accommodated in Urungwe Reserve in the unassigned lands arguing that:

Although the land is insufficient to accommodate natives, the addition of unassigned land to native area will not assist since all unassigned land is fly-infested and the 5,600 natives on Crown Land cannot be located there.³⁴⁵

Until 1950, it was unknown where these *Gowa* dwellers were to be placed in line with the provisions of the LAA. Chimhowu's study on Rengwe has observed that the environs of Rengwe remained without activity until after the Second World War.³⁴⁶ In spite of teeming with wild animals it offered no potential prospects and it was viewed as a broken country.

When Urungwe Reserve had proved inadequate to accommodate all the Africans who were supposed to be moved, SNAs were created and these were Rengwe and Kanyati [refer to map 4, page 59]. The population in the Urungwe Reserve was estimated at 12,300 in 1946, with

³⁴⁵ LS 100/36/50/1, 16 August 1950 - the description is about unassigned areas west of Urungwe Reserve.

³⁴⁶ Chimhowu, 2002: 555

approximately 6,750 on unassigned area and 6,350 on Crown Land and European area.³⁴⁷ Consequently, the Native Affairs Department was left with no other choice but to consider the tsetse-infested Sanyati Valley. Rengwe SNA was specifically created for Dandawa Chiefdom and from that particular moment the territory was given a political meaning which replaced the wilderness perception.

Indeed Rengwe was sparsely populated but the people were not of the Korekore ethnic group as was claimed by Chimhowu.³⁴⁸ Rather, they were African hunters (*magocha*) who had been employed by the colonial government in its tsetse fly operations. These *magocha* were a conglomeration of different ethnicities inside and outside Urungwe Reserve, thus they were not necessarily Korekore. The land between the Urungwe Reserve and Sanyati River was claimed by Chief Nematombo who himself did not belong to the Korekore ethnic group.³⁴⁹ NC Dawson acknowledged Nematombo's claims following his death in 1958 that "he regarded most of what are now the Urungwe Native Areas as his country. Due to resettlement from Crown Land, other tribal groups had to be put in the unoccupied areas of Urungwe West and into the SNA"³⁵⁰ A descendant of one of the *magocha* families also made the same claim during discussions because Nematambo was their chief before they relocated.³⁵¹

New territories and chiefdoms were created in the 1950s and were given political meaning. Boundaries were created and shared between chiefdoms and from them ethnic identities, social belonging and distinction were made known and contested. According to the 1968 delineation report, the boundaries of Dandawa Chiefdom (Rengwe SNA) [which have been maintained to date] were:

Commencing at the intersection of the four-strand cattle fence with the Tengwe River, thence along this fence in a northerly direction (crossing the Musukwi River) to its intersection of the Kanyati River, thence down the Kanyati River to its confluence with

³⁴⁷ S1563, 1946: 1

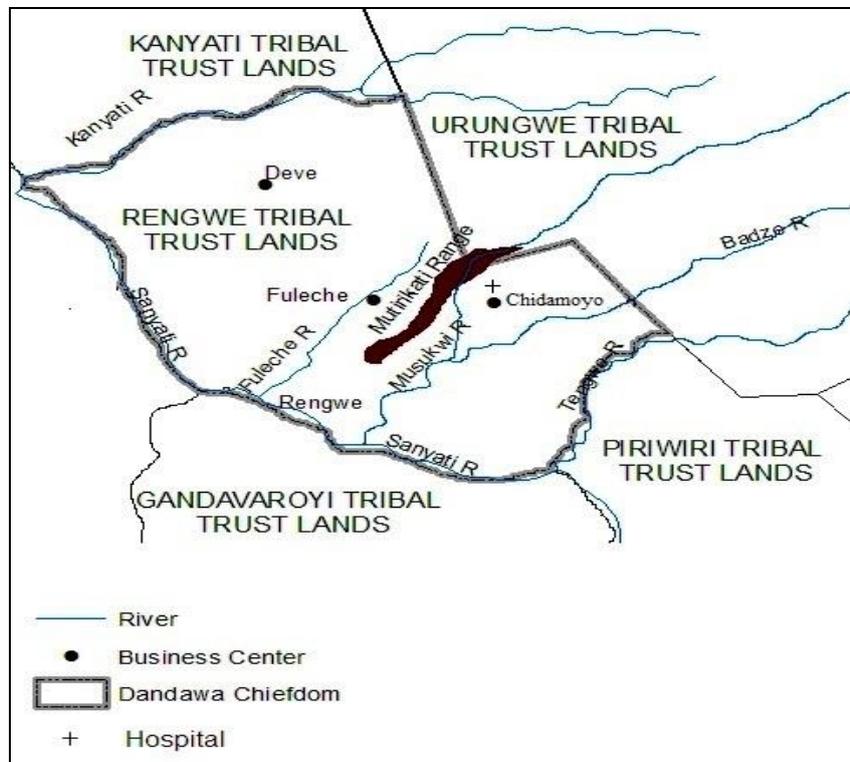
³⁴⁸ Chimhowu, 2002: 555

³⁴⁹ S2929/2/9, 1968: 5

³⁵⁰ S2827/2/2/6 vol. 1, Urungwe, 1958: 30

³⁵¹ Interview, Chinhema, 2011

the Sanyati River, thence up the Sanyati River to its confluence with the Tengwe River, and up this river to the starting point.³⁵² [Refer to map 7 below].



Map 7: Dandawa Chieftom Boundaries, Adapted from Surveyor General, 1975

Kanyati River was/is the boundary between Chief Dandawa to the right and Chief Nyamhunga to the left. The four-wire (no longer physically existent) was/is the boundary between Chief Dandawa to the left and Chief Nematombo to the right and Tengwe River as the boundary between Chief Dandawa to the left and Chief Mujinga to the right [refer to map 7 above].

Turning Rengwe into a livable place required much more than just eradicating tsetse fly because it was very dry and heavily forested. Concerted efforts were harnessed from the entomology and irrigation divisions of the department of agriculture to try and turn around the Rengwe environs for African resettlement. The entomology division concentrated on tsetse

³⁵² S2929/2/9, 1968: 30 - the four-strand cattle fence referred to was used to demarcate tsetse fly infested areas from those that had been completely cleared and were allowed to keep livestock. Rengwe SNA had been cleared but the fly could still be spotted and trypanosomiasis was occurring. The four-strand fence was removed in the mid-1970s.

fly eradication whilst the irrigation division delved into drilling boreholes and construction of roads in Rengwe and beyond. Drilling boreholes was meant to turn the dry country into a place with abundant sources of water. It also meant providing clean water which resonated with colonial ideas on hygiene and healthy bodies. In spite of its hotness and dryness, Rengwe had abundant underground water supplies and some fine stretches of fertile lands.³⁵³ By 1956, the water unit had drilled 68 boreholes in Urungwe West, of which 58 were yielding water and a total of 61 boreholes had been sunk in SNA by 1957.³⁵⁴

Similar programmes were launched in Binga where the Tonga were to be resettled. Like in Rengwe, extensive campaigns against tsetse fly were carried out by the colonial government, some boreholes were sunk, small dams were built and roads were also constructed.³⁵⁵ However, McGregor has critically noted that water supply was an acute problem in Binga and she revealed that, “of the new boreholes drilled ... many supplied water that was hard or dirty, and in the first year more than 60% failed to provide any water at all or dried up in the dry season.”³⁵⁶ It therefore was not a coincidence that the Tonga got agitated for an unfulfilled promise of water following them because the water was insufficient compared to what they were used to along the Zambezi River. Tsetse fly campaigns and road construction in Binga opened employment opportunities for Tonga men despite it being regarded as chibharo, unlike in Rengwe where it benefited those from Urungwe Reserve and surrounding areas and not Rengwe’s forced settlers.

Apart from the provision of clean water, these water sources were aimed at creating concentrated settlements. This worked very well with the concept of centralization in stark contrast to the scattered settlements that were a feature in the Zambezi Valley. It was planned that homesteads should congregate around water points. Nucleated settlements also allowed for easier provision of services and coordinated administration since the whole exercise was aimed at establishing “planned villages.” Land Development Officers (LDOs) were stationed

³⁵³ S2827/2/2/5 vol. 3, Urungwe, 1957: 2

³⁵⁴ S2827/2/2/4 vol. 3, Urungwe, 1956: 6; S2827/2/2/5 vol. 3, Urungwe, 1957: 9

³⁵⁵ Tremmel, 1994: 39

³⁵⁶ McGregor, 2009: 137

in the African reserves to map and demarcate villages as well as to oversee the overall resettlement exercise by receiving the Africans.

Through a careful analysis of narratives regarding the boreholes today, one comes into contact with memories of resistance on the one hand, and memories of adaptation to change on the other. Research participants recalled how much they detested borehole water because it “smelled grease and was tasteless.”³⁵⁷ Colonial reports on resettlement also made reference to this idea. Reports noted that Africans disliked borehole water and its taste caused a lot of grumbling among them and that they instead preferred surface water found in pools or rivers.³⁵⁸ However, over the years borehole water has become the desired option for many people in Rengwe with those still relying on unclean river water or areas with no boreholes perceived as “backward”. Complaints are being raised against the rural district council’s failure to supply clean water, to sink new boreholes or even repair the old ones. As such, Rengwe is slowly turning back into the dry country of the early 1950s and before as many of its boreholes have become dysfunctional and very few have been sunk in post-independent Zimbabwe.

Involuntary resettlement also made Rengwe to become accessible through the construction of a road network. Roads were developed to serve the movement of evicted African groups both in Rengwe and Binga. Nesham has noted that the Kariba resettlement scheme resulted in the construction of 962 miles [1,548 kilometers] of access roads in Binga, Gokwe and Urungwe to serve the relocation process.³⁵⁹ In Urungwe, the irrigation department started making access roads in preparation for the resettlement programme in 1955.³⁶⁰ By 1956 two ring roads and several access roads to water points had been built in Urungwe West and the SNA.³⁶¹ These roads represented the image of forced removal to Rengwe’s forced settlers. They reminded them of their first experiences in Rengwe which then was a foreign environment. On the other hand, they together with boreholes represented imprints of the

³⁵⁷ Interview, Sedina Kabage, Fuleche, 7 August 2011; Siyana, 2011

³⁵⁸ S2827/2/2/5 vol. 3, Urungwe, 1957: 2

³⁵⁹ Nesham, 1961: 22

³⁶⁰ S2827/2/2/3, vol. 1, Urungwe, 1955: 10

³⁶¹ S2827/2/2/3, vol. 3, Urungwe, 1956: 10

colonial state on the Rengwe landscape. They also stood as aids to the people's memories of forced relocation as well as their responses to involuntary resettlement.

Forced Resettlers' Perceptions of Rengwe

After having completed restructuring the Rengwe landscape to suit the colonial administrative objectives, Dandawa *Gowa* and *Gota* were then moved to settle on that land. Upon their arrival, the forced resettlers viewed Rengwe in sharp contrast to how the colonial state perceived it. Colonial authorities believed they had turned the "fly country" into livable land after sinking boreholes, building roads and eradicating tsetse flies. However, as noted in Chapter 2, Rengwe's forced resettlers perceived Rengwe as a "wild country" fit for wild animals. Different perceptions indicated a struggle in meaning over the Rengwe landscape. Contrary to the colonial state's view, Rengwe was viewed by Africans as unlivable regardless of the presence of a good road network and boreholes to supply clean water. This perception was further deepened by the absence of shelter upon arrival such that people had to brave themselves against the marauding wild animals at night, especially hyenas.

People had to engage in building shelter to house their goods and themselves. They were racing against time because it was towards spring. As stated by Ndumeri and Boniface, immediately after arrival they had to secure building materials to make their homes and cleared land for cultivation.³⁶² Some villages negotiated and made local arrangements to live in close proximity as they were before relocation.³⁶³ For instance, Manzungu Village negotiated with Mudzongachiso Village thereby resulting in the restructuring of the government settlement plans.

Forced relocation marked a watershed in the history of the affected people because they were removed from landscapes that had imprints of their ancestors. The imprints were a mark for belonging to or of membership in that community or lineage, and they also distinguished them from other groups. Rengwe did not possess such imprints, those that were there were of other

³⁶² Interviews with: Ndumeri, 2011; Boniface, 2011 - the point was also raised in other discussions.

³⁶³ Interviews with: Rusika, 2011; Kenani, 2011

ethnic groups that had at some point in the past occupied this land and later abandoned it. It was therefore “wild” in the sense that it could not be used to explain or express belonging and attachment. Rather, it distinguished them because its imprints were regarded as those of the *VaMbara* who were believed to have occupied that land in the past. The forced settlers had to begin a process of appropriating the land and inscribing their cultural and symbolic meanings into its landscape in order to connect with it and to be able lay claims in the future. Wolmer has argued that “landscapes are the location of currency of claims and counterclaims some of which relate to the legitimacy and survival of identity....”³⁶⁴ Thus Rengwe’s forced resettlers needed to create symbolic meaning that added and superseded colonial meaning in order to legitimize their occupation of that land. It was also to be relevant in matters of ethnicity, belonging and distinction as the colonial state had somewhat made the creation of new ethnicities its project by mapping territories.

Forced removal radically affected collective relationships as former neighbouring villages were put in different localities although some villages requested on their own volition not to share the same locality with former neighbouring villages. Removal was a critical event that irrevocably changed people’s relationships in a short space of time.”³⁶⁵ For instance, among local populations foot-paths were treated not as ordinary, rather, they represented kinship ties apart from networking villages or settlements. Their presence on the landscape indicated collective relationships and therefore were an important imprint, something that was absent on the Rengwe landscape. As Ingold has argued, “the world can only be nature for a being that does not inhabit it, yet only through inhabiting can the world be constituted, in relation to a being, as its environment.”³⁶⁶

Upon arrival in Rengwe, former *Gota* inhabitants were settled in the area between Mtirikati Mountain Range and Musukwe River. As for the former *Gowa* and *Matinhari* occupants, some were put to the east of Musukwe River and others to the west of Mtirikati Mountain [refer to map 7, page 126]. Already the LDO and the agricultural supervisor were on the

³⁶⁴ Wolmer, 2007: 10

³⁶⁵ Fisher, 2002: 121

³⁶⁶ Ingold, 2000: 40

ground to make sure that villages were offloaded at their correct water points.³⁶⁷ Participants told their experiences as follows:

We found the area pegged; *sabhuku* (village-heads), his people and his boundaries. Spaces for homesteads were pegged as well. We only apportioned fields amongst ourselves.³⁶⁸

Every *sabhuku* was offloaded at his borehole site. Afterwards, the agricultural supervisor showed the *sabhuku* his boundaries and arable land. He then divided the fields amongst his people.³⁶⁹

Borehole sites, thus, were important points that aided in recollection of what happened in 1957/58. They were prime points in telling the experiences of involuntary resettlement and in locating villages. Water points became crucial in the (re-)establishment of the relationships and social networks that had been disrupted by forced removal and the new settlement patterns in the new land.

As people settled on their given areas, they made such areas represent portable landscapes of where they had been removed. Thus areas were named after their former homelands as a way of re-establishing and reconnecting with their past and history. Besides pointing to history, they also became central in identity politics and social distinction and their inscription into the Rengwe landscape. For instance, the land occupied by former *Gota* people was/is referred to as *kuGota* (the place of *Gota*). *Gota* was/is used to give meaning and identity both to this space and the people occupying it. *Gota* was therefore made a portable landscape and that has assisted in making that part of Rengwe occupied by former *Gota* inhabitants to be symbolic.

Similarly, the land west of Mtirikati Mountain was/is referred to as *kunogara vekuGowa* (where former *Gowa* people live). However, the occupants of that space did not subscribe to this *Gowa* identity. Rather, they identified their space as *kuMusasa* particularly the land occupied by Chagadama village of the *Nzou Samanyanga* totem. According to them, the Zambezi Valley was comprised of *Gowa* proper (areas in the proximity of the Zambezi River)

³⁶⁷ S2827/2/2/4 vol. 3, Urungwe, 1957: 29

³⁶⁸ Interviews with: Ndumeri, 2011; Mathias, 2011; Bhauza, 2011

³⁶⁹ Interviews with: Josphat, 2011, Mareya Kadovhurunga, Chidamoyo, 6 July 2011, Milda, 2011

and *Musasa* which was located at the foot of the Zambezi Escarpment.³⁷⁰ These *Nzou Samanyanga* villages perceived themselves as *vekuMusasa* (people of *Musasa*). Already one is confronted with a matter of identity contestation within the same group that was forcibly removed from the Zambezi Valley and had a shared history of co-existence. It was at that point that ethnic distinctions and debates about belonging emerged and were unpacked. Besides pointing to ethnic distinctions, this identity contestation also represented the hidden power struggles within the Dandawa Chiefdom in Rengwe. Such distinctions and contestations have created both visible and invisible territorial boundaries, though not cast in stone, because of mobility and intermarriages.

Local inhabitants referred to Rengwe as *nyika yeMtirikati* (Mtirikati country), the same way they referred to their former homelands as *nyika yeGowa* (*Gowa* Country), *nyika yeUrungwe* (Urungwe country) and *kuGota* (*Gota* country).³⁷¹ Rengwe, was named after Mtirikati Mountain Range, an outstanding natural feature that represented the general physical outlook of the landscape [refer to map 7, page 126]. This name has superseded both the colonial name of the territory, Rengwe SNA/TTL and the post-colonial name Rengwe Communal Land which are found on local government authority maps. Now Rengwe has come to refer only to the territory occupied by former *Gota* people because that is where a stream and primary school named Rengwe are found. Naming as a practice was meant to give socio-political meaning to the land. As such *nyika yeMtirikati* pointed to the dryness, mountainous, mixed ethnicities and an extremely changed traditional politics. Apart from that, it also indicated that the forced resettlers were adapting to and interacting with their new environment. It was now the act of dwelling on the Rengwe landscape that created new perceptions and turning into a home thereby belonging to it, and also distinguishing themselves from those outside its boundaries.

³⁷⁰ Interviews with: Siyana, 2011; Lina, 2011; Kamurosi, 2011

³⁷¹ Interviews with: Milda, 2011; Mareya, 2011; Mathias, 2011, Group discussion - [Amai Kenani], 2011

Building Relations and Cultural Practices in Rengwe

In the foregoing section, reference was made to the issue of imprints on the landscape playing a big role in identifying with and making claims to the land. Cultural practices play a significant role that gives a socio-cultural meaning to the land which then makes certain features to be regarded symbolic. Such practices are, in most cases, connected to the belief in the spirits of ancestors who are believed to own *nyika* (country). Thus, *nyika* becomes a crucial variable in understanding culture and the land. Despite having occupied Rengwe for more than half a century, those who were forcibly resettled there stated clearly and categorically that that land is not their *nyika*. *Nyika* as a concept goes beyond the simple reference to the physical territory to point to include the spiritual realm which is believed to be responsible for the unknown and social welfare of the inhabitants of the land. As a result, the people's beliefs are anchored on *mhondoro* (lion spirits) which are territorial spirits because they are spirits of ancestors who tamed that environment or territory. And according to Korekore cultural beliefs these are spirits of important ancestors that reside among the living through spirit guardians called *mhondoro* (lion spirits).³⁷²

Nyika, as an idea, was strongly emphasized because it is embedded with claims of traditional legitimacy and rights to occupying the land. In the traditional setup, authority over the land is claimed to be shared between *mambo* (chief) and the *mhondoro* (lion spirit). Rengwe presented a complex cultural scenario which forced the resettled groups to insist that it was not their land despite the fact that their occupation was legitimized by both colonial and post-colonial governments' policy. Policy cannot give them a spiritual and emotional attachment to the land, it cannot make the landscape symbolic but cultural beliefs do. Rengwe was claimed by Chief Nematombo as his because his *mhondoros*, Nyamuswa and Rukodzi, were believed to be in charge of the territory.³⁷³ Consequently, Rengwe's forced resettlers could not unilaterally claim ownership of the land since their occupation of that land is not legitimate because it was not sanctioned by the lion spirits of Nematombo.

³⁷² M.F.C. Bourdillion, "The Cults of Dzivaguru and Karuva Amongst the North Eastern Shona Peoples", in J.M. Schoffeleers (ed.), *Guardians of the Land: Essays on Central African Territorial Cults*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1999: 238

³⁷³ Interviews with: Ndumeri, 2011; Wairesi Guvheya, Mtirikati, 30 September 2011; see also S2827/2/2/6 vol. 1, Urungwe, 1958: 30

Mhondoros are significant because they are believed to look after their living descendants. They provide rain, good harvests and fertility to the land and as such certain spaces are reserved and preserved for propitiating of ancestral spirits. Such spaces are regarded as “places of power” and it where rituals are performed. These “places of power” are regarded as sacred and are sometimes marked with man-made land shrines which are associated with spirits of reputed ancestors.³⁷⁴ Although the new settlers laid no claim to Rengwe, they had to continue with their cultural practices on the one hand, and to perform those of the perceived owners of the land on the other. *Mondoros*, thus, emerged as the new significant actors after the colonial authorities had turned Rengwe into a livable place. Former *Gota* dwellers had Mutota and Chingowo as their *mhondoros* while the Nzou Samanyanga group of the former valley dwellers had Chitehwe and Chindaro and the *VaMbara* group had *Chidzere*, *Kapepe* and *Siyanyanga*. The new settlers, therefore, had to combine and propitiate spirits of the land and their own at the same time.

Thus, upon settlement in Rengwe, ritual spaces and land shrines were identified, created and consecrated. It was, however, a different scenario for the *VaMbara* who claimed that their ancestral spirits were associated with particular sacred spaces that were non-transferrable. These sacred spaces were permanent on the landscape and were therefore not portable and immovable.³⁷⁵ For instance *Siyanyanga* was believed to be a snake, *Kapepe* was wind and *Chidzere*³⁷⁶ was a baobab tree. They could not identify and consecrate new spaces into shrines because it had been the sole prerogative of their ancestors to create and consecrate ritual spaces through great acts of magic upon their death. The *VaMbara* strongly contested that they had no power to re-establish their rituals and were outspoken about being allowed to return to the Zambezi Valley to perform their rituals at their exact sacred places.

³⁷⁴ E. Colson, “Places of Power and Shrines of the Land”, in *Paideuma: The Making of African Landscapes*, vol. 43, 1997: 48, 51

³⁷⁵ Descendants of *VaMbara* explained that the only way they can engage in their ritual activities is to be allowed to go back to *Gowa* and perform them because they are specific to that area and nowhere else.

³⁷⁶ About the *Chidzere* tree see J.C. Mitchell, “*Chidzere’s* Tree: A note on a Shona Land-shrine and its Significance”, in *Native Affairs Department Annual*, Vol. 38, 1961

A shrine, according to van Binsbergen, “is an observable object or part of the natural world, clearly localized and usually immobile” meant to ensure that the ecology is protected and that activities conducted by the human population such as horticulture, fishing, animal husbandry and hunting succeed.³⁷⁷ Man-made shrines are seldom present in Rengwe, but trees such as *mubvumira* (*kirkia acuminata*) are now used in performing *marenda* (rain-making rituals). Van Binsbergen has described the shrine space as, “a spot which is singled out and treated in a very special way because of its close association with events...”³⁷⁸ In the case of the *Nzou Samanyanga*, they did not only select the shrine space, they also brought soil and clay pots from their valley ritual sites. This was meant to consecrate the chosen space.

Marenda as a ritual practice became significant as forced resettlers shifted from subsistence farming to market-oriented farming on Rengwe’s dry land. Their forced movement to the upcountry meant that streambank cultivation and *matoro* (winter gardens) were a thing of the past. Agriculture and animal husbandry replaced them. In terms of agro-ecological classification, Rengwe straddles climatic regions III and IV³⁷⁹, thus, it is of moderate to low rainfall. As a result, the practice of *marenda* has acquired a central role in agricultural activities.

Another crucial cultural practice related to the observance of *chisi* (rest-days). Certain days are set aside and are strictly observed during the rain season. *Chisi* is meant to be a sign of respect to the *mhondoros* of the land. *Chisi* is a tradition that is widely practised in Zimbabwe, but observed differently in different regions. Before moving to Rengwe, *chisi* for the former *Gota* people occurred on the first Friday after the appearance of the moon in the sky, and it was observed once in a month.³⁸⁰ Those from the valley used to observe *usere* (the eighth) which was the eighth day after the appearance of the moon in the sky thus it also happened

³⁷⁷ W.M.J. van Binsbergen, *Religious Change in Zambia: Exploratory Studies*, Kegan Paul International, London, 1981: 101, 104

³⁷⁸ W. van Binsbergen, “Explorations into the History and Sociology of Territorial Cults in Zambi”, in J.M. Schoffeleers (ed.), *Guardians of the Land: Essays on Central African Territorial Cults*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1999: 48

³⁷⁹ Zimbabwe is classified into five agro-ecological regions. Natural regions I and II cater for specialized and intensive farming and they receive between 750mm and 1000mm of rainfall. Region III is meant for semi-intensive farming and receives rainfall of between 650mm and 800mm. Region IV is meant for semi-extensive farming and receives rainfall of between 450mm and 650 mm while Region V receives rainfall of below 450mm and it caters for extensive farming.

³⁸⁰ Interviews with: Bhauza, 2011, Tapiwa Gwaze, Musukwe, 1 October 2011; Chipeni Chishato, Rengwe, 5 July 2011

once in a month.³⁸¹ Rengwe's forced resettlers adopted new practices of *chisi* as dictated by those who claimed ownership of the territory and it was observed weekly on Monday and Thursday.³⁸² During *chisi* no one is allowed to work or enter their fields as that will be disrespect to the ancestors of the land and disrespecting them was to invite great misfortune to one's family or fields.

However, *chisi* as a traditional practice has come under serious threat from economic and religious circles. In rural economies, families with low incomes are surviving by selling their labour during the farming season. A counter-practice known as *maricho*³⁸³ (temporary/assistance labour) has been devised to circumvent the unfavourable regulations of *chisi*. *Maricho* occurs at two levels which are either working in other peoples' fields for remuneration or forming collective work groups that rotate working in members' fields. *Maricho* are done during the *chisi* days, thus, people have evaded the cultural restrictions attached to it. This practice demystifies the idea that entering the fields on *chisi* causes misfortune.

What has emerged therefore is a struggle over the meaning of *chisi*. Some groups have attempted to use economic and religious interpretations to challenge the meaning and practice of *chisi*. Christian groups give primary concern to their faith and not to traditional practices. The land has therefore emerged as a locus for struggles over meaning-making. Christian groups, especially the white-garment churches that worship on Thursday, Friday or Saturday believe that the worship day "is holy and in it thou shall not do any work" If they follow the *chisi* tradition they end up with almost three days of not working their fields and that is not economically viable in a rural economy. Other Christian groups, as is discussed in Chapter 7, are also refusing to participate in *marenda* rituals because they do not believe in traditional practices but in God whom they claim is solely responsible for the land, rain and the ecosystem.

³⁸¹ Interviews with: Ndumeri, 2008; Stefani, 2008; Lina, 2008, Kenani, 2011; Group discussion??

³⁸² Interviews with: Chinhema, 2011; Chiriyoti 2011; Milda, 2011; Mathias, 2011

³⁸³ Group Discussion, 26 September 2011 – I have also included my own observations and experiences in discussing the concepts of *maricho* and *chisi*.

As the new settlers familiarized themselves with their new environment, they also engaged in a process of building and re-establishing relations. It was generally claimed that since both groups of forced resettlers were Korekore, relations were created easily.³⁸⁴ On the contrary, the picture was rather different and complicated. The naming of others caricatured them and that alone proved that relations were not good as it created a particular identity which looked down upon the other. Alexander and McGregor have explored everyday politics of naming in Shangani Reserve and have observed that “a derogatory and divisive process of naming accompanied day-to-day social interaction” in which others were seen as primitive and uncivilized.³⁸⁵ What happened was a case of defining themselves against each other but in the Shanganii context of evictees versus early settlers³⁸⁶, but it was evictees against evictees in Rengwe. The very act of calling those from the valley *MaGowa* was itself derogatory or referring to those from Sipolilo as *vekuGota* made them second-class citizens in Rengwe. Former *Gota* dwellers perceived their former *Gowa* counterparts as witchcraft practitioners³⁸⁷, a perception they developed based on comments and warnings that were made by *Musoromuchena*, who was the NC of Sipolilo. He is said to have remarked that:

Mushoshoma and your people don't rush to engage in marriage with people from the Zambezi Valley. Take your time to learn their way of life and customs. These *Gowa* people practise witchcraft which causes *runyoka/rukawo*. Surely, those who ignored the advice died of *rukawo* after getting involved with *Gowa* women....³⁸⁸

Surely, in the early years a lot of skepticism and suspicion existed between the two groups. It went to the point that even deaths that happened in those early years caused fingers to be pointed at former *Gowa* dwellers as the cause behind them. The same was true of the way *Gowa* evictees perceived their fellow evictees and according to one participant:

We had problems with (deputy) Chief Jairos who denigrated us [*Gota*] saying “if I get a guinea fowl egg and have it hatched together with hen's eggs, the chick is not mine; it

³⁸⁴ Interviews with: Bhauza, 2011; Chipeni, 2011; Wairesi, 2011

³⁸⁵ J. Alexander and J. McGregor, “Modernity and Ethnicity in a Frontier Society: Understanding Difference in Northwestern Zimbabwe” in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1997: 188

³⁸⁶ *Ibid*

³⁸⁷ Interview, Chapo, 2012

³⁸⁸ Interviews with: Bhauza, 2011; Tapiwa, 2011; Josphat, 2011, Mathias, 2011 - *Rukawo/Runyoka* is a disease or condition one acquires following a sexual encounter with a woman who has, unknowingly, been administered with a traditional medicine by her husband to discourage infidelity and this is euphemistically referred to as ‘fencing’. The effect of the medicine is seen on the man whose result is chronic illness that leads to death if not reversed by the person responsible.

belongs to the forest....” He indicated that no relationship could develop between them and us. Some elders from *Gowa* cautioned him saying “a child is child no matter what; even if s/he is a step-child, you have to take responsibility as your own....”³⁸⁹

Jairos’ statement was very clear that *Gota* evictees were regarded as second-class citizens. It was only the fact that they shared similar experiences of forced removal and accidentally found themselves put in the same basket that they had to co-exist no matter what the challenges were. In spite of all this othering, relations were eventually created and they were based more on shared experience than on anything else. After several years of co-existence their relations have gradually matured and have come to identify themselves as a group of “government relocates” against those who did not come through government initiated resettlement. Over the years, they have learned to accept their forced circumstances and they now use it as an agent to negotiate or integrate alternative identities, a point emphasized by Malkki in her study of Hutu refugees in Tanzania.³⁹⁰ Their new socio-political context did not support asserting separateness; rather, it supported establishing relations beyond group boundaries.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the various land practices that were done by the colonial state in its bid to turn Rengwe into a livable land. Such land practices were part and parcel of the process of place-making whose ultimate aim was to restructure and to bring reforms that fitted very well with local administration of the countryside. The colonial state imbued the landscape with meanings that culminated in the creation of conflicts over space and legitimacy. The very act of forcibly resettling people in Rengwe warranted a particular kind of response from the forced resettlers which started as hostile to one of engaging with the landscape and with the other group. As the chapter has demonstrated, the new settlers appropriated some of the meanings that had been inscribed into the land by the colonial state and they also created their own which superseded those of the colonial state. The main point underscored here relates to

³⁸⁹ Interview, Tapiwa, 2011 – Ziden Nutt, the first White Missionary to come to Dandawa Chiefdom in 1962, also communicated to me that he had a hard time grasping a good relationship with Jairos, adding that he was nothing like his two predecessors.

³⁹⁰ Malkki, 1995: 3

the different ways of seeing the same environment or landscape that existed between the colonial authorities and the forced resettlers. Efforts by the colonial officials to turn Rengwe from being a “wilderness” through the provision of hygiene and abundant water could not replace the forced resettlers’ need for a symbolic and cultural landscape. Naturally, these different perceptions indicated the presence of struggles in meaning over the land and attitudes to the land. By extension, it has also ignited a struggle about the meaning of certain traditional practices due to changing socio-economic circumstances in the rural economy. The latter is the focus of Chapter 7.

Chapter 6: Identity, Power Struggles and the Rengwe Landscape

Introduction

The foregoing chapter discussed at length how Dandawa's forced resettlers came to terms with and inscribed meaning into their new land and dealing with the aspect of place-making after their arrival. Involuntary resettlement was a government project and it could not be reversed. Most Africans grudgingly accepted forced relocation, appropriated their new places by inscribing (new) identities and meanings onto the landscape. This chapter examines the transformation of identities and perceptions as well as power struggles that ensued after settling in Rengwe. The aim is to analyze meaning-making as a stepwise process.

People and Place: Transforming Identities in Rengwe

This chapter looks at the emergence of (new) identities after resettlement. It analyzes how these identities transformed or deepened. Both resettled groups broadly identified themselves as Korekore although they have different historical backgrounds. However, it was not very clear at what point this identity got strongly appropriated or accepted. General observation indicated that the process of removal played a crucial role in deepening the use of Korekore identity. Despite claiming a similar identity, the two groups wanted to maintain their distinctiveness, hence they derived other forms of identities to create difference and distinction. Colonial authorities partly played a role in the way the two groups perceived each other. Like what they did elsewhere, for example in Shangani and Gokwe, colonial authorities regarded one group as primitive and the other as modern. This perception was also picked up by those viewed as modern to mock and look down upon the other group. A point of difference is that in Shangani and Gokwe, it was the immigrants who were regarded as modern and advanced because they had interacted with the white settlers and had acquired modern methods of economic progress and were thus seen as agents of modernity.³⁹¹ In turn the original inhabitants of these lands were perceived as backward and primitive because they

³⁹¹ Alexander and McGregor, 1997:194; Nyambara, 2002: 287

had not adopted any modern ways of economic progress and somehow considered as resistant to change.³⁹²

In Rengwe, both were evicted groups but had had contact with white settlers and had embraced colonial thinking at different levels. Evictees from *Gowa* were perceived by their *Gota* counterparts as backward and beyond that as witches. The mere fact that they carried fire-stones and grainbins made them to be regarded as primitive. Chapo remarked that they were shocked to see their *Gowa* counterparts bringing with them stones and poles in the lorries as if there were no forests in Rengwe.³⁹³ Their negative perception was also encouraged by their former Ngosi Musoromuchena who informed them to be wary of the *Gowa* people because they were witches. No such clear perception about the *Gota* people came from the former *Gowa* inhabitants during interviews. On their part, the former *Gota* people saw themselves as “modern” compared to their counterparts because they had been taught crop rotation, practised good market-oriented agriculture and had participated in early national politics. They had also been introduced to mission education through the Evangelical Church whereas their former *Gowa* colleagues never experienced mission education until their resettlement in Rengwe.

Missionary presence in Rengwe played no role in moulding and deepening the Korekore identity. For a start, the Evangelical Church was not very active on the ground apart from simply transferring their primary school from *Gota* to Rengwe. The Church of Christ which established a mission in Rengwe arrived 4 years after resettlement and contributed nothing to the Korekore identity. These perceptions were precursors to the way identities were created, transformed and derived in Dandawa Chiefdom. Daily practices and activities became part and parcel in the creation of identities. Alexander and McGregor have noted that in Shangani day to day social interactions proved critical in shaping identities between the evictees and original settlers.³⁹⁴ In Rengwe there were no original inhabitants, both groups were evictees

³⁹² Nyambara, 2002: 288; Alexander and McGregor, 1997: 188

³⁹³ Interview with Chapo, 2012

³⁹⁴ Alexander and McGregor, 1997; 187-188

and therefore were regarded as the first settlers at that point. They were later joined by immigrants who brought a new dimension to the identity matrix.

A crucial point that should be hastily mentioned is that although *Gowa* people were viewed as backward, they held their heads high because Rengwe had been designated as their land. It was also under their traditional authority. Such a scenario created power struggle within the newly established community of evictees. It also encouraged the emergence of dominant and less dominant narratives. This development greatly affected social relations between the two groups at this early stage and caused some acrimony. The dominant-minority dichotomy that emerged haunted this newly merged chiefdom. Evictees from *Gowa* and *Matinhari* perceived themselves as forming the dominant group whilst former *Gota* dwellers were seen as the minority. The latter were led by a headman whose authority had been removed and therefore had been disempowered. Chief Dandawa from *Gowa* was the sole authority of the territory triggering a dispute of legitimacy between these two authorities.

Von Oppen has observed that resettlement schemes placed too much emphasis on structural relationships but negated and underestimated the dynamics it triggered.³⁹⁵ According to him, villagization policy in Tanzania contributed to the intensity of local struggles revolving around two issues; control over land and control over local institutions.³⁹⁶ In the case of Rengwe, former *Gowa* people claimed a major stake because the colonial system recognized their chief over Headman Mushoshoma. Thus, former *Gota* people were merely seen as an appendage to the main group by their counterparts. What this created was a myriad of contestations of claims over space and belonging.

Naming emerged as a useful tool in mapping the landscape and in deriving identities. The act of naming was taken as part of connecting with the landscape and creating new relations. Ingold has argued that “apprehending the world is not a matter of construction but of engagement, not of building but of dwelling, not of making a view of the world but of taking

³⁹⁵ von Oppen, 1996: 86

³⁹⁶ *Ibid*

up a view in it.”³⁹⁷ Landscapes are engaged in various ways of which naming is one basic method of engagement. Such kind of engagement is not neutral, but builds a story regarding the people occupying that landscape. Hodgkin and Radstone have noted that “place names are one way of listening on the reality of a particular version of the past and also of the present.”³⁹⁸ As forced resettlers engaged and interacted with the Rengwe landscape, their perception of it as “wild” was gradually replaced by appreciating it. It also assisted the two groups to integrate and to eventually begin to understand that they shared a similar experience therefore they needed to accept their fate and view themselves as one group.

Forced relocation caused identities to shift within the chiefdom. As has been shown in Chapter 5, the *Gowa* and *Gota* identities became more pronounced than the Korekore identity which could have easily united the two groups. These were used more as temporal markers of identities and were not deepened. This played multiple functions both for the people being identified and for outsiders. Firstly, it categorized them as a people. Secondly, it was about their history and thirdly, it was a story about their forced movement. Nonetheless, these identities did not mean complete division. They were meant to tell the different narratives about forced relocation. Instead of seeing them as dividing, we should rather view them as talking to each other and contributing different versions to the story of forced removal. Their continued use makes us know that this is a merged chiefdom. Consequently, the Korekore identity could not serve such a purpose because it was too broad and would end up narrowing the story of forced removal. However, it still remains relevant only that it is loosely used as the majority prefers totem identity. In Gokwe, Worby has observed that the VaShangwe, the original inhabitants, prefer to identify themselves as VaKorekore, a mainstream Shona identity as a way of eluding the denigrative nature of the ethnic label applied to them.³⁹⁹

A new situation emerged with the arrival of immigrants in Rengwe in the 1980s. The immigrants came and made two crucial changes to the identities and perceptions that existed. These immigrants came and attempted to popularize the Korekore identity whilst in the

³⁹⁷ Ingold, 2000: 42 (citing Ingold 1996a)

³⁹⁸ K. Hodgkin and S. Radstone, “Introduction: Contested Pasts”, in K. Hodgkin and S. Radstone (eds), *Memory, History, Nation: Contested Pasts*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, 2006: 11

³⁹⁹ Worby, 1994: 376

process making it to be associated with backwardness. The existence of this perception emerged in interviews conducted with both forced resettlers and immigrants. Chiriyoti, a forced resettler himself, lamented the way immigrants looked down upon them saying that “Makorekore are uneducated and uncivilized.”⁴⁰⁰ Even the immigrants did not hide their perception that when they arrived the Makorekore were still primitive and that they were the ones responsible for modernizing them. At this particular point Korekore as an identity became popularized and deepened due to its constant application by the immigrants. On second thoughts, it could actually mean that the identity was even popular and in constant use before the immigrants moved to Rengwe.

The question that arises then is; why did the identity lose popularity following the arrival of immigrants? By way of speculation and taking a cue from Worby, it is possible that the primitiveness and backwardness associated with Korekore ethnic label could have influenced Dandawa’s forced resettlers to disavow it, preferring totem identities. Totems tend to be universal because they are distributed across ethnic identities although some are more concentrated in certain ethnic groups such as the Nzou Samanyanga (elephant) which is associated with Korekore and Gumbo Madyirapazhe (leg) with MaKaranga. According to Worby, “the practice of ethnicity thus comprises not only the power to name, but its antithesis as well: the power to refuse to be named.”⁴⁰¹ This could have been the case with the shift from Korekore to emphasize totems and thus made the *Gowa* and *Gota* to become more profound as identities in Rengwe than they actually are.

The immigrants came as individuals to Rengwe and their movement was voluntary. Their arrival added a new identity to the Dandawa polity. Majority of them originated from Masvingo and therefore are of the Karanga ethnic group but are referred to locally as Mavhitori which is actually a corruption from the colonial name of Masvingo, Fort Victoria. Apart from originating from Masvingo, their ascent that was contrastingly different from that of the forced resettlers made them to be seen as the other. Naturally, any immigrant to Rengwe whose ascent sounded different from theirs was indiscriminately named Muvhitori. Mavhitori, on the other hand, presented themselves as the embodiment of modernity in

⁴⁰⁰ Interview with Chiriyoti, 2011

⁴⁰¹ Worby, 1994: 372

Rengwe and, thus, regarded themselves as progressive and successful compared to first settlers who still relied on the hoe and practised streambank cultivation. Primitiveness and backwardness were also measured with the type of houses, way of dressing, and language itself was crucial, and access to education. Mavhitori, as they are popularly called, bragged of being educated and most of them having interacted with white settlers on farms and industries. They also had a strong urban connection than their Korekore counterparts and all this made them present themselves as modern, but more importantly, they perceived themselves as model farmers to be emulated by the Korekore.

Like the Madheruka in Gokwe, Mavhitori were responsible for bringing the cotton revolution to Rengwe and as such, this became a critical contributor in the way they perceived and identified themselves. Not all of the immigrants came from Masvingo but their self-conscious categorization as modern and successful made them distinct from the others. As immigrants, they did not have shared history because they were pushed by diverse reasons but, nonetheless, found a common classification of being progressive people. In Gokwe, Madheruka possessed a shared history of forced removal from Rhodesdale Estate and thus viewed themselves as a group, but they were also an amalgam of diverse people. Madheruka, as Nyambara has noted, came to be indiscriminately applied to all subsequent immigrants who moved to Gokwe voluntarily after 1960.⁴⁰²

In this maze, forced migration, voluntary migration and the changing socio-political circumstances have consequently caused identities to either shift or transform in Rengwe in order to accommodate and integrate the “other.” Such include political and religious identities which compete and are laden with some tensions. Religious identity allows people to create ties based on their faith and beliefs. This identity has also transformed itself into a social security measure. Religious identities include among others *Mapositori* (Apostolic believers), *maRoma* (Roman Catholics), Pentecostals and *maSavadha* (Seventh Day Adventists). In this rural community where life insurance services are unavailable, religious associations are functioning as burial societies. They assist members during funerals and other crisis

⁴⁰² Nyambara, 2002: 293

situations, hence they have introduced a new dimension to the contestations surrounding the issue of belonging and distinction.

Politics has also become an indispensable tool in deriving identities, especially in a changing political landscape following the emergence of opposition politics, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), in 1999. Opposition politics threatened Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front's (ZANU-PF) political hegemony in the country. Consequently, rural communities have become the frontier for the battle of the political titans. The physical violence that was unleashed in the countryside between 2000 and 2008 caused political identity to emerge as an alternative identity as people sought protection against violence.

In Tanzania, Malkki discovered that Hutu refugees in Kigoma Township developed multiple identities which they manipulated in different contexts. For example, they did not define themselves as members of the marked collective, "Hutu refugees," to operate as strategies of invisibility.⁴⁰³ Among the Dandawa people, identities are manipulated for purposes of social belonging and distinction, for social networking and for political security. These identities are made explicit.

Multiple identities are a significant tool in negotiating membership to a group and in circumventing distinction in circumstances where it tends to be exclusive. Totems are the easiest to manipulate in such contexts and to deploy in debates about ethnic identity, belonging and distinction. Among the resettled peoples in Muringamombe, Zvataida and Mudzinge, Dekker discovered that identities played a critical role in creating social networks.⁴⁰⁴ They acted as social security and safety nets in crisis situations, droughts and hunger. As a result households placed themselves closer to those they were acquainted with whether blood relatives or those sharing the same totem.⁴⁰⁵ Thus, their settlement pattern resembled identity, kinship ties, belonging and distinction.

⁴⁰³ Malkki, 1995: 155-156

⁴⁰⁴ M. Dekker, *Risk, Resettlement and Relations: Social Security in Rural Zimbabwe*, Tinberg Institute Research Series, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, 2004: 2, 13

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid*: 65

Power Struggles: Boundary Dispute in Rengwe

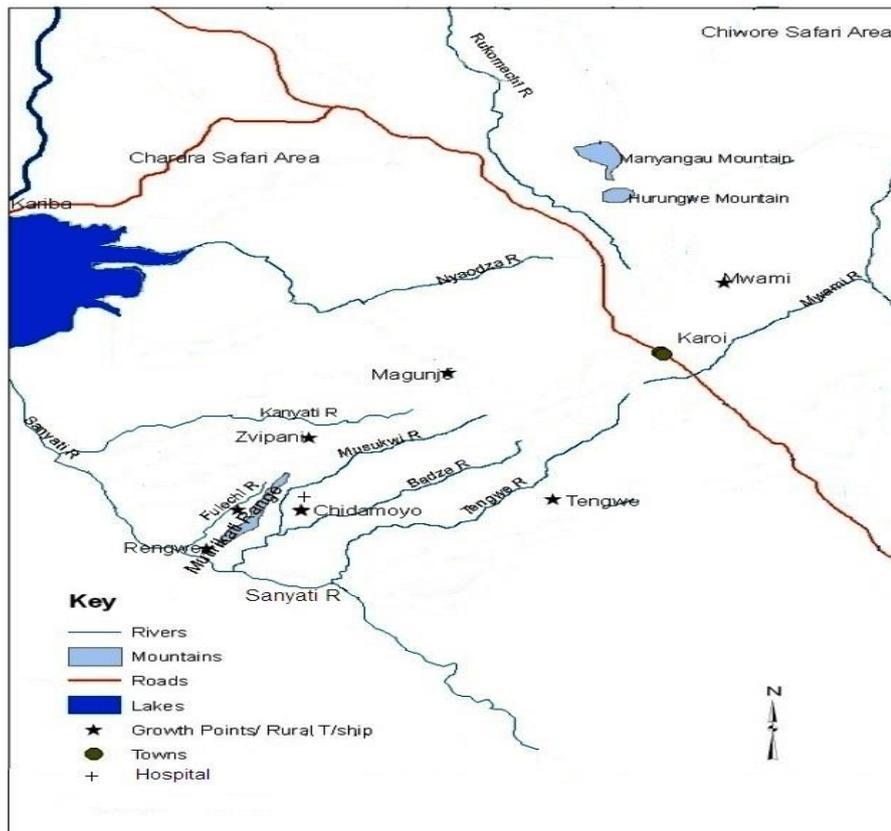
After 1958, the dynamics of the creation of a merged chiefdom in Rengwe did not take long to surface and cause problems. Involuntary resettlement was an exercise initiated to serve the interests of the white settlers and not those of the Africans. As a result, African political systems were manipulated to establish chieftainships that served colonial interests. The colonial state required strong and intact structures that helped it in local administration. By the 1950s chiefs and headmen had become salaried officials serving at the discretion of the colonial government.

Due to its nature of a merged chiefdom, Dandawa was soon to be embroiled in a serious struggle for authority pitting Headman Mushoshoma and Chief Dandawa. Mushoshoma's traditional authority had been revoked during his relocation to Rengwe and was submerged under Chief Dandawa's.⁴⁰⁶ This decision by the colonial state irked Mushoshoma because it meant that he had not only lost his ancestral lands in *Gota*, but also his status as the traditional office bearer. Thus in a bid to maintain his political identity and significance, he attempted to manipulate the Rengwe landscape to influence and reclaim his traditional legitimacy.

The settlement pattern saw Mushoshoma and his people forming an island between Mtirikati Mountain Range to the West and Musukwe River to the East [refer maps 8 & 7, pages 176 & 151]. The opposite sides of these two landscape features were occupied by former *Gowa* and *Matinhari* people. Chief Dandawa was himself settled to the East of Musukwe River near Chidamoyo Mission. Naturally, Musukwe River Valley emerged as a potential boundary landscape. Therefore Mushoshoma attempted to manipulate it to reinstate and legitimize his traditional authority. Rengwe's natural physical features carried no meaning before the resettlement exercise because no one inscribed any meaning into them. The arrival of the first group of forced resettlers in 1957 began a process of interaction between the landscape and a permanent group of settlers. No sooner had the resettlement exercise been completed than power struggles between Chief Dandawa and Headman Mushoshoma emerged. Thus,

⁴⁰⁶ Interviews with: Mathias, 2011; Kesamu, 2011; Bhauza, 2011; Josphat, 2011

Musukwe River became entangled in this power struggle and boundary dispute meant to legitimize authority and to divide the territory [refer to map 8 below].



Map 8: Rivers and Other Features in Dandawa Chieftom, (adapted from Surveyor General, 1975)

Headman Mushoshoma wanted the area occupied by his followers to be solely under his traditional authority. Before Chief Dandawa had been moved to Rengwe in 1958, Mushoshoma had exercised his authority and had established a traditional court. Nonetheless, Chief Dandawa refused to grant Mushoshoma’s request arguing that he had enough headmen, Mudzimu and Matau, and that he could not have another one, moreover, within his own territory.⁴⁰⁷ Mushoshoma was said to have defied Chief Dandawa’s position by acting as the

⁴⁰⁷ Interviews with: Mairosi, 2011; Kamurosi, 2011

authority in his area. This created tension between the two traditional authorities which eventually forced Headman Mushoshoma to approach the Urungwe Native Affairs Department and requested to return to Sipolilo.

Unfortunately, Urungwe NC reports, at least those I consulted, make no mention, not even the slightest allusion, to this dispute. Nevertheless, research participants from both groups stressed that a dispute existed in which Mushoshoma wanted Musukwe River to be recognized and proclaimed as the boundary between him and Chief Dandawa.⁴⁰⁸ A female participant showed me where Mushoshoma's traditional court was located before his return to Sipolilo and she even referred to him as "our Chief."⁴⁰⁹ The absence of information about, or reference to, this dispute in NC reports does not necessarily mean the dispute never occurred; and neither does it mean it is a creation by the people. Mushoshoma actively participated in early African politics through his interaction with the African National Congress (ANC) before relocation. In 1958 the NC of Urungwe remarked that "the African Congress group in the Rengwe resettlement area have [sic] been comparatively quiet during the year but have a strong hold over Headman Mushoshoma."⁴¹⁰ Although Mushoshoma had been stripped of his authority, surprisingly the NC still referred to him as headman. It is possible that influence from ANC politics had enlightened him and therefore refused to be intimidated to relinquish his traditional authority. He could not lose on two fronts, hence he fought for the reinstatement of his traditional authority.

Although Mushoshoma distanced himself from ANC politics, the NC was not convinced and he maintained that "he says he is not a member himself but if he is not a member he is very close to being a supporter."⁴¹¹ He actually believed that Mushoshoma and his people were responsible for bringing Congress politics or influence to Rengwe. One male participant explained that had Joshua Nkomo launched his guerrilla warfare earlier, they would have

⁴⁰⁸ Interviews with: Chipeni, 2011; Bhauza, 2011; Chiriyoti, 2011 – Ziden Nutt was told by one Mr. Nyamutora who was on Chief Dandawa's council who alluded to this dispute between Mushoshoma and Dandawa: personal communication, 25 January 2014

⁴⁰⁹ Interview, Chapo, 2012

⁴¹⁰ S2827/2/2/6 Vol. 1, 1958: 32

⁴¹¹ *Ibid*

remained in *Gota*.⁴¹² The fact that Mushoshoma was active in African politics is enough evidence from NC Reports to incline us to believe that this dispute existed. But that should not be reason to take away agency from him without necessarily linking it to nationalist politics. Revoking his traditional authority was similar, in the eyes of Africans, to the usurpation of Africans' ancestral lands, power and land rights by the colonial state.

The boundary dispute attempted to inscribe a new meaning into Musukwe River valley landscape. Mushoshoma was trying to manipulate it to legitimize his traditional authority and to resolve the territorial dispute. Thus, the landscape was intended to become a marker of political and territorial identity. The perception of former *Gota* people as “outsiders” or their description as guinea fowl eggs by deputy Chief Jairos (see Chapter 5) should be analyzed and understood within the context of this dispute.

Musukwe River valley landscape became the frontier on which the territorial rivalry played out. This territorial division should not be mistaken to mean total separation of the East from the West. In essence, it was merely a political division involving the two traditional leaders and no such concrete division existed on the ground. In fact, Musukwe River did not in any way separate the East from the West. Rather, it brought the units together because lands on both sides of the river valley landscape were united by it. It united the lands through exchange and it allowed the movement of people to either side. In reality therefore, the idea of using Musukwe River to divide the lands went against the peoples' everyday life and practices.

According to Bollig, collective memory embedded in specific places and landscapes in general carry a profound political statement vis-a-vis neighbours and government.⁴¹³ Bollig argues that landscape is used as a medium to present specific political messages to members of the community as well as political actors beyond that community.⁴¹⁴ Fontein has concluded that disputes and claims over the custodian of Great Zimbabwe are rooted in the firstcomer discourse which is used to try and assert ownership over the Great Zimbabwe ruins and the

⁴¹² Interview, Mathias, 2011

⁴¹³ Bollig, 2009: 329

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid*

wider landscape in general.⁴¹⁵ Landscape tends to be neutral when no one is occupying it, and once it gets settled it begins to be manipulated to suit the perceptions of the society or individuals. Dieckmann has argued that “conceptualization and engagement with space are closely intertwined and have to be contextualized politically and historically to arrive at meaningful explanations of landscape comprehension.”⁴¹⁶

The territorial or boundary dispute eventually fizzled out after Mushoshoma returned to Sipolilo in the early 1960s. He was, however, not resettled in *Gota* but was allocated land in the Bakasa Mountains and he had his traditional authority reinstated. While others believed his return was necessitated by the power struggles, others maintained that Mushoshoma did not like the Rengwe landscape because its soils were infertile and therefore not good for market-oriented agriculture.

Christianizing the Landscape: The Establishment of Chidamoyo Mission

The boundary dispute was soon overtaken by another development on the Rengwe landscape in 1962. Rengwe lagged behind in critical social services such as education and health. It lacked critical medical facilities despite the prevalence of diseases like malaria, measles and dysentery.⁴¹⁷ The nearest medical clinic at that time was at Magunje which was 80 kilometers away. Its services were inaccessible to people of Rengwe because of transport problems. The health situation in the region was very acute [see fig. 3 below]. Ziden Nutt revealed to me that shortly after the establishment of Chidamoyo Mission Hospital there were eighty patients suffering from leprosy.⁴¹⁸ Educationally, there was only Rengwe Primary School which was run by the Evangelical Alliance Mission.

⁴¹⁵ Fontein, *The Silence of Great Zimbabwe: Contested Landscapes and the Power of Heritage*, UCL Press, London, 2006: 22

⁴¹⁶ U. Dieckmann, “The Spectator’s and the Dweller’s Perspectives: Experiences and Representation of the Etosha National Park, Namibia”, in M. Bollig and O. Bubenzer (eds), *African Landscapes: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, Springer, New York, 2009: 353

⁴¹⁷ Telephone Interview, Dale Erickson, United States of America, 6 March 2012

⁴¹⁸ Ziden Nutt, Personal Communication, 25 January 2014



Fig. 3 - Missionary Ziden Nutt Treating a Child With Bush Ulcer, 1963

Rengwe Primary School offered education up to Standard 4 and it served Dandawa Chiefdom and beyond. Its location, however, endangered the lives of school children, especially young girls. School pupils had to traverse the forested landscape that teemed with dangerous wild animals and reptiles such as lions, hyenas and snakes. Some had to cross Musukwe River, whilst others had to ascend and descend the Mtirikati Mountain. Young girls faced the greatest risk because they were also vulnerable to sexual abuse by men. Bitesi recounted two incidents, one involving his niece and another involving Silvia, a daughter to one Paurosi, who were both sexually abused and impregnated by some boys on their way from Rengwe Primary School.⁴¹⁹

1962 marked a turning point in the history of Rengwe. The Church of Christ was granted permission to establish a Christian Mission in Rengwe in 1961 by the Native Affairs Department. Their mission was to offer health services, education and evangelization. According to Nutt, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (1953-1963) had placed Rengwe as number one priority for a major hospital and it was required that they agree to

⁴¹⁹ Interview, Bitesi Chikanda, Chidamoyo, 5 August 2011

build a hospital or their mission would not be approved.⁴²⁰ It was commented that “the Special Native Area “A” is sadly lacking in medical facilities, but the Church of Christ Mission intend establishing a hospital at their new station in this area. A flying doctor will visit the hospital once weekly.”⁴²¹ More than half a century now after the establishment of the mission, research participants recalled and appreciated the coming of the Church of Christ to this region. They emphasized how it transformed their lives and the landscape as a whole. They also have fond memories of two African men whom they credited for the establishment of Chidamoyo Mission. However, the contribution of the two men is highly contested.

These two individuals were Shadrach Manyepa Dandawa who at that time deputized Chief Dandawa and Miga Chikanda, a “self-proclaimed” missionary. Shadrach was partially educated and one of the few, if not the only one, in the chiefdom at that time. Participants also mentioned that he owned a typewriter and that distinguished him from the rest. Ziden Nutt, a missionary with the Church of Christ and a pioneer in the establishment of Chidamoyo Mission, confessed in his book that they were surprised to find someone who could speak perfect English in such a remote place and that person was Shadrach Manyepa.⁴²²

He narrated that one day his wife Helen started an engine and its loud noise attracted people’s attention who then gathered to see this wonder and how it washed clothes. When the noise stopped “a voice spoke in perfect English *ah madam this is civilization!*”⁴²³ Nutt also confessed that Shadrach became of great help to their work in the area and that he had great respect for him. Miga Chikanda on the other hand was initially based at Dadaya Mission⁴²⁴ and later relocated to Chitomborwizi. Upon settling there, he began to evangelize and to establish branches for the Church of Christ in areas surrounding Chinhoyi. According to Nutt, Chikanda’s passion for evangelism saw him travelling 120 miles [193 kilometers] on his

⁴²⁰ Ziden Nutt, Personal Communication, 25 January 2014

⁴²¹ Annual Report, Urungwe District, S2827/2/2/8 Vol. 2, NAZ, 1961: 2

⁴²² Z.L. Nutt, *Beyond Ourselves: Adventures with God Around the World*, College Press, Joplin, 2010: 58; Interview with Levi and Bitesi Chikanda, 2011

⁴²³ Nutt, 2010: 58-59

⁴²⁴ Dadaya Mission was established by the Church of Christ from New Zealand.

bicycle to reach Chief Dandawa's area, a point that was also stressed by Chikanda's sons, Levi and Bitesi.⁴²⁵

Chikanda impressively presented his connection to the Church of Christ Missionaries to Shadrach and Chief Dandawa. It is claimed that he impressed on them that the missionaries were willing to come and assist the people of Rengwe. Shadrach, in consultation with Chief Dandawa, passionately tasked Chikanda to bring the missionaries. Chikanda went back and brought David Grubbs in 1960 to meet Chief Dandawa. Grubbs was impressed and he applied for a mission site near Chief Dandawa's village which was approved on 24 August 1961 next to Kenyonga [sic] Mountain.⁴²⁶ This marked the beginning of what became Chidamoyo Mission which now boasts of a state of the art hospital and a church that has spread its influence beyond Rengwe.

Nutt, his wife and Michael Nyandoro arrived in Dandawa Chiefdom in April 1962 to oversee the construction of the mission hospital and to evangelize. When they introduced themselves to Chief Dandawa, it is claimed that the chief was literally angry at them. Nutt described the Chief's reaction as:

Chief Dandawa then became almost violent as he literally shouted at me, "Where have you been living?" And without giving me time to answer, the second question came, "Why didn't you come to me before now?"⁴²⁷

Chief Dandawa, despite his advanced age, was keen to see his territory developed. Shadrach then travelled the breadth and length of Rengwe encouraging his people to selflessly offer their labour for the construction of the hospital, school and an airstrip. Villagers' response was overwhelming as they came and felled down trees, destroyed and removed anthills. The construction of the hospital created employment for some men and women of Rengwe.

⁴²⁵ Nutt, 2010: 49; Interview with Levi and Bitesi, 2011

⁴²⁶ Nutt, 2010: 49

⁴²⁷ *Ibid*: 51

They also established Chidamoyo Primary School which brought relief to school pupils who were enduring the long distance to reach Rengwe Primary School. Evangelization programmes to convert people to the Christian faith were also started. Churches were planted in Rengwe and beyond. Nutt explained that the local population was “suspicious of White people.”⁴²⁸ They scattered, hid behind trees or in their pole and mud huts when missionaries approached their places.

In 1967 the construction of Chidamoyo Mission Hospital was completed and it was officially opened in January 1968. The delineation officer remarked that in Dandawa Chiefdom:

Education and health facilities were not complained about, and for good reason. Slap bang in the middle of Dandawa’s area is located the Chidamoyo mission (Church of Christ – American), which has first-class facilities including – [X-] Ray equipment, laboratory, resident doctor. The hospital genuinely satisfies a great need and it draws patients from many miles away. An airstrip enables urgent cases to be flown out at short notice and more modern equipment is being installed. About 6,000 treatments were given to about 3,000 patients during 1967.⁴²⁹

The successful establishment of Chidamoyo Mission gave a new meaning to the Rengwe landscape. The mission represented an island of progress in the midst of remoteness. It represented a significant landmark in the history of the area and its people. The mission offered three social services, that is, health, education and evangelization. Consequently, Rengwe emerged from oblivion to recognition and became a centre of attraction. According to Kathy McCarthy, the first resident doctor after the dedication of Chidamoyo Hospital was Dale Erickson.⁴³⁰ Erickson was also a pilot and as a result, he started fly-in clinics to much more remote areas that were not covered by health services. He established clinics in Msambakaruma, Tchoda, Mashame (across the Sanyati River) and Mujinga areas. In 1978, the hospital was temporarily because of the liberation struggle.

Services resumed on 31 December 1981 and since then the hospital has continued to grow and to attract patients from as far afield as Karoi and Kariba [see fig. 4 below & fig. 5, page 157].

⁴²⁸ *Ibid*: 57

⁴²⁹ S2929/2/9, 1968: 33

⁴³⁰ K. McCarthy, ‘General Information’, unpublished manuscript, Chidamoyo Mision, 2011

With the rise in Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), the hospital was among the first to offer HIV testing and free antiretroviral drugs to patients. It also continues to be a source of employment for the local population and many have been empowered by it.



Fig. 4 - Outpatient Section (left) and Maternity Section (right), 1 July 2011



Fig. 5 - Chidamoyo Mission Hospital, 1967 – Photograph by Ziden Nutt

The evangelization programme on the other hand resulted in the establishment of Church of Christ in Rengwe and beyond. Majority of the older generation in Rengwe was at some point

members of this church. That, however, did not mean they entirely subscribed to its faith. The Church of Christ's branches were referred to as *veChechi yeChidamoyo* (belonging to Church of Chidamoyo) [see fig. 6, page 158]. This brought a new dimension to the discourse of identity and distinction. It identified people by their faith which categorized them either as members or non-members of the Church of Christ.

The establishment of Chidamoyo Mission resulted in Rengwe being perceived as a Christian landscape. Church of Christ also rolled out a welfare project for its congregants. Others were educated and initiated into the church's evangelization mission. A women's fellowship was also instituted where they learned not only about the bible but also other skills such as sewing, knitting and cookery. It acted as a women's social club. Consequently, the name Chidamoyo grew stronger and superseded the original name Rengwe.



Fig. 6 - Chidamoyo Church of Christ, 1 July 2011

Chief Dandawa's territory came to be referred to as *kuChidamoyo* (Chidamoyo territory) and it is known as such to date. Depending on terms of reference it either represented Chidamoyo as a landscape of disease healing or as a landscape of soul healing. The significance of Church of Christ has, however, waned due to competition from other established and emerging spirit-based and Pentecostal churches. Such churches include among others Apostolic Faith Mission

(AFM), Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA); spirit-and-faith based churches such as *Johane Masowe*, *Johane weChishanu* and *Zion*. These churches are offering alternative Christian doctrines anchored on prophesying and exorcizing demons and witchcraft. This is not being offered by the Church of Christ and other mainstream churches. Nonetheless, this does not take away the contribution made by Church of Christ to the Rengwe landscape.

The Second Chimurenga and the Changing Meaning of Landscape

Around the late 1970s Zimbabwe's liberation struggle, popularly known as the Second Chimurenga, entered Rengwe. The war inscribed a new meaning into the territory's landscape. Recollections of this phase of Rengwe's history were diversified and sometimes unpleasant. However, it should hastily be stressed that what I gathered was not exactly what happened during the liberation struggle but, nonetheless, it was a good alternative to the official narrative. There were traceable instances of exaggeration or suppression of information. In some cases emotions were raised plainly indicating that not much healing has taken place since the end of Second Chimurenga. Or, they could be emotions linked to the political violence of the first decade of the 21st Century that pricked the hearts and feelings of many in the manner of the liberation struggle.

The Second Chimurenga in Zimbabwe has been studied from various angles. Some have viewed the participation of peasants as voluntary⁴³¹, whilst others have pointed to the forced nature of peasants' involvement in the struggle.⁴³² Other lines of argument have emphasized the issue of religion on the one hand⁴³³, and the participation of women combatants in the liberation struggle under the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA).⁴³⁴ Schmidt has examined the introduction of Protected Villages (PVs) or "Keeps" in Honde Valley where she grappled with issues of memory, love and healing in forced communities

⁴³¹ Ranger, 1985; K.D. Manungo, "The Role Peasants Played in the Zimbabwe War of Liberation with Special Emphasis on Chiweshe District", Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of History, Ohio University, 1991

⁴³² N. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992

⁴³³ Lan, 1985: xvii-xviii, 5

⁴³⁴ J. Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For Better or Worse? Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2000: xx, 1-2. ZANLA was the military wing of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). Nhongo-Simbanegavi's book focuses on women and ZANLA and does not include the ZIPRA side.

after the war.⁴³⁵ Central to her argument was the fence that was erected to prevent contact between peasants and guerrillas and how it was interpreted by former inhabitants of the Keep or PV. Keeps, Schmidt concluded, represented images of coercion, violence and death and that it was also about power relations.⁴³⁶ Rengwe never experienced the establishment of PVs.

Marowa has examined the construction of the sellout identity in Rengwe where he analyzed how the landscape contributed in the creation of temporal identities.⁴³⁷ According to him, the river valley landscape was perceived as a boundary or “border” and was therefore used to categorize people of chiefdom and at the same time identifying the other part as a political frontier.⁴³⁸ In discussions about the liberation war Musukwe River featured prominently. A variety of narratives were told regarding the river valley landscape and these narratives were anchored on personal experience and hearsay. Two reasons explain why the Musukwe River narratives became of particular interest to this study. Firstly, it has to do with particular perceptions of space or environment which created contestation. Secondly, it acted more as a prism through which analysis, stories and memories of the Second Chimurenga were recalled and articulated. Once again, the river was temporarily manipulated to influence perceptions of power, hegemony and control. During this time, a military meaning was attached to the river valley landscape. It was viewed as a boundary between the Eastern and Western sides of Dandawa Chiefdom [refer fig. 7 below].

⁴³⁵ H. Schmidt, “Healing the Wounds of War: Memories of Violence and the Making of History in Zimbabwe’s Most Recent Past”, in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 23, no. 3, 1997: 301-302; and “Love and Healing in Forced Communities: Borderlands in Zimbabwe’s War of Liberation”, in P. Nugent and A.I. Asiwaju (eds), *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*, Pinter, England, 1996: 89, 191, 193

⁴³⁶ Schmidt, 1996: 191; 1997: 306-307

⁴³⁷ Marowa, 2009: 122, 125

⁴³⁸ *Ibid*: 126-127



Fig. 7 - Musukwe River/Bridge- Photograph taken by researcher, 1 July 2011

This perception of Musukwe River as a “border” in the 1970s brought more harm than good to Rengwe. It went against the inhabitants’ daily activities by suspending the uniting aspect of the river. Such a divisive practice also took away people’s rights to free movement and interaction. A new temporal but deepened identity emerged for those few years of the liberation struggle. Any unsanctioned crossing of the river caused a person to be labeled as a “sellout.”

According participants’ narratives the Second Chimurenga is presumed to have entered Rengwe around 1977. Before any guns were shot in Rengwe, a group of the Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF) arrived in Rengwe and camped at Kenyungo Mountain. This move was necessitated by the aim to protect Chidamoyo Mission from guerrilla attacks. The arrival of guerrillas completely changed the state of affairs in Rengwe as they quickly manipulated Musukwe River as the point of demarcation of the chiefdom. This boundary concept resulted in the military “territorialization” of Rengwe. Territorialisation, according to von Oppen, refers to “a particular construction of space based on a radical idea of the geographical

surface.”⁴³⁹ Storey has also argued that territory refers to “a portion of geographic space claimed or occupied by a person or group of persons or an institution.”⁴⁴⁰ Both ideas agree that territory is constructed and that it is claimed by a person or group of persons. The process of laying claims to space begets territoriality and as a result certain perspectives develop alongside it. Construction of space is connected to particular perceptions arising from human behaviour and understanding of the environment. Musukwe was manipulated just to create differences between the eastern and western sides of Rengwe.

The eastern side was perceived as representing the colonial state because of the presence of Chidamoyo Mission, Chief Dandawa and the RSF camp at Kenyungo Mountain. Despite being a church establishment, Chidamoyo Mission and its White Missionaries were viewed as symbolizing the colonial state and the presence of an RSF battalion further compounded this perception. Chief Dandawa was not spared either because as a salaried chief his sympathies were believed to lie with the colonial government. On the other hand, the western side did not have any institution that, or a person who, mirrored the colonial state. These socio-political differences were manipulated to divide the territory and as such Musukwe offered that divisive platform. Storey has observed that territorial strategies are used by individuals or groups as a way to attain or maintain control and therefore “territoriality can be seen as an expression of power.”⁴⁴¹ He went on to stress that “territoriality and imposition of boundaries are political strategies designed to attain particular ends.”⁴⁴² Thus the image and perception of Musukwe River valley landscape as a boundary should be seen in the context of political contestation, power and control meant to achieve military goals.

In other regions of Zimbabwe such as Honde Valley and Chiweshe, forced villagization was introduced as a counter-insurgency strategy to suffocate the communication network between the rural populations and the guerrillas. The liberation war in Zimbabwe was waged by two military wings of the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). These military wings were the Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary

⁴³⁹ von Oppen, 2006: 58

⁴⁴⁰ Storey, 2001: 1

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid*: 6

⁴⁴² *Ibid*

Army (ZIPRA) and the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) respectively and it was the former that operated in Rengwe. In Urungwe, the colonial government established a shanty settlement known as *tangwena* at the outskirts of Karoi Town only to shelter people and families that were displaced by the war. The emergence of the *tangwena* settlement and the use of Musukwe River as a military boundary indicate that the district in general was highly contested as was the case elsewhere in the country.

The boundary concept had two outcomes on the Rengwe population. Firstly, it managed to cut contact between the local population west of Musukwe River and the RSF and later the *Pfumo reVanhu* (PRV) of the United African National Congress (UANC) in the east. Secondly, it acted as a catalyst in pushing certain sections of the local population into supporting the cause of the war. Even though former *Gota* people had had earlier experiences with nationalist politics; they became more or less inactive when they moved to Rengwe. The situation was even worse for former *Gowa* people because they had not experienced let alone participated in nationalist activities. Thus a great deal of mobilization using all sorts of measures was requisite in order to get the majority of the Rengwe population to support the liberation war.

In Gokwe and Binga the situation was quite different and mobilization of local support was not much of a challenge compared to Rengwe. From since their removal from the Zambezi River the Tonga had been strongly agitated against forced eviction and coupled with their connection with the Northern Rhodesian (Zambia) African National Congress (NRANC), they were readily receptive to nationalist activities. A plethora of grievances existed among the Tonga ranging from chibharo on the roads, forced removal and the water that did not follow them. According to McGregor displacement became the prime memorial site together with the broken promise of looking back, constructing their public histories and protesting exclusion.⁴⁴³ Ethnicity in Northwest Zimbabwe, as McGregor has observed, had been used for divisive reasons by the colonial administration but actually turned out to benefit nationalist activities in the territory which was a borderland. McGregor has explained that, “the new ethnohistories and grievances they contained were entirely compatible with broader

⁴⁴³ McGregor, 2009: 130, 129

nationalist messages of freedom, political rights and restored lands.”⁴⁴⁴ Consequently, the Tonga easily identified and connected with nationalist politics because they already had their own platform and grievances synonymous with the nationalist cause of the late 1960s. It recharged the politics of crossing the border or river and established expectations of the post-colonial state.⁴⁴⁵

There were no popular expectations in Rengwe, at least based on the stories that were gathered about the war. No one seemed to have been active in protest politics prior to the war except for Mushoshoma who by the time of the war had returned to Sipolilo. Similarly, in Gokwe guerrillas found a strong foundation already in existence founded on forced removal, restricted access to land and destocking. Nyambara has noted that Madheruka “could hardly achieve the same economic success in Gokwe which largely explains why they were the most vocal opponents of destocking and removal from Rhodesdale.”⁴⁴⁶ Thus, a fertile and receptive ground was in place in Gokwe, particularly among the Madheruka, to support the cause of the liberation struggle whereas in Rengwe the local population did not have any form of organized protest or opposition that could be tapped by the guerrillas.

The emergence of Musukwe River as a boundary became the prime focus of whipping Rengwe’s population into aligning with the nationalist cause. It resulted in the eastern and western sides being named Rhodesia and Zambia respectively.⁴⁴⁷ This naming of territories represented a contestation of military and political power between the RSF and the PRV to the East and the ZIPRA guerrillas to the West. In ZIPRA guerrillas’ understanding, the name “Rhodesia” referred to the East as a political frontier whilst “Zambia” regarded the West as independent and a “no-go-zone” for RSF and PRV.

Nevertheless, this boundary concept was not cast in stone because the warring parties and *mujibhas* could cross the river at will albeit with extreme caution. For example, ZIPRA

⁴⁴⁴ McGregor, 2009: 130

⁴⁴⁵ McGregor, 2009: 130

⁴⁴⁶ Nyambara, 2005: 278-279

⁴⁴⁷ Marowa, 2006: 49; Group discussion: 2011; Interviews with: Ephraim Chipungu, Chidamoyo Business Centre, 10 August 2011; Chiriyoti, 2011

guerrillas crossed Musukwe to operate in places such as Bhashungwe, Dzimaihwe, Mudzimu and Zvipani. Their operations eventually forced Jairos, who deputized Chief Dandawa to flee to *tangwena* in Karoi and his car was later burnt by the guerrillas.⁴⁴⁸ Similarly, the PRV crossed Musukwe on several occasions to carry out surveillance in the West. In some instances this resulted in military skirmishes between the PRV and the ZIPRA guerrillas.⁴⁴⁹ According to Bhauza, a former *mujibha*, the perception of Musukwe as a “border” did not affect *mujibha* activities because they crossed the river at any time to carry out errands and to gather intelligence for the guerrillas.⁴⁵⁰ This meant the Musukwe was being manipulated for military gains and that the meaning inscribed into it could be flouted when it offered advantages to the guerrillas or as and when they deemed it necessary. However, it instilled fear to the general populace, as well as restricted their actions and movements. Most importantly, it was the prime site through which the activities of the belligerent forces were recalled, re-imagined and re-interpreted.

In their study of Matabeleland, Alexander *et al* have argued that violence and memory are rooted in understandings of particular landscapes, language of everyday political discourse and local interpretations of history.⁴⁵¹ The Rengwe landscape was no exception to the violence caused by the Second Chimurenga which was rooted in the homesteads, abandoned settlements, mountains and rivers. Musukwe did not only create problems for the local populace but also among the ZIPRA guerrilla themselves. One Chigutsa, a rebel and ex-ZIPRA combatant, revealed that Musukwe at some point caused a serious rift and irreconcilable differences between ZIPRA forces stationed in the West and those in the East.⁴⁵² He claimed that ZIPRA guerrillas who operated in the West had “abandoned the nationalist principles and thus caused the two camps not to see eye to eye to an extent that they almost squared-off at some point.”⁴⁵³ There were many struggles within the liberation struggle that have remained undocumented. Overall, Musukwe River should not only be seen

⁴⁴⁸ Interview with: Chiriyoti, 2011; Ephraim, 2011

⁴⁴⁹ Group discussion - [Amai Kenani], 2011; Interviews with: Ephraim, 2011; Pedi Guvheya, Mtirikati, 4 October 2011

⁴⁵⁰ Interview, Bhauza, 2011

⁴⁵¹ Alexander *et al*, 2000: 3

⁴⁵² Interview, Robert Chigutsa Munuwa, Badze, 5 October 2011

⁴⁵³ *Ibid*

as a fading natural feature, but also as a valley landscape that carries different stories about the war of liberation.

A New Context: Voluntary Migration to Rengwe 1979 ended with the Lancaster House Agreement that brought to an end the fighting between the belligerent forces and called for a ceasefire in preparation for the watershed plebiscite of 1980 which brought independence to Zimbabwe. Independence ushered in a new socio-economic and political context which encouraged Zimbabweans to work for the development of the Republic of Zimbabwe. The new government moved quickly to outlaw movement restrictions (curfews) that had been instituted at the height of the liberation struggle. In addition, the post-colonial government announced at once its desire to deal with the skewed distribution of land and resources between the white settlers and the Africans. Spierenburg has noted that after independence the new government promised the “return of stolen lands” to African farmers. The first post-independence development plan envisaged the resettlement of 162,000 families onto former European land before 1986.⁴⁵⁴ In addition to this plan, a call was also made for landless people to look for land in any region of the country.

Some of the areas that began to receive new immigrants in huge droves included Urungwe, Binga, Gokwe and Shangani. In Urungwe, Rengwe Communal Land became one of the most preferred destinations by the land seekers because it still had large tracts of unoccupied land. Agriculturally, Urungwe had been performing well since the establishment of the White farming community in the late 1940s because of its great potential. Black has pointed out that, “in 1975 it (Karoo) remained one of the leading agricultural districts in Rhodesia, proving, despite the setbacks of UDI [Unilateral Declaration of Independence], that almost any crop can be grown successfully...”⁴⁵⁵ Even after independence the trend continued which saw Mashonaland West, to which Urungwe belongs, maintaining its agricultural production records with peasant farmers’ participation contributing significantly to the increased

⁴⁵⁴ Spierenburg, 2004: 2

⁴⁵⁵ Black, 1976: 28

aggregate output.⁴⁵⁶ Data compiled from provincial deliveries to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) in 1984 indicated that Mashonaland West led in maize deliveries with 35% and coming second in sunflower deliveries with 33.2%.⁴⁵⁷ This marked an increase from below 10% of the market output prior to independence to well over 40% in maize and cotton in 1985.⁴⁵⁸

In his inaugural speech, the first Prime Minister of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe called upon the people to turn “guns into ploughshares.” His message recognized the importance of agriculture in the socio-economic development of the country. From as early as 1982, landseekers started to migrate to Rengwe because it was sparsely populated. This new wave of migration resulted in breaking the isolation that Rengwe had endured prior to independence.

Majority of the new immigrants were from Masvingo and they perceived Rengwe lands as *makombo* (virgin lands). Similar scenarios occurred in Gokwe, Binga and Shangani. Migrations to Gokwe began during the colonial period in the 1960s and 1970s, a few years after the involuntary resettlement of Madheruka.⁴⁵⁹ The Ndebele-speaking people constituted the majority of immigrants into Shangani and Binga areas whereupon arrival caused a dramatic transformation of the social, economic and political life.⁴⁶⁰ In Binga, as Dzingirai has revealed, the Ndebeles positioned themselves in influential political positions much to the chagrin and bitterness of the indigenous people. And they even contested the operations of the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) which had been instituted only to benefit the Tonga.⁴⁶¹ The Tonga in Binga and the Korekore in Rengwe suffered the same hostility and negative perception from immigrants into their areas

⁴⁵⁶ S. Moyo *et al*, “The Root Causes of Hunger in Zimbabwe: An Overview of the Nature, Causes and Effects of Hunger and Strategies to Combat Hunger”, Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies Working Papers, Harare, 1985: 1

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid*: 3, 7

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid*: 1

⁴⁵⁹ Nyambara, 2002: 293

⁴⁶⁰ Alexander and McGregor, 1997: 190; Dzingirai, 1999: 266

⁴⁶¹ Dzingirai, 1999: 266; “CAMPFIRE is Not For Ndebele Migrants: The Impact of Excluding Outsiders From CAMPFIRE in the Zambezi Valley, Zimbabwe” in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 2003: 446

who regarded them as “lazy and unable to look after themselves”⁴⁶² and employed derogatory labels on the indigenous populations.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that the immigrants contributed very much to behavioural change among the indigenous people as they started to appreciate new methods of livelihood and lifestyles. They also became active and strong participants in projects meant to benefit their communities. However, in Rengwe the hostility between Korekore and other immigrants tended to be mild compared to the Tonga and immigrants in Binga due to the CAMPFIRE project. CAMPFIRE was a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) initiative to benefit the Tonga who had not received any compensation for their forced removal and had also been excluded from the benefits accruing from wildlife management.⁴⁶³ This programme interfered with the agricultural activities of mostly the Ndebele immigrants or those who viewed CAMPFIRE as putting to waste land which they could use for agricultural production rather than reserve it exclusively for wildlife. In Rengwe the hostility remained only on the level of ethnic differentiation and perception of the “other”, and not anything more.

Those who voluntarily migrated to Rengwe held different perceptions about the land they came to occupy. They contradicted those of the Korekore people who were forced to settle there. Immigrants were pushed by different reasons, but most of them underscored the issue of the shortage and infertility of the land in their former rural areas. Some explained that they migrated to Rengwe because:

I wanted a place where I could get enough land to cultivate. We did not have enough arable land in my former rural area. It was also limited and over-crowded.⁴⁶⁴

Our agricultural life was uneconomic. The arable lands were divided into 4 small fields and as a big household we could not share equally. We did not have fields; the fields belonged to our mothers.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶² Dzingirai, 1999: 266

⁴⁶³ Dzingirai, 2003: 445

⁴⁶⁴ Interview, Tarupiwa Muchando Humasi, Fuleche, 16 September 2012 - the same point was made by Mubayiwa Mutumha, Mutore, 17 September 2012

⁴⁶⁵ Interviews with: Calisto, 2012 - this point was reiterated in interviews with Tobias Machingauta, Mutore, 17 September 2012; Casmore Chekesa, Mutore, 16 September 2012

Other immigrants also narrated their experiences in the former Native Purchase Areas (NPA). They explained that their migration was caused by the fact that the farms in NPA belonged to their fathers and colonial regulations did not allow them to be divided into smaller plots. They were not meant for communal ownership and that only one son could inherit it.⁴⁶⁶ Thus, colonial land policies left a lot of people and their future generations landless. However, as from 1980 onwards, Zimbabwe's post-colonial government seriously engaged in addressing the land question through various measures. One crucial change that occurred in Rengwe was the social transformation from a Korekore community to an ethnically polarized territory. The arrival of immigrants in Rengwe, generally referred to as Mavhitori, further complicated the merged status of the Dandawa Chieftdom thereby turning it into one of a hybrid nature.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the physical landscape has been at the core of discussion. Central has also been the emergence of new concepts of space imbued with different meanings, as well as the manipulation of landscape features to suit particular situations. The colonial government had created Rengwe and gave it a political meaning. That act brewed contestation and tension between Headman Mushoshoma and Chief Dandawa who found themselves resettled in the same land not by their choice. The Rengwe landscape became embroiled in socio-political conflicts as various groups or individuals attempted to manipulate it to serve their interests. Such manipulation caused divisions to emerge within the chieftdom in general, which divisions have more or less been concretely cemented by the establishment of Chidamoyo Mission that had first class facilities in a rural setting. However, the coming of independence in 1980 ushered in a new era which started with a new wave of immigrants arriving in Rengwe and turning around the agricultural prospects of the region.

⁴⁶⁶ Interviews with: Anna Dziyata, Mutore, 17 September 2012; Taurai Chirenje, Mutore, 20 September 2012

Chapter 7: Nostalgic Memories and the Present: A Comparative Analysis

Introduction

Nostalgic memories are a common phenomenon, but are located in different currencies of claims. In this chapter, the objective is to critically analyse the different nostalgic memories found among Dandawa's forced resettlers. Their case is not unique, but what is of interest is making a comparative analysis to understand why they possess such positive memories of an era that has since disappeared. It is of wider significance to ask why nostalgic narratives exist in societies and also why they tend to differ from one group to the other. Historical narratives that fall into the nostalgic or mythical category should be treated as stating a historical, contextual, traditional or contemporary point. As such the forced removal of different groups during the colonial period in Zimbabwe should not be viewed as a rupture or disjuncture between their past and present lives. Rather, it should be seen as the connecting thread between the present and the past experiences. Simply put, nostalgic memories carry reflections and counter-memories regarding the past and the present. Nyambara pointed out that nostalgia bordered on controlling production, autonomy and economic independence and as actors who had control over their daily lives.⁴⁶⁷

Research participants in studies conducted in Gokwe, Binga and also in the present case study, all expressed positive memories about their former homelands. However, it should be hastily pointed out that the circumstances and reasons for such perspectives differ from one case study to the other. The Madheruka of Gokwe talked of Rhodesdale Estate as "that place was wonderful" because there was abundant and fertile land, they owned large herds of livestock and they were close to markets.⁴⁶⁸ Due to these conditions Rhodesdale Estate was preferable and incomparable to Gokwe. Most of the African tenants on the estate were actually identified as black entrepreneurs because they were able to put as much fertile land under cultivation as their resources would permit without any restrictions. The same applied to the herds of livestock individuals could own. Rhodesdale was a place full of opportunities

⁴⁶⁷ Nyambara, 2005: 268-269

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid*: 267, 276

and those who had the passion to do agriculture profited to a great extent. As Moses Mbida expressed, “in Somerset we lived happily. No one experienced hunger because we ploughed as much land as we could. There were no laws restricting us to 10 acres, or the number of cattle we owned, as was the case when we were resettled in Gokwe.”⁴⁶⁹ Those who successfully worked the land and took advantage of opportunities, as indicated by Nyambara, expressed the greatest nostalgia about Rhodesdale describing it as “a wonderful place.”

In the case of the Tonga, the Zambezi River is the embodiment of their positive memories coupled with the bad experiences they endured upon arriving in Binga. Water has been the major complaint of the Binga Tonga and as a result it became the focal point of their nostalgia about the Zambezi River. In his interviews, father Tremmel noted the repeated reference and emphasis to the idea of “leaving their water behind” and also to the promise that had been made by the colonial authorities regarding the water. Simpongo Munsaka stated that “we left with our property and bodies, but we left our water behind. We would like our water to follow us. They promised that the water would follow us,” a position which Tremmel said was repeated over and over again during the interview.⁴⁷⁰ Such nostalgia developed due to the dryness of Binga, poor soils and lack of rain that resulted in constant droughts in their new home.

By sharp contrast, the Zambezi Valley particularly the river, began to be viewed positively due to its abundant water and other livelihood activities it offered. Thus, forced removal created a platform on which comparative perspectives between the past and the present are drawn. Similarly, Rengwe’s forced resettlers developed their own nostalgic and even mythical perceptions about the past and present. Despite being grounded in the same removal experiences, this nostalgia, as indicated earlier, emerged attached to different contexts. Critical to this analysis is the understanding that forced resettlers in Binga, Gokwe and Rengwe have in fact become producers of imaginations and truths of the environments they interacted with and livelihoods they practised both in the past and present.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid*: 274

⁴⁷⁰ Tremmel, 1994: 39

During my field research in Rengwe elders enthusiastically narrated about a glorious past where every problem or challenge was solvable. Their descriptions entice us to visualize the past as a kind of a mythical country. The past is presented as unique, the land of milk and honey and where wild animals were friends or competitors to environmental resources. Today, wild animals are kept in national parks and game reserves such as Mana Pools, Gonarezhou and Chewore among others in Zimbabwe. This description that perceived wild animals as “friends” conjured the image of a mythical past and country. Such a golden past was sharply contrasted with the present bedeviled by enormous problems of unemployment, deteriorating standards of life, political violence and disintegrating social systems. One is therefore confronted with the question: To what extent are these retrospective perceptions shaped by the hardships of resettlement and the liberation war that followed, or perhaps by problems connected to more recent developments in agriculture and land, or are they more than mere glorifications of the “good old times?”

This chapter analyzes this concept of a golden past found in popular memories of the older generation in Rengwe. In spite of being nostalgic, their memories should be seen as projecting the socio-economic, political and health problems of the present onto the past through comparative analysis. It examines how people talk of things in the past with an implicit connection to the present and thereby see the past in sharper light. In this chapter, the memories of research participants are regarded as views about the past and not as sources of the past.

Nostalgic Memories: Contest and Meaning

A Portuguese archaeologist (cited in Gengenbach) in Maputo, Mozambique, commented in 1995 that “old people in the country no longer remember anything about the past. Their memories are completely garbled now because of the war.”⁴⁷¹ The assumption was that the violent removal of people from lands where their history was embedded was tantamount to losing their memories. Gengenbach has challenged this assumption by illustrating how

⁴⁷¹ Gengenbach, 2000: 523

women in displaced communities in Mozambique very well recounted their history and kinship relationships. Most, if not all, displaced communities present their old environments as “landscapes of home.” The question is: at what point does a landscape become a home? Sopher has argued that the concept of home can refer to a house, a land, a village, a city, a district, a country or the world.⁴⁷² For instance among the Aranda (Australian aborigines), home is located in the ties between people and place whilst among the Luo in Kenya, home is “where the placenta is buried.”⁴⁷³ Attachment to home among the Aranda is meant for males and that home has no meaning for males apart from the journey which takes them away from it.⁴⁷⁴ In the context of displaced communities, home happens to be where they derive connection to the landscape, kinship ties, history and identity as a people. But this is also subject to change.

Alienation from landscapes of attachment does not stop people from making claims to them. Such memories are not only about the removal itself, but they can also be about promises that were made as is in the case of the Binga Tonga mentioned above. The promise of “water following them” has kept their memories lightened to the point of being agitated against the government and presumed outsiders. In 2000 they threatened to invade Lake Kariba to dislodge “outsiders” who owned fisheries there because they felt discriminated against yet they endured removal for the construction of the lake.⁴⁷⁵ Despite their displacement and loss of access to the Zambezi, their claims to the river have not been silenced.⁴⁷⁶ Their claims have revolved around politics of belonging and conflicts about the past.

Similarly, notwithstanding the many years of non-interaction with the valley landscape, Dandawa’s forced resettlers’ (the older generation) memories still possess a stronger attachment to their former homelands. Chiriyoti, for example, stated that “if the government says go back to *Gowa* today; I will be the first one because that is our ancestral land.”⁴⁷⁷ Other

⁴⁷² D.E. Sopher, “The Landscape of Home: Myth, Experience, Social Meaning”, in D.W. Meinig (ed.), *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1979, 130

⁴⁷³ *Ibid*: 132; Cohen & Odhiambo, 1989: 25

⁴⁷⁴ Sopher, 1979: 136

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid*: 181-182

⁴⁷⁶ McGregor, 2009: 3

⁴⁷⁷ Interview, Chiriyoti, 2011

participants also reiterated the same. They stressed the need to return and perform their rituals at the rightful and sacred places because they felt disempowered in their traditional roles and also disconnected from the spiritual world.⁴⁷⁸ Nonetheless, nothing tangible was happening to indicate that the people were seeking land restitution. Their cause is weak because there are two groups of forced resettlers who came from different regions and coupled with that, the younger generation is not interested in this land restitution business. They seem satisfied and comfortable with their present socio-economic status and therefore they are not concerned about the nostalgia of their grandparents. They are not willing to sacrifice their little achievements by reestablishing themselves somewhere else.

However, a comment deserves to be made about accounts that are deemed to be nostalgic. When we declare accounts about the past as “nostalgic,” we might fall into the danger of overlooking the claims they contain. Firstly, they contain contesting claims that emanate from different versions of the past from within the group. Secondly, our views render a critical review of such “nostalgic memories” and thus might lead to overlooking the claims contained therein. The presence of contest points to an interest in the terrain of truth, reliability or validity. By questioning nostalgic accounts, it means we are contesting what happened in the past as well as its historicity. Contesting the past is posing questions with regards to the present and what the past means in the present.⁴⁷⁹ It is worth noting that in today’s perspective certain things of the past tend to be seen in a sharper light than they actually were then.

In Rengwe, participants sharply contrasted their life before removal with their present circumstances. Some claimed that *Gowa* was better because they did not experience much hunger and droughts whereas now these are occurring successively. Others claimed that life after removal has been better compared to the suffering they experienced in *Gowa*. Chapter 3 attempted to demystify the perspective that the impact of droughts and hunger was less felt by indicating that the Zambezi Valley is hot, dry and receives an annual average rainfall of

⁴⁷⁸ Interviews with: Danger, 2012; Tapiwa, 2011; Mathias, 2011

⁴⁷⁹ Hodgkin and Radstone, 2006: 1

650mm.⁴⁸⁰ It was also stressed that the fact that *Gowa* dwellers resorted to eating poisonous tubers and roots disapproves the description of the valley as a “land of milk and honey.” Actually it was more life-threatening in *Gowa* than it is in Rengwe.

When one considers the positive memories of Madheruka about Rhodesdale Estate, a remarkable difference in what makes up people’s nostalgia is noticeable. Madheruka’s nostalgia is premised more on the issue of policy change and less on the environment or landscape. As stated earlier, Rhodesdale was considered a wonderful place because of the many opportunities and resources it offered and Gokwe was the stark opposite as it could not offer the same economic opportunities. The introduction of land husbandry in 1951 which restricted access to land, resources and livestock became a huge blow for the Madheruka. The effect of land husbandry came to be greatly felt after removal. Moses Mbida explained that, “there were no laws restricting us to 10 acres, or the number of cattle we owned, as was the case when we were settled in Gokwe.”⁴⁸¹ A point of comparison in this case is the kind of entrepreneurship of which removal and land husbandry dealt a blow to their economic and livelihood activities. For Rengwe’s forced resettlers, they were not successful agriculturalists neither did the Zambezi Valley offer opportunities nor critical productive resources, so forced removal only uprooted them from a landscape of attachment which had no economic opportunities.

Whilst others perceived *Gowa* as a wonderful place, other participants’ assessment of it was rather negative. They actually saw positive change coming into their lives after removal as they now have tangible things such as presentable properties and better educated siblings. Sedina observed that:

Our life is better now; it has greatly improved compared to *Gowa*. We have durable brick-made houses which are roofed with either corrugated iron or asbestos sheets. In *Gowa*, we had pole and mud houses. Our children are getting education. Some are driving cars, something we never dreamt of in *Gowa*.⁴⁸²

⁴⁸⁰ See Pwiti, 1996: 3

⁴⁸¹ Nyambara, 2005: 274

⁴⁸² Interview, Sedina, 2011 - the idea was also shared by Nyamutaka Chiworeka, Chidamoyo, 10 August 2011

Such memories reinterpret and recreate the image not only of the past, but also of the narrator himself or herself. Portela has argued that when recalling the past, one recreates an image nourished by consecutive memories recreated from the time the events happened and framed by the shape of the narrator at the moment of recollection.⁴⁸³ Hodgkin and Radstone have observed that in such circumstances the focus of historical analysis should shift from looking at memory either as “true” or “mistaken” but as a process and to work towards understanding its motivation and meaning.⁴⁸⁴ Thus, rather than dismissing nostalgic narratives, we should seek to understand the meaning portrayed in “nostalgic” memories and the circumstances shaping them.

Uncertainties and the Reinterpretation of the Past

In discussions about their history and culture, Rengwe’s forced resettlers expressed huge anxiety as they took a journey into their past. They drew illustrations from everyday practices, challenges and tensions to develop views about the past and the present. They did not only see themselves in the past, but their memories also located them in history. One striking aspect in their narratives was the consistent use of the possessive form *kwedu* (ours). Close analysis revealed that the possessive form was used to legitimize the idea of ownership and belonging to those lands and also making land rights claims. One participant commented that “nothing is good about a land that isn’t yours. Our land is in *Gowa* from where we were removed, where we were born, where our ancestors are and where we left them.”⁴⁸⁵

Land has a basic importance in the socio-cultural and political activities of the community. It is significant for its materiality, its fertile soils, its abundant resources such as fruits and honey and it features prominently in debates of attachment and belonging. Attachment and belonging are not visible and neither are they tangible, rather they are expressed in relation to land and identity. Shipton has described human attachments as something with “no feeling or texture like twine but would seem somehow to tie persons to other persons...”⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸³ Portela, 2009: 52

⁴⁸⁴ Hodgkin and Radstone, 2006: 4

⁴⁸⁵ Interview, Danger, 2012 – the same point was also stressed by Rusika, 2011; Stefani, 2011; and Kamurosi, 2011

⁴⁸⁶ P. Shipton, *Mortgaging the Ancestors: Ideologies of Attachment in Africa*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2009: pix

On another level, claims to the land by Rengwe's forced resettlers touched on a crucial but difficult question: can spirits of the ancestors relocate? By emphasizing that their land was "from where they were removed and where their ancestors are," participants were making a clear statement that spirits of ancestors cannot be relocated. It, however, remained unclear to identify the point at which graves and spirits of the ancestors can be treated as separate. They only made a clear distinction regarding who relocated and who did not. It was stressed during discussions that the ancestors did not relocate and that they could not be relocated. This belief has caused the continued existence of the feeling of connection to their former homelands.

The discourse of attachment and belonging goes beyond people to include attachment between people and things.⁴⁸⁷ Chapter 5 discussed at length the concept of *nyika* (country) in which Dandawa's forced resettlers (the older generation) maintained that Rengwe was not their *nyika*. This continued reliance on the concept of *nyika* represented some remnants of protest against forced eviction from the Zambezi Valley and its Escarpment and from Sipolilo. It is also employed to reveal the socio-cultural and political changes that have emerged as a result of eviction and resettlement in another land. For instance, some people have lost influence in traditional matters such as succession to the Dandawa Chieftainship and ritual practices. On top of that, the checks and balances on abuse of traditional authority are no longer useful. Consequently, it has caused the emergence of tensions within the chiefdom.

Thus, reference to land is not only meant to make connection with the past and lost territories; it is also a way of explaining new ties and relations that have developed. It is also about highlighting the challenges and the tensions which are present in the chiefdom. As one tries to understand how Rengwe's forced resettlers got established in Rengwe, s/he is also asking how other ethnic groups found their way into the chiefdom. Nonetheless, it should be noted that belonging and identity construction are not cast in stone, they are very flexible. The ethnic groups that now form the Dandawa Chiefdom have built new relations through intermarriages, totems and other forms of identities. Totems have managed in some instances

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid*

to narrow the gap between the *Korekore* and the *Mavhitori* grand-identities because totems such as *Nzou Samanyanga* (elephant), *Soko* (monkey), *Shumba neChinanga* (lion), among others, are found in both collective identities.

In Tanzania, Malkki has found out that Hutu refugees in Kigoma Township did not hold on to their collective identity like their counterparts in Mishamo refugee camp. Instead, they sought ways of assimilating and shifting the multiple identities that were found in the township.⁴⁸⁸ They preyed on the social context of the township to derive or borrow identities that suited their circumstances and thus they exhibited no single identity as a means to circumvent the challenges that came with being a refugee.

The past and the land therefore become the theatre where struggles and frustrations are mapped and where contestations and claims of belonging and change are illustrated and debated. The land is the frame on which projections about the past on the present are made. This is exemplified by the different accounts of nostalgia found among Madheruka in Gokwe, Tonga in Binga and Dandawa in Rengwe. People reveal and debate changes in their territories by referring to what used to be there, what is no longer there and what is now there.

Now back to the question: “Did the ancestors relocate?” The relationship between the forced resettlers and the ancestors did not end with relocation, despite their graves remaining behind in *Gowa* and *Gota* respectively. Tsumwa narrated the fate of their ancestors and ritual sites as:

We left our ritual sites just like that but after informing the ancestors of our forced movement. What could we have done? Our elders performed rituals and they told the ancestors that the Whites wanted us out of that land. The ancestors did not refuse and neither did they relocate. Our desire today is to go back and perform the rituals. However, we are facing resistance from the Chief because he does not support that idea. It’s a stalemate; we are in dispute there...⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁸ Malkki, 1995: 3

⁴⁸⁹ Interview, Tsumwa Tsumwa, Chidamoyo, 21 September 2012

Here we notice different points of attention between the Tonga and Dandawa *Gowa*, both of whom were removed from the Zambezi Valley. Dandawa *Gowa*'s major concern was the ancestors and their graves whilst for the Tonga it was their water which remained behind. Graves among the Tonga have seized to be critical because they were covered and destroyed by the Zambezi water following the damming at Kariba Gorge. Such talk of ancestors and graves is not common among the Madheruka because for them their major loss was in the economic arena.

People who were responsible for performing the rituals in Rengwe strongly maintained that relocation only affected them but not the ancestors and their sacred ritual sites. The most revered rituals in *Gowa* were *Chidzere*, *Siyanyanga* and *Kapepe*. Participants emphasized that a community consisted of two halves: human beings and the spirits of ancestors. They believed that only one half was moved to Rengwe and the other half, which is the powerful one, remained behind in *Gowa* and *Gota* respectively. This same idea is also found among the Tonga, but in a different context. The Tonga believe that two snakes which represent the Zambezi River goddess and god known as *Nyaminyami* were separated during the construction of Kariba Dam wall. As a result the tremors that occur on Kariba Dam wall are explained as the fight by the male *Nyaminyami* which needs to be reunited with the female *Nyaminyami*. *Nyaminyami* is the river god of the Tonga so their desire for the water to follow them is a call to reconnect with their spiritual world. Thus, claims about former homelands are not only about belonging to the land; they are also calls for the reunion of the halves. Tsumwa expressed that their desire is not to return to the valley per se but it is about returning to perform their rituals and reconnect with their ancestors.

In nostalgic narratives we encounter comparison of the places by the storytellers. Such comparison, in the case of Rengwe's forced resettlers, was not merely meant to reveal how the other was not good, but also to illustrate the problems they were experiencing.

What can we do? There is no reverse with relocation but life here is different from our own land. We were brought here to suffer. In *Gowa* we suffered but we were at our home, our country of birth. Chiefs were mature people and not like these modern ones. We can't perform *marenda* for this land; they have to be done by the owners, the likes of Ziome. This country isn't productive; there is witch-weed, it is mountainous; how can we harvest on stones? *Gowa* soils were loose, required no fertilizer but here the soil

is tired. In *Nyakasikana*, women caught fish from Rukomeshi River using medicinal plants. They filled baskets; we never ate green vegetables but meat, fish We were used to tsetse fly and wild animals such as elephants and they were our friends. We even met them as we returned from beer parties.⁴⁹⁰

This was a narrative from a female participant. It illustrated how present circumstances influenced peoples' views of the past and the present. Her analysis focused on aspects of livelihood and social status of the group as indicated by the use of "we." The narration was negotiated between her interests, the interests of the group and the circumstances at the time of telling. And at this point, one can agree that individuals involved in remembering "do not inhabit isolated worlds but live socially, commemorate the past and actively make sense of the world through a process of social communication."⁴⁹¹

Nostalgic Memories and the Present

Present-day socio-economic challenges emerged as the most crucial reasons for projecting today's situation on the past. Kadovhurunga's narrative was very remorseful about the kind of life and livelihood they were experiencing in Rengwe which she described as a "life of suffering." She focused more on aspects affecting women and highlighted how their responsibility of fending for the family has come under serious threat. Here relocation was not viewed as bad; rather it was the land on which they were resettled that was the problem. We are also tempted to ask: Would they tell the same story if their life today was good? Similarly, Madheruka in Gokwe did not blame the land for their reduced economic success but blamed the restriction laws put in place after 1950 that restricted their acreages to ten and livestock to eight, a sharp drop from the thirties and forties they used to own in Rhidesdale. It should be mentioned that forced removal of the 1950s was not meant at poverty alleviation, but at aligning the country's populations with the racial land divisions that had been drawn in 1930. Most Africans were not privy to this idea and when they looked back in hindsight, their past or old homes appeared in a positive light.

⁴⁹⁰ Interview, Kadovhurunga, 2011 - the point was also emphasized by Siyana, 2011; Edina, 2011

⁴⁹¹ Devine-Wright, 2003: 10

Elsewhere, for example in India, studies on displacement have emphasized the profound socio-economic effects and cultural disruption of those affected.⁴⁹² Tripathy has stated that “dislocation breaks up living patterns and social continuity, it dismantles existing modes of production, disrupts social networks, causes impoverishment of many of those uprooted, threatens their cultural identity....”⁴⁹³ Impoverishment, as noted by Tripathy, was what Kadovhurunga referred to as “suffering” in her narrative. Whilst the forced resettlers in Binga and Rengwe complained about the areas, voluntary immigrants to the same areas saw them as good or described them as “virgin” lands. For instance, the Ndebeles regarded Binga as “Eden”, likening it to the biblical land where the first two human beings dwelt which was regarded as fertile.⁴⁹⁴ Dzingirai’s research in Binga has revealed that immigrants who are mostly Ndebele-speaking were up in arms against Binga Council and the CAMPFIRE programme after some land was earmarked for safari hunting to benefit the Tonga.⁴⁹⁵ The Ndebeles perceived the land differently because they wanted to put the land to commercial agricultural and ranching and not safari hunting. They argued, as Dzingirai put it, “this good land is not for elephants”, and as a result, they engaged in poaching activities and encroaching into some of the safari land for agriculture purposes.⁴⁹⁶

Thus, forced resettlers and voluntary immigrants perceived the same land they occupied differently. The so-called problems in Rengwe’s forced resettlers play a central role in the manner in which the present is projected on the past. They perceived the challenges as insurmountable because they have failed to find ways to remedy the situation. For instance, they cannot address the infertility of the soil and the poor harvests. Rengwe is of low agro-agricultural potential because it falls under agro-ecological regions III and IV. These are regions of moderate to low agro-ecological potential, rainfall is unreliable, and they are suitable for extensive livestock farming and limited production of some grains especially small grains.⁴⁹⁷ This agro-ecological classification of Rengwe tallied to some extent with Kadovhurunga’s description of Rengwe as a “land of suffering.”

⁴⁹² Tripathy, 2009: 1-2

⁴⁹³ *Ibid*: 2

⁴⁹⁴ Dzingirai, 1999: 266

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid*: 270

⁴⁹⁶ Dzingirai’s article title precisely summarizes this point: see Dzingirai, 1999

⁴⁹⁷ Chimhowu, 2002: 554

Migrants who came to Rengwe after 1980 also shared the same view. They described Rengwe as a mountainous and sloppy terrain which washes away the top fertile soil in just two or three farming seasons.⁴⁹⁸ However, Kadovhurunga's description (and those of other participants) of *Gowa* contradicted the agro-ecological classification of the Zambezi Valley as Natural Region V. Natural Region V is considered unsuitable for crop production and also because of tsetse fly, it is marginal for livestock.⁴⁹⁹ Rather, it is most suitable for game ranching. Local perceptions of land use differ significantly with those from natural sciences. Before displacement, some villages practised flood recession agriculture. Such agricultural practice was also done by the River Tonga as very well elaborated by McGregor. The Dandawa *Gowa* cultivated the rich alluvial soils that were deposited on the banks of the Zambezi River. These were small fields or winter gardens known as *matoro*. Villages that could not access the Zambezi water did not maintain *matoro*. Instead they relied mainly on streambank cultivation or slash-and-burn (*temwa* fields) during the rainy season. They also benefited from the rich soils on the banks of rivers such as Rukomeshi and Nyakasanga among others. Thus in the context of local land practices, Kadovhurunga's perception of *Gowa* as fertile land when contrasted with Rengwe was correct.

Pwiti's archaeological conclusions on prehistoric farming communities in mid-Zambezi Valley support Kadovhurunga's observation. He observed that the location of settlement sites in mid-Zambezi Valley can be explained partly from the point of agricultural economy. Location of settlement sites was influenced by the occurrence of suitable agricultural soils such as alluvial sandy loams found along river banks.⁵⁰⁰ Alluvial soils "possess good agricultural potential, particularly for small grains like millet and sorghums which were the principle crops."⁵⁰¹ Local perceptions of soil fertility were based on its ability to support the staple crop that was grown. According to Pwiti the alluvial soils deposited along river and stream banks were fertile and good for staple crops namely, millet and sorghum. Comparatively, Rengwe soils do not have the same agricultural potential to support the

⁴⁹⁸ Interview, Calisto and Tobias, 2012

⁴⁹⁹ See Pwiti, 1996: 3

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid*: 4

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid*

cultivation of maize, their staple crop unless aided by fertilizers and manure. By the mid 1980s and following the arrival of migrants, cotton which is a cash crop began to be cultivated because it suited the conditions. In Rengwe it was the immigrants who came with the cotton revolution whereas in Gokwe it was the Madheruka, the involuntary migrants, who introduced cotton in the region and to the Shangwe.

The infertility of the soil has placed most of Rengwe's peasant farmers in an invidious position. They require tested and quality hybrid seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and draught power to be able to produce a good yield both for subsistence and for the market. Unfortunately, the region does not offer opportunities to the peasant farmers to obtain income to support their agricultural activities. The situation was made worse by the economic decline and hyper-inflation that characterized the Zimbabwean economy in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Peasant farmers, almost across the country, could not purchase and neither could they access agricultural inputs. Poor rainfall and the absence of a competitive market for their agricultural produce compounded the already deteriorating situation. Prices that were offered by the market were unreasonable and could not even cover production costs let alone inputs taken on credit.

Due to such challenges, nostalgic memories seem to have emerged stronger in the period after 2000. Most rural peasant farmers have failed to fairly compete and sustain their livelihood in the post-2000 Zimbabwean economy. The situation is even worse for female-headed households. Drinkwater has argued that the advent of the colonial state altered and transformed the scale of insecurity affecting particularly women, children, the poor, the elderly and the less educated.⁵⁰² Peasant women's opportunities are restricted, yet they have to provide for their families. They rely mainly on cash crop production or maintaining small gardens, but because of poor soils, unreliable rainfall and unavailability of agricultural inputs, they are greatly exposed and insecure.

⁵⁰² Drinkwater, 1991: 2

Nostalgic memories when viewed from this angle are thus not meant to celebrate the past but to illustrate what they have lost in the process because the past is no longer attainable. In *Gowa*, a woman possessed fishing skills and knowledge of medicinal herbs but this has since disappeared (or is slowly disappearing) as a consequent of displacement. Kadovhurunga's narrative exposed the effect of forced relocation and change of environment on women's socio-economic lives; namely: on women's ability to provide for their families; on their knowledge and skills which they can no longer exploit and on how their role as women has greatly diminished. In India, Tripathy observed that women were the worst victims of displacement because it "constraints their access to forests and its resources which directly affect their traditional housework and in the formal economy."⁵⁰³

Challenges in Present-day Rengwe

In Rengwe, women could no longer practise streambank cultivation or maintain *matoro* because the colonial government had created new concepts of space. Such changes added to the psychological stress they already had of starting a new life in a foreign environment. It created new challenges which they needed to cope with and also compete for the same resources with men. Women felt disempowered and impoverished by forced relocation so they positively viewed the past. The present has made their potential in certain spheres redundant.

Rengwe is a hot region and according to Chimhowu it receives an average rainfall varying from 754mm in areas close to Sanyati River and rising to 890mm near Chiroti.⁵⁰⁴ However, the rainfall pattern is not consistent; it varies from one season to the other to the extent of causing severe droughts in Urungwe District in general. Between 1980 and 2000 Zimbabwe as a country experienced six droughts: in 1981-82; 1983-84; 1986-87; 1991-92; 1994-95 and 1996-97 with the 1991-92 being regarded as the worst ever. The first decade of the second millennium has neither been good because of very low or no rainfall and the unavailability of

⁵⁰³ Tripathy, 2009: 5

⁵⁰⁴ Chimhowu, 2002: 554 - the areas referred to fall within Dandawa Chiefdom.

agricultural inputs. The land reform of 2000 known as the “Third Chimurenga”⁵⁰⁵ resulted in the emergence of political and economic problems in the country. Poor peasants were the worst affected because their livelihood depended mostly on agricultural production. At the height of the country’s economic crisis, between 2006 and 2008, the value of its currency greatly depreciated, inflation skyrocketed causing agricultural inputs and basic food commodities to go beyond the reach of most, if not all, rural peasants.

Most rural businesses closed down and the few that remained operational had nothing of substance to sell. Danger remarked that “you went to the shop there was no bread, sugar, no groceries; what you found was vaseline (petroleum jelly). Do we cook and eat vaseline? This was because we have disrespected our traditions.”⁵⁰⁶ During these years, the political economy adversely affected rural economies. Consequently, people resorted to the old survival strategies of gathering, preparing and eating poisonous tubers and roots. As a result of consuming poisonous roots to mitigate the extent of the hunger, a number of lives were lost in Rengwe.

Some participants’s narratives emphasized their fear which was connected to the uncertainty of the future. Chiriyoti narrated that:

Ah, what we liked in *Gowa* We did not like what we have today; clothes, ah! We loved our lifestyle. There was no government that oppressed us. We hunted animals. If I went into the forest I would bring home *masenda* (termites) from *mizunga* trees to eat. Roots such as *manyanya* were eaten as snacks and not as part of a meal like today. Ah, today’s life is nothing, NEVER! I think we are approaching the end of the world. Look at how people are dying these days. You hear every one of God’s days that someone is dying here and another is being buried there. It was not like that in *Gowa*. Five years could elapse without witnessing a single death. Here agricultural practice requires fertilizer; this was no requirement in the valley, the soils were fertile. There was no witch-weed like here. If you got to Mana Pools and disrespected traditions like asking; where is the honey then? You wouldn’t go very far away before finding a beehive but with blood inside it because you opposed traditions. We didn’t eat green vegetables like now. Boss (addressing me), we had a better life in *Gowa*; we didn’t suffer from the

⁵⁰⁵ The land reform was called “Third Chimurenga” because land remained unfinished business following the Second Chimurenga against White Settler rule.

⁵⁰⁶ Interview, Danger, 2012

effects of droughts or hunger. There were plenty of edible things such as *tsangu*, *katunguru*, *nhunda*, *mhande*, *nyakapanda* among others.⁵⁰⁷

Of course Chiriyoti's narrative is exaggerated to some extent, but his aim was to express historical change through his nostalgic memory. As such, the past and present are made to engage in a dialogue in order to debate and reveal that historical change. Chiriyoti's views about the past were reconstructed around the backdrop of socio-economic and political changes in the country. This made him to give a kind of mythical and nostalgic importance to the past. Notable was his view that respecting ancestors or traditions opened the way to exploit environmental resources. For instance, one could ask the ancestors to feed him whilst he was in the forest. Of great significance, was his understanding that change from the past to the present represents a historical process.

Chiriyoti picked two of today's major problems: the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). HIV and AIDS are still incurable and the impact is unbearable, particularly in rural areas. Local relations and settlement patterns make it easier for the local population to monitor closely the rate of mortality in their localities. The situation is further worsened by lack of food and specifically malnutrition in children which therefore make the future seem hopeless and uncertain. Chiriyoti's statement that "every one of God's days someone is dying," aptly captured the uncertainty and people's fear of the future. In another way, it also stressed the perception of Rengwe as a "diseased landscape" as discussed in Chapter 6.

His layman's analysis of the situation proved that even with sophisticated health systems; the present was not getting any better than the past. Another participant also remarked in hindsight that "why did the owners of this land (Rengwe) abandon it? It was because of diseases; they were dying."⁵⁰⁸ Yet another connected HIV and AIDS to a local practice known as *runyoka/rukawo*. It is a practice where husbands administer a certain traditional concoction

⁵⁰⁷ Interview, Chiriyoti, 2012 - almost all former *Gowa* participants, both female and male, expressed similar sentiments and descriptions.

⁵⁰⁸ Interviews with: Rusika, 2011; Rusika Manatsa, Fuleche, 2 March 2008 - the idea was also expressed by Chapo, 2012; Lina, 2011

to their wives to stop them from engaging in extra-marital relationships. *Runyoka* is believed to be a protective measure (euphemistically referred to as “fencing”). Men who engage in infidelity with “fenced” women fall seriously ill and eventually die if the condition is not reversed or treated. Mathias also weighed into this matter and remarked that “society rushes to say any person dying has AIDS, NO! Some are dying from *runyoka*.”⁵⁰⁹ HIV and AIDS are scientifically diagnosed and any death resulting from them cannot be doubted. Nonetheless, Mathias’ analysis focused on the society’s perception of deaths. His concern emphasized the immoral practices that have bedeviled the present-day Rengwe society. The marriage institution is no longer respected so for him the mortality rate will remain higher as long as people do not behave morally.

Consequently, these issues of droughts, unproductive land, diseases and deaths have earned Rengwe such descriptions as “land of hunger” and “diseased landscape” respectively.⁵¹⁰ Such perceptions underscored the level of suffering to which people have been exposed. Chimhowu observed that the older generation in Dandawa viewed Rengwe as *nyika yenzara* (the land of hunger [drought]).⁵¹¹ According to the elders, it does not possess many natural resources compared to the Zambezi Valley. It has no alternative ways to mitigate stressful situations other than to wait for the intervention of the government or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). For instance, were it not for an NGO called GOAL which has provided food relief since 2000, it could have been a disaster for the local population. Now GOAL has shifted its attention to providing nutritional food to people living with HIV and AIDS. However, this kind of analysis should not be taken at face value.

Disputes and Traditional Politics in Rengwe

Soon after 1980 new immigrants (*Mavhitori/Madheruka*) began to arrive and to settle in Rengwe. This development transformed the chiefdom into one of a hybrid character. Its composition created new challenges, reshaped identities and transformed local politics. For

⁵⁰⁹ Interview, Mathias, 2011

⁵¹⁰ Such categories were deployed by research participants as they lamented the challenges they face in Rengwe particularly droughts and diseases.

⁵¹¹ Chimhowu, 2002: 556

purposes of easier discussion, the forced resettlers and the immigrants are referred to as the “first” and “late” comers respectively.

This post-independent migration resulted in the rapid growth of peasant agriculture in Rengwe. Despite its negative policies on Africans, colonial capitalism introduced African peasants to market-oriented agricultural practices. According to Berry, during the colonial period African farmers became increasingly involved in market exchanges by gaining [limited] access to productive resources.⁵¹² Most of the latecomers to Rengwe possessed better knowledge in market-oriented agriculture. Some among them held Master Farmer Certificates while others had acquired competent farming skills from working on their fathers’ or white settlers’ farms. They appreciated, to some extent, the benefits of commercialized peasant agricultural production.

Berry has observed that the colonial period resulted in “increased amounts of cash-flow into rural economies and farmers’ incomes rose, transactions in material goods and claims on productive resources became increasingly commercialized.”⁵¹³ In Zimbabwe, for instance, peasant agricultural production increased from “below 10% prior to independence to 40% in market output” by 1985.⁵¹⁴ The majority of the latecomers had participated in commercial farming before they came to Rengwe. In stark contrast, the firstcomers had not participated in peasant-based commercial agriculture and neither did they possess the relevant skills or knowledge for market-oriented agriculture.

This difference in skills also differentiated their socio-economic statuses. The gap in socio-economic status created divisions due to the denigration of others in the chiefdom. Consequently, it brewed tensions and suspicions between the first and the latecomers. Latecomers, nonetheless, downplayed the idea of tensions between them and the firstcomers

⁵¹² S. Berry, *No Condition is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*, University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin, 1993: 16

⁵¹³ *Ibid*

⁵¹⁴ Moyo *et al*, 1985: 1

during discussions and opted instead to stress the cordial relationship that existed.⁵¹⁵ In contrast, the firstcomers made strong statements that emphasized the existence of divisions between the two groups. The emergence of negative perceptions especially directed at the firstcomers created latent divisions within the chiefdom. However, it was unclear why the latecomers swept the tensions under the carpet. Nonetheless, they admitted that in the early 1980s the firstcomers did not possess competitive agricultural skills. It was them who imparted the skills to their counterparts.⁵¹⁶ They also admitted that the firstcomers specifically the younger generation were now performing better than them in agricultural production.

In the early years soon after they arrived in Rengwe, the latecomers harvested exceedingly high yields. They used to produce between fifty and seventy bales of cotton, between twenty and forty tonnes of maize while women produced between fifteen and thirty bags of groundnuts.⁵¹⁷ There was no doubt that peasant farmers contributed greatly to Zimbabwe's food security in the 1980s. According to Moyo *et al*, the success story of Zimbabwe's aggregate output of agriculture products owed much to the increase in production by peasant farmers.⁵¹⁸ Chisvo has noted that before the introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in 1990, Zimbabwe had a strong food security base which afforded her to export maize to member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).⁵¹⁹ Participation in this agricultural economy brought increased income to the latecomers which significantly improved their socio-economic status. This became a source of tension in the chiefdom as the firstcomers remained with nothing much to show for their social status.

Here, making use of three illustrations, I demonstrate how the firstcomers perceived the tensions between them and the latecomers. The latecomers actually regarded the firstcomers as the "owners of the land." The firstcomers on the other hand described Rengwe as

⁵¹⁵ Interviews with: Casmore, 2012; Tarupiwa, 2012; Anna, 2012

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid*

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid*

⁵¹⁸ Moyo *et al*, 1985: 1

⁵¹⁹ M. Chisvo, "Reaping the Whirlwind: Economic Liberalization and Food Security in Zimbabwe", Catholic Institute of International Relations Report, London, 2000: 5

comprised of those who were resettled due to government policy and immigrants or Madheruka.

Dandawa is comprised of those who were resettled by government policy and those from Masvingo. We live together but our counterparts do not respect our traditions and that is where the problem is. They look down upon us, *Makorekore*.⁵²⁰

Adherence to culture was singled out as one of the areas of conflict. They accused the latecomers of despising them as a people and also their Korekore culture. This possibly arose from the fact that the firstcomers were not competent peasant farmers. Moreover, they lacked western-oriented education. As a result, they remained inward-looking and tradition-focused. This contempt caused the emergence of an inferiority-superiority scenario between the two groups.

However, this idea of disrespecting Korekore traditions lacked merit because the latecomers actively participated in traditional rituals. For instance, the person in charge of coordinating the preparations for the rain-making ritual in Mutore area was *Muvhitori*, a latecomer. He coordinated them together with the lion spirit and the Korekore elders. This cultural synergy unites the different ethnic groups in the chiefdom than to divide them. Moreover, rain-making rituals are not peculiar to Rengwe since they are widely practised throughout the country. The only difference is that it is called differently by different ethnic groups. The Korekore called it *marenda* whereas *Mavhitori* called it *mutowo*. Research has shown that the Matopos Hills was/is a religious shrine where rain-making rituals were/are performed and the same was/is true for Great Zimbabwe, Dande and northeastern Shona peoples.⁵²¹ If tension really existed, as was perceived by the firstcomers, it was caused by other things not related to culture.

I gathered during my research that socio-economic status and education were central factors in causing the tension. In the earlier years the latecomers owned herds of cattle whilst their counterparts did not, except for a very few. One research participant stated that:

⁵²⁰ Interview, Mairoso, 2011 – discussions with Chiriyoti, 2011 and Chapo, 2012 also emphasized this point.

⁵²¹ See Ranger, 1999; Fontein, 2006; Spierenburg, 2004; Lan, 1985; Bourdillon, 1999 - they discuss the concepts of ancestral spirits and rain-making rituals in different regions of the country.

Our counterparts who are not from *Gowa* denigrated us as backward and opposed us, the owners of the land. They said “we don’t know how to farm.” At our primary school here, teachers from Masvingo chased away the acting headmaster, a son of the soil. Our relations are not good. I will not give land to *Mavhitori* in my village.⁵²²

This tension is neither overt nor explicit. It was only discernible in discussions, hearsay and gossip. The participant made reference to two scenarios to express and explain the tension between the two groups in the chiefdom. He pointed to farming and education to describe the tensions. Reference to farming located the tension in the first years of the two groups’ co-existence. The inclusion of a recent event indicated that the tension still existed. By the 1980s the firstcomers were still practicing subsistence farming and did not grow cash crops as did the latecomers. Undoubtedly, the latecomers were empowered by market-oriented agriculture which caused them to look down upon their counterparts. This socio-economic gap and the perceptions it created caused problems in the chiefdoms.

The situation was made worse by the high number of both qualified and unqualified teachers from Masvingo and other regions who teach at schools found in Rengwe. Unfortunately, no figures can be supplied to qualify the point. I, nonetheless, generally observed that at Dzimaihwe, Rengwe, Dandawa and Fuleche Schools much of the staff originated from Masvingo. They also maintained outspoken factions at these educational institutions. The proportion of teachers from Masvingo to those from the district sort of strengthens this divide between the first and latecomers. This tension, whether imagined or real, was now more pronounced at educational institutions than in the local villages. The above-mentioned case of the acting headmaster was one practical case which occurred in 2011 during my fieldwork. The firstcomers of that locality did not take the fallout between the acting headmaster and the *Mavhitori* teachers as a professional dispute. Rather, they contextualized it within the larger *Korekore-Mavhitori* tension.

⁵²² Interview, Chiriyoti, 2011

Chiriyoti's sentiments were reiterated by another female participant who precisely stated that "Mavhitori are not good neighbours."⁵²³ Despite the latecomers' denial to the existence of this tension, the Urungwe District Administrator's (DA) office has a record of disputes involving *Mavhitori* and the incumbent Chief Dandawa. I accessed Dandawa's file⁵²⁴ kept at the DA's office and I noted instances where the DA issued warnings to some *Mavhitori* for their disregard of Chief Dandawa. Overall, it was difficult to ascertain the rootedness of the tension. This is because they are neighbours; they share knowledge and tools and they intermingle and cooperate very well with each other.

Nonetheless, this kind of tension in Rengwe was not unique because it was common in combined communities. The land reform of 2000 created combined communities in the former White-owned farms. They comprised people of different ethnic identities and classes. Chaumba *et al* have observed that settlers in Fair Range and Gonarezhou National Park (GNP) represented a broad spectrum of people of varying ages, ethnicities and degrees of wealth.⁵²⁵ In such circumstances suspicions and tensions emerged and acused divisions and tensions within the resettled communities. Another factor that also possibly caused tension related to party politics. Soon after independence the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) introduced committees and consolidated its structures at village, ward and district levels.⁵²⁶ Chaumba *et al* have argued that this new system worked in some places whilst in others it caused people to be at loggerheads.⁵²⁷

The Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) which had fought the liberation struggle in Rengwe did not establish political structures there. The arrival of ZANU in Rengwe after 1980 caused a lot of jostling for power and political positions. ZANU established itself at the same time the latecomers were also arriving in Rengwe. Most of them were already members of ZANU whereas the majority of the firstcomers were joining it for the first time. The latecomers played the political card to get influential political positions. For

⁵²³ Interview, Chapo, 2012

⁵²⁴ I, however, was not given permission to reference material from the file.

⁵²⁵ Chaumba *et al*, 2003b: 9

⁵²⁶ *Ibid*: 3

⁵²⁷ *Ibid*

instance, Tarupiwa from the latecomers was elected the chairperson of Tendai Masimba Cell in 1983. He held that position for three years during which he was responsible for organizing ZANU-led independence celebrations in his area.⁵²⁸ Party positions were highly contested, and it is very likely that the idea of the Korekore being “uneducated” emerged at this point. A female participant from the firstcomers lamented that “the Makorekore are letting the *Mavhitori* to take control of everything: politics, food relief, school committees.... Very soon they will take-over as village-heads and I tell you Makorekore will be chased away.”⁵²⁹ Certainly there has been suspicion building in the chiefdom between the two groups over the years and it is still building.

Apart from this, there is a different tension involving the Christian faith-Shona tradition believers. This one transcends the first-latecomer divide. It is tension based on beliefs between the traditionalists and the Christians. Apostolic sects such as Johane Masowe, Johane Marange, Johane weChishanu simply known as *mapositori* have categorically refused to partner their fellow rural dwellers in performing traditional rituals like rain-making. Both first and latecomers admitted that tension existed between them and *mapositori*. *Mapositori* believe that only God has ultimate control over rainfall and that they are not obliged by their faith to engage in traditional practices. Although established and led mostly by the immigrants, the congregants comprised both the first and the latecomers.

There is also tension within the group of firstcomers themselves. This tension involves traditional politics and the discharge of traditional duties and it is located within the group of former valley dwellers. It is mainly between the majority of the Korekore’s older generation and the incumbent Chief. The Chief is accused of usurping all traditional portfolios of authority as well as practicing partisan politics. The tension focuses on the personality of the Chief and his imperious attitude. The Chief⁵³⁰ is very young, but has enormous political influence which causes most elders to respect and fear him. Since his appointment as a substantive Chief in February 2001, he has risen through the political ranks both at local and

⁵²⁸ Interview, Tarupiwa, 2012

⁵²⁹ Interview, Siyana, 2011

⁵³⁰ The current Chief Dandawa is Try Manyepa born on 5 May 1974 and was appointed substantive Chief in February 2001 at the age of 27 (becoming the youngest Chief in Zimbabwe’s history at that time).

national levels. He was appointed to the Zimbabwe Parliament and Senate in 2005 and 2008 respectively because of the quota that was reserved for Chiefs in the old Zimbabwean Constitution.⁵³¹

Traditionally, the role of the chief was to maintain the connection between the living human beings and the ancestors through spirit mediums and lion spirits. Nonetheless, there has been an irreversible shift because the Chief is not showing any serious interest in upholding traditional practices. Instead, he is accused of blocking any attempt to return to *Gowa* to perform traditional rituals. However, the conflict is not as simple as it was presented by participants. I also observed that there was a misrepresentation of facts in stating that Chief Dandawa had dissociated and distanced himself from traditional practices. I discovered that despite the Chief's imperious attitude, some individuals had developed a personal dislike of him due to grudges related to other things which were, nevertheless, not mentioned. For instance, Tsumwa stated that "if you invite the Chief to come and consult with spirit mediums, his response is; 'I don't consult fake spirits.' Fake? Does a fake spirit make rain fall? But the so-called fake spirits are making the rain to fall."⁵³² I discerned from his verbal tone and facial expression that the two do not see eye to eye. It emerged that the Chief was regarded as part of the problem, specifically in the context of performing the "appropriate" traditional rituals.

Another participant remarked that "Uhm! Our chief is living pretty well. He doesn't mind our grievances and suffering...."⁵³³ Due to political interference, the office of the Chief has lost its traditional significance.⁵³⁴ It has therefore come under fire and critical scrutiny from various sections of the chiefdom. There are widening socio-political and economic gaps between the Chief and the majority of the local population. Traditional roles have been

⁵³¹ Until 22 May 2013, Zimbabwe was using the Lancaster House Constitution which was drafted in November 1979 and had been going through amendments over the years. On 22 May 2013, a new home-grown constitution was signed into effect replacing the Lancaster House Constitution.

⁵³² Interview, Tsumwa, 2012

⁵³³ Interview, Hora Datsi, Dzimaihwe, 1 October 2011

⁵³⁴ The traditional role of chiefs has been usurped by politics. As a result they have alienated themselves from performing that crucial role of connecting with the ancestors, safeguarding traditional practices and customs and the interests of their chiefdoms.

manipulated in the face of opposition politics in the country in general. Other participants also explained that:

The chief has taken over the responsibility of *mapiye* (taboos). He takes the fines for himself but that is traditionally unacceptable. Fines for taboos should be taken by spirit mediums who in turn should inform him. Right now there is a dispute between the Chief, Try and the Korekore.... It is about his treatment of the former.... Also, the Chief has no control over *chisi*⁵³⁵ (rest-days). Matters related to *chisi* were dealt with by spirit mediums and the fines were collected by them and not by the Chief....⁵³⁶

A number of things are being done wrongly by the Chief such as taboo matters. A person was fined two beasts for engaging in a taboo; one went to the spirit medium and the other to the Chief. The Chief would then slaughter his to perform a cleansing ceremony for the guilt person. Without that ceremony it would be difficult to get rainfall. Today our Chief fines two goats for *chisi* and one beast for taboos and takes them for himself....⁵³⁷

These last two illustrations emphasize two points: firstly, the changes that were occurring in the traditional establishment and secondly, the tensions that have resulted from the changes. This tension seemed to be deep-rooted compared to the one involving the latecomers. Traditional practices, namely, *mapiye* (taboos) and *chisi* (rest days) were used to project the past on the present and to explain changes in the chieftdom including social belonging and distinction.

Before relocation, the *Nzou Samanyanga* people were responsible for the installation of the Dandawa Chiefs. Now they feel disempowered and sidelined because that role has been taken over by the Ministry of Local Government. Other traditionalists also feel their roles have been usurped whilst those who are not towing the position of the Chief are being treated as bad elements. All these groups are disgruntled because traditional roles have been politicized. Overall, it would therefore be misguided to perceive tension in Rengwe as existing only between the first and the latecomers. Lately, political tension has been raging badly in the chieftdom especially towards and during elections in 2002, 2005 and 2008. These tensions

⁵³⁵ Refer to Chapter 5 for a discussion on *chisi*.

⁵³⁶ Interview, Goro Bheki, Mtirikati, 30 September 2011

⁵³⁷ Interview, Tsumwa, 2012

involved supporters of Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T).

Conclusion

Looking at nostalgic memories one is bound to ask: Are they more than being nostalgic? Is this one memory? Indeed these are crucial questions which this chapter has attempted to dissect and answer. The past has and will always be glorified, romanticized and idealized. Nostalgic memories allow people to make views about the past, the present and the future. One crucial question that has been raised is that: Would Rengwe's forced resettlers tell the same story if they were living comfortably? Unfortunately, due to the methodological problem of defining what constitutes a better or poor life for the people under research, the question was not sufficiently addressed and, therefore, remains an aspect for further research. In debating change, these memories bring the past into dialogue with the present which, in turn, shapes today's views about the past. Points of change such as the forced removal in 1957/58 serve as trajectories to imagine the past as a "golden" era in contrast with the problems of the present and with the uncertainties of the future. Such problems include lack of agricultural inputs, an under-paying agricultural market, political repression and suppression, high mortality rate due to HIV and AIDS and malnutrition and immorality, among many others. This interpretation of the past provides an in-depth understanding of current relations and disputes in the chiefdom.

Chapter 8: General Conclusion

This study has addressed two broad questions which are: How does the memory of forced removal shape the construction of ethnic identity and contestation of social belonging and distinction of the people affected? And how is the environment, past and present, of these people, reflected in these processes? Answers to these questions, as this study has shown, can be summarized in three major points. Firstly, it has observed that forced relocation, among Rengwe's forced resettlers, just like among the Tonga and Madheruka who were introduced into this study for comparative purposes, is a key and prime process. It is used to explain and to describe forced removal on the one hand and to mould memories of the past into a critique of the present on the other. Madheruka perceived Rhodesdale Estate as a "wonderful place" whereas the Tonga and Rengwe's forced resettlers regarded their former areas as their ancestral lands. Forced movement connected the past and the present and through it they constructed their socio-economic history.

In spite of their victim status, the affected people were active in the whole process of forced removal. When the Madheruka arrived in Gokwe, they actively engaged in the naming game between them and the original inhabitants of the land. Forced removal became a comparative point between the "modern" latecomer and "backward" firstcomer. The Shangwe were viewed as primitive and anti-modern whereas the Madheruka saw themselves as modern and progressive. In Rengwe, it was a different scenario as both groups of evictees struggled to traditionally legitimize their presence in the new land. Although they despised their new lands, the forced resettlers quickly accepted the changed situation and worked very hard to come to terms with their environment. In Gokwe, the Madheruka did not seriously concern themselves with the malaria problem; rather they concentrated on the production of cotton and applying "modern" ways of farming in this arid region. Similarly, Rengwe's forced resettlers began a process of putting imprints into the Rengwe landscape and also creating portable landscapes which played an important role in identity construction and distinction.

Forced removal, in the long term, became a resource used in creating some kind of group identity and a means to foster distinction as well. In Rengwe, forced resettlers developed a sense of being a group and began to see themselves as “those resettled by government policy” whilst those who came voluntarily and later, are comparably regarded as a different group. Despite the initial problems encountered between the two groups of Rengwe’s forced resettlers, they came to perceived themselves, more than before, as one group and also distinct from those other immigrants who came to the area because of reasons different to theirs. Of course they are very much aware that they originated from different regions, but the fact that they share the same experience of forced removal has tremendously strengthened both their identity as a group and as a combined chiefdom. In this whole maze, memory and forced removal interweave and, as Schmidt has argued, memory can foster or destabilize social cohesion in a society,⁵³⁸ because it plays a crucial role in debates regarding ethnic and group identity.

Apart from creating cohesion, past experiences were used as a resource in fighting the struggles of the present. In Rengwe, this manifested in fighting the negative perceptions that were directed against the forced resettlers by those who came voluntarily after 1980. Latecomers to Rengwe despised the firstcomers as anti-modern during their early years of settling in this region. So, the latter employed their forced removal experience to stake profound and claims of legitimacy to the land. They became owners of the land by virtue of the government authority that created and resettled them in this territory. It has been the experience of displacement that has created a sense of both attachment and loss which in the long run has resulted in the development of a particular way of seeing the past, and the territory.

The question of social belonging and distinction which has been central to this study contrasts with the problem of citizenship that plagues refugees who have crossed national boundaries.⁵³⁹ Central to the citizenship debate is the issue of membership to territories. In Rengwe, as has been demonstrated in this study, the early years were marked by conflicts

⁵³⁸ Schmidt, 2013: 10

⁵³⁹ Scudder, 1993: 125-126 - citing Stein and Clark (1990)

over inclusion. None of the resettled groups could lay claims to the Rengwe landscape but Dandawa by virtue of being the paramount Chief viewed the group from *Gota* as second citizens. Rengwe is a very interesting case because the issue of despising the other did not involve original inhabitants and forced resettlers, but it involved the forced resettlers themselves who by the way claimed a similar ethnic identity. Another difference with other case studies such as the Tonga of Binga and Madheruka of Gokwe is that Rengwe emerged as a combined chiefdom which underwent power struggles during its inception period, something that was not experienced in Binga and Gokwe. As noted earlier, the shared and early experiences in Rengwe gradually transformed from separateness to creating some kind of group formation and identity which became visible in the wake of the arrival of new immigrants that threatened and despised Rengwe's forced resettlers in various spheres but especially their socio-economic status.

Secondly, this study has stressed that forced removal is not only a story of re-making identity and authority, but also as a story of change - as it also happened, for instance, among the Gwembe Tonga In this regard, forced removal has been treated both as a cause and as an accelerator of change. Africans in the Zambezi Valley were faced with a myriad of expectations from the colonial state, chief among them, was to make available their labour, a system which became known as *chibharo*. Change was taking place though in a less dramatic way compared to what happened after the creation of territories for specific chiefdoms which in a big way deepened certain identities and also created certain perceptions amongst Africans of the other.

When they spoke about forced removal, they focused on the experience both as an event and as a process. One of the questions that this study has addressed regards the problem of reconstructing from memories what actually happened. Feldman (1991), cited by Malkki, has argued that "the event is not what happens. The event is what can be narrated."⁵⁴⁰ True to that, memories that have been dealt with in this study are displaced memories because they are memories of two different groups which have been collapsed together to form a collective

⁵⁴⁰ Malkki, 1995: 107

memory of the chieftdom. Verbal imagery and analogy have been crucial in accessing the memories still held and which also represented what they believed to have happened.

The question is not only what is told, but also concerns; who remembers, what is remembered and why? Everyone is capable of remembering and bringing his memory into some kind of a narrative, but the difference is whether it is based on experience, hearsay or simply the ability to knit a narrative. According to Schmidt, “the memory pool of a given community is not equally accessible - accounting of the past is privileged and closely linked to gender, age and social status”⁵⁴¹ Women and men alike have proven to be rich with different versions of the past and at no point did certain stories or narrative get privileged at the expense of others. Such an occurrence actually buttresses Schmidt’s revision of Malian Amadou Hampaté Bâ’s famous dictum that “In Africa when an old man dies, it’s like a library burning” to argue that “the death of any person of any gender or age” is a great loss of information.⁵⁴²

Thirdly, this study has argued that forced removal in the context of Rengwe was also about empowerment and disempowerment. This forced removal was not development-induced, despite being conducted within the context of Kariba resettlement and the hydro-electric power project. It was largely part of racial dispossession, segregation and separateness that had been instituted under the Land Apportionment Act (LAA) in 1930. Only a small percentage of the Rengwe population benefited from forced removal, with the majority of these found among the voluntary immigrants. The biggest beneficiary has been Chief Dandawa who now claims absolute and unquestioned traditional authority over the territory because he now derives it from the government rather than from claims to the land.

Forced removal consolidated Chief Dandawa’s authority and also nucleated villages that were under him and therefore made it easier to control. His traditional role is was no longer legitimized by other related traditional portfolios as was the case in *Gowa* but has since been transformed and aligned with politics of patronage to the political party in power. After

⁵⁴¹ Schmidt, 2013: 10

⁵⁴² *Ibid*

relocation, the chief became more answerable to the local government authority than to other traditional leaders. And if anyone was to claim ownership of the territory, it was Chief Dandawa because it was created and designated solely for his authority. This empowerment continued after independence as traditional powers of chiefs were increased as enshrined in the Traditional Leaders Act chapter 29: 17, modified in 2001. Those who held other traditional portfolios especially those related to rain-making rituals and lion spirits lost relevance as their influence was connected to claims of owning the land. Women were also greatly disempowered as forced removal disrupted their livelihood and daily activities in fending for their families. In addition, they were not allocated lands to farm as it was assumed that they benefited from allocations given to their husbands or fathers. Rural resettlement schemes during the colonial period, as argued by Scudder and Colson, “were planned by men for men with the result that men receive the title of the land... regardless of what the land tenure situation was prior to removal.”⁵⁴³ Thus, the opportunity base for women shrunk as they could not benefit from both the colonial job market and the land as did men.

Looking back today, a lot has changed for the forced resettlers whose socio-economic status was low at the time of resettlement in Rengwe. According to Scudder and Colson, the “large majority of those forced to move... are low-income, low status people who have very little political power and scant access to national resources.”⁵⁴⁴ Whereas other groups of people evicted from the Zambezi Valley possessed an estimated 5,000 head of cattle which multiplied when they moved to the plateau to 14,000 by 1973,⁵⁴⁵ it was a different story for the groups resettled in Rengwe. On top of losing their ancestral lands, the displacement meant different things to Rengwe’s forced resettlers. For the former *Gowa* dwellers it meant changing environments, settling in nucleated settlements and imposition of a new form of socio-political order whereas for former *Gota* dwellers, it meant losing both their traditional significance and heads of cattle and donkeys, as no domestic animals were allowed in Rengwe except goats.

⁵⁴³ Scudder and Colson, 1982: 284

⁵⁴⁴ Scudder and Colson, 1982: 268; see also Scudder, 1997: 668

⁵⁴⁵ Weinrich, 1977: 21

This study has emphasized that remembering is a practice that carries two facets: acts of recollection, based on personal experience, and recollections that emanate from hearsay. Olick and Robbins have argued that “much of what we ‘remember,’ moreover, we did not experience as individuals.”⁵⁴⁶ As this happened to be the first comprehensive historical study on Rengwe, it did not, however, exhaust the changes and developments that happened and continue to occur in this area. Since 2000, some parts of Rengwe have benefited from the rural electrification program and other subsequent developments such as access to wireless communication networks. This study has ended in 2000 not because there is nothing worth researching after that date.

In fact, the period after 2000 is ideal for examining the paradigm shift in debates about social belonging, distinction and disputes owing to a changed political environment in which the experience of forced removal was challenged by the discourse of the liberation struggle that imposed a national character and outlook. In addition to that, the Fast Track Land Reform (FTLR) of 2000 also introduced tobacco farming to this rural economy that has seen some of the second and third generations realizing increased income resulting in a few widening their opportunities to venture into small businesses such as owning grinding mills, transport businesses or running small grocery shops in the chiefdom. Such developments are bound to bring different perceptions from the second and third generations regarding the past which the first generation continues to hold dear. This distinction in memory between the generations raises the question: Are memory-based debates something particular of a generation, and how long do such memories last? And this stands as a promising area of future research.

⁵⁴⁶ Olick and Robbins, 1998: 123

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