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**This Land: Politics, Authority and Morality after
Land Reform in Zimbabwe**

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PhD Social Anthropology

The University of Edinburgh

2016

For all Zimbabweans everywhere

Declaration of Own Work

This is to certify that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Date: 31/03/16

Signed:

Contents

Preface	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract	v
Chapter One: Introduction	1
From Farm Occupations to the FTLRP	11
Land Reform: from Product to Process	16
Research Methods	17
Research Ethics	24
Mazowe Exceptionalism	26
Chapter Outline	31
Chapter Two: Re-making Citizens, Re-making the State	35
Colonial Legacies.....	49
‘Fast track’ Resettlement: a Problem of Belonging?	52
Belonging, Morality and Politics in Mazowe	60
<i>Noise</i> and ‘Politics’ in Zimbabwe from 2009-2013.....	63
Chapter Three: The House	70
Farms as Sedimented Landscapes.....	72
Legal Frameworks around Houses on Farms.....	75
<i>Comboni</i> : Houses in the Compound	80
<i>Maline</i> : A1 Land Beneficiaries Houses	90
What is a Farmhouse?	100
Conclusion	105
Chapter Four: Kin and Labour	110
From White Farmers to Land Beneficiaries.....	111
Comboni as a Site of Immorality	114
Case 1: The Idiom of Kin.....	116
Case Two: Piecework (<i>maricho</i>)	127
Case Three: Farmworkers Don’t Work Well with Others	132
Conclusion	139
Chapter Five: From Care to Disregard: Land Beneficiaries and the State	142
What is Land in New Resettlement Areas?	145
What is an Offer Letter?	150

What is a Land Beneficiary?	154
The Dispute	158
From Care to Disregard: a Shift in Tactics	164
Conclusion	167
Chapter Six: Traditional Authority in Mazowe.....	170
Chiefs, Legitimacy and State-making.....	174
Chiefs and Land Reform in Mazowe	177
What is Traditional Authority?	180
A ‘Project of Return’	184
The ‘Politics’ of the Present.....	188
Conclusion	198
Chapter Seven: Making Community through a Customary Court	200
Culture as Ideology	201
The Structure of the <i>Dare</i>	203
Creating Chiefly Subjects, Reinforcing State Exclusions.....	210
‘Be Logical. Stop Wasting Our Time!’	217
‘Don’t Be Like the Whites who Chop Trees’	221
‘There is no Politics in the <i>Dare</i> ’	225
Conclusion	229
Chapter Eight: The Chief’s Two Funerals	230
Bodies, Belonging and the Reproduction of Chiefly Authority	233
Death, Funerals and Sovereign Perpetuity.....	237
The Chief’s Public Funeral	241
Conclusion	254
Conclusion: Between Stability and Clarity.....	256
Bibliography	266

List of Figures

1. Map showing Dam Lake and Utopia Farms in Mazowe district. (Source: Author commissioned map from Kevin Philip, 2016)
2. Map of Zimbabwe with provincial boundaries marked and Mazowe district circled. (Source: Perry Castañeda Map Collection, 2002)
3. Map showing position of Chiweshe communal lands relative to Mazowe commercial farming district. (Source: Author, 2016)
4. Billboard next to main road just outside of Harare that reads: ‘Mothers, you are the experts at peace’. (Source: Author, 2013)
5. Dam Lake Farm. (Source: Google Maps, 2014)
6. A1 land beneficiary’s home, Dam Lake Farm (Source: Author, September 2012)
7. The Basims’ half constructed house on Dam Lake Farm. (Source: Author, July 2012)
8. Sign to Chief Chigariro’s residence before removal, Mazowe. (Source: Author, February 2012)
9. Land beneficiary’s fields being ploughed. (Source Author, July, 2012)
10. Sekuru Tsoko and Chief Chigariro display fish eagle. (Source: Sunday Mail, Zimbabwe, 2012)
11. Chief Chigariro sitting with his advisers at the dare held at Mhangura. (Source: Author, May 2012)

Acronyms

AREX – Department of Agricultural Technical and Extension Services

BSAC – British South Africa Company

CC – Constitutional Commission

DA – District Administrator

DC – District Commissioner

DLC – District Land Committee

EMA – Environmental Management Agency

FTLRP – Fast Track Land Reform Program

GNU – Government of National Unity

LRRP-2 – Land Reform and Resettlement Program Phase 2

MDC – Movement for Democratic Change

MDC-M – Movement of Democratic Change formation led by Aurthur Mutambara

MDC-T – Movement of Democratic Change formation led by Morgan Tsvangirai

MIA – Ministry of Internal Affairs

NAD – Native Affairs Department

NC – Native Commissioner

NCA – National Constitutional Assembly

NDP – National Democratic Party

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

NLHA – Native Lands and Husbandry Act

ORAs – Old Resettlement Areas

POSA – Public Order and Security Act

RNLB – Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau

SRANC – Southern Rhodesia African National Congress

USD – US Dollar

ZANLA – Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANU PF's military wing)

ZANU – Zimbabwe African National Union

ZANU PF – Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front

ZAPU – Zimbabwe African People’s Union

ZCTU – Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions

ZIPRA – Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army (ZAPU’s military wing)

ZRP – Zimbabwe Republic Police

Technical Terms

A1 – de-congestion model for majority of landless peasants, A1 plots in Mazowe were small holdings of up to six hectares allocated to A1 land beneficiaries. A1 beneficiaries were given usufruct rights but no lease over their allocated plots.

A2 – model to increase participation of black indigenous farmers in the commercial farming sector, A2 plots in Mazowe were medium to large-scale holdings of up to two hundred and fifty hectares. A2 farmers were given 25 and 99 year leases by government.

Committees of seven – governance structures set up by land beneficiaries in A1 areas after the Fast Track Land Reform Program.

Communal areas – originally called ‘native reserves’, less fertile areas where native African populations were placed to make space for white settler agriculture under Rhodesian rule. In post-independence Zimbabwe these are areas under customary tenure.

New resettlement areas – former commercial farming areas re-named after Fast Track Land Reform Program.

Offer letters – pieces of paper given to A1 farmers by government formalising individual land allocations and use rights over A1 plots.

Old resettlement areas – government designated resettlement areas established after independence in 1980.

Glossary

akamangara – the one reported

amai – mother

ambuya – grandmother, term of respect for older woman

anechichemo – the one with a complaint

baba – father

bira – ceremony to supplicate the ancestors

braai – barbeque

changamire – leader

chibaro – forced contract labour

chibuku – commercially produced brand of traditional beer made from fermented maize.

chiChewa – language spoken in Malawi

chiKaranga – dialect spoken in the south of the country, Masvingo area

chiKorekore – dialect spoken in the north of the country, Mt. Darwin area

chimurenga – uprising

chinjahouse – change house, term used for bathroom

chiZezuru – Shona dialect

comboni – farm compound

dare – customary court

dhuku – headscarf

dongo – home in *chiKaranga* dialect

hungwe – fish eagle

ibude pachena – truth would come clear

imba – house

ivhu – soil

jambanja – chaos and disorder, term used to describe the first wave of farm occupations in the early 2000s

kuchengetwa – to be cared for/looked after

kudzingwa – to be chased

kugadzika nyika – to settle the land/country

kuremekedza – to respect

kurova guva – to beat the grave

kusununguka – to be free

kuwirirana – to cooperate with

lobola – bridewealth payment

ma A3s – ‘the A3s’, joking term used to refer to farmworkers which highlights the fact that they have not been allocated land

maBlantyre – those from Blantyre

madrassa – Islamic religious school

mafamawekasi – farmworkers

maline – ‘lines’, refers to rows of houses in villages organised into lines during Rhodesian 1940s centralisation policies in which villages were organised into

mambo – chief

mapa – graves

mapraz – farms, from *prazero*, Portuguese term for ‘ranch’

maricho – pieceworkers

maruseva – communal areas (formerly native reserves)

masvikiro - mediums that became possessed by a family spirit

matongo – houses

mbanje – marijuana

mbira – a traditional instrument described in English as a finger piano

mhondoro – living representatives of royal ancestral lineages

mugamuchiri wezwi – welcomer of words

Muhacha – sacred tree, ‘Hissing tree’ in English

mujiba – young sympathiser/informant for guerrilla fighters during 1970s liberation struggle

mukwasha – son-in-law

muriwo – canola, vegetable

murungu – term used to refer to a white person

musha – paternal village considered to be your home

mushonga – medicine, can be associated with witchcraft

mwana – child

nduruza – fool

noise – term used to refer to any form of social/political disturbance

nyika – country

ngochani – derogatory word used to describe homosexual men, can be applied to women

panze – yard

pungwe – all-night vigil, commonly held during the liberation war by guerrilla fighters and more recently referred to as ZANU PF ‘re-education’ sessions

rukuvhute – umbilical cord in *chiKaranga* dialect

sabhuku – title of headman, literally ‘holder of the tax book’

sadza – stiff mealie meal porridge

samusha – title of head man before Rhodesian centralisation policies

situpa – pass

tsika – culture

unhu – moral substance

vabereki – parents

vabvakure – people from afar

vakomana – the boys

vakuru – big men/elders

vana – children

vana vemuChiweshe – autochthons from Chiweshe, literally ‘children of Chiweshe’

varimi – farmers

varimi – farmers

vatengesesi – sellouts

zambia – printed cloth

zvigure – secret society of dancers coming from *chiChewa* speaking communities in Malawi

Preface

My family moved to England from Zimbabwe in 2003. The decision to move had been sudden. My parents ran an independent film company producing mostly documentaries with the occasional feature film. Hyperinflation, progressively stringent laws that worked against the independent media, and the mounting anti-white discourse combined with my parents' concerns for their childrens' university education meant they decided to immigrate to England where my mother was from. Although we all had British citizenship, 'home' had never been in question for me: Zimbabwe was always 'home'. However, on returning 'home' to do fieldwork seven years later, I painfully discovered that as a white person, my claim to being Zimbabwean was perceived to have strong political implications and was questioned both by those who had remained living in Zimbabwe and those living abroad. As such the question of 'home' and the more abstract notion of 'belonging' in an emotional, legal and political sense are very close to me. These issues remain unresolved, though through the process of writing this thesis, I have daily grown more comfortable with their irresolution.

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Abstract

This thesis examines people's attempts to (re)construct belonging and authority after rapid socio-political and economic change. It is a study of the lives of those living alongside each other in a new resettlement area in Zimbabwe a decade after 'fast track' land reform. Drawing on ethnographic research conducted on a series of farms in the Mazowe area (March 2012-May 2013), I show that in the uncertain socio-political context of this new resettlement area, belonging was a dynamic social process involving complex moral bonds, and relationships of dependence and obligation.

'Fast track' land reform can be understood as a process of state-making in which the Zimbabwean state reconfigured its relationship with its citizens via the redistribution of land. After 'fast track', farms were transformed from socially and politically bounded entities under the paternalistic rule of white farmers, to areas in which land beneficiaries and farm workers lived alongside one another under the rule of the ZANU PF state. Land was allocated according to ZANU PF loyalty. Farmworkers due to their associations with white farmers and oppositional politics, were rarely allocated land. Thus farms in Mazowe consisted of landless farm workers who had lived and worked in the area for generations, and landed beneficiaries who came from a variety of places. In addition, 'fast track' was framed in terms of redistribution rather than restitution but many chiefs saw it as an opportunity to 'return' to their ancestral lands. However, their claims to authority in the areas remained uncertain. I examine how people dealt with the various tensions thrown up by 'fast track'. By leaving these tensions unresolved, a contingent stability was generated on farms, even as this was fragile.

My work contributes to better understanding the socio-political effects of land reform. Research on Zimbabwean land reform has tended to rely on official framings of people's relationships to each other and the land, and has largely failed to capture the complexity and negotiated nature of these in everyday life. Anthropological work on belonging has mostly focused on explicit claims. I show how history and the micro-politics of everyday relationships profoundly shaped local forms of belonging which crosscut state delimitations of who belonged, and what land reform meant to those living in this area.

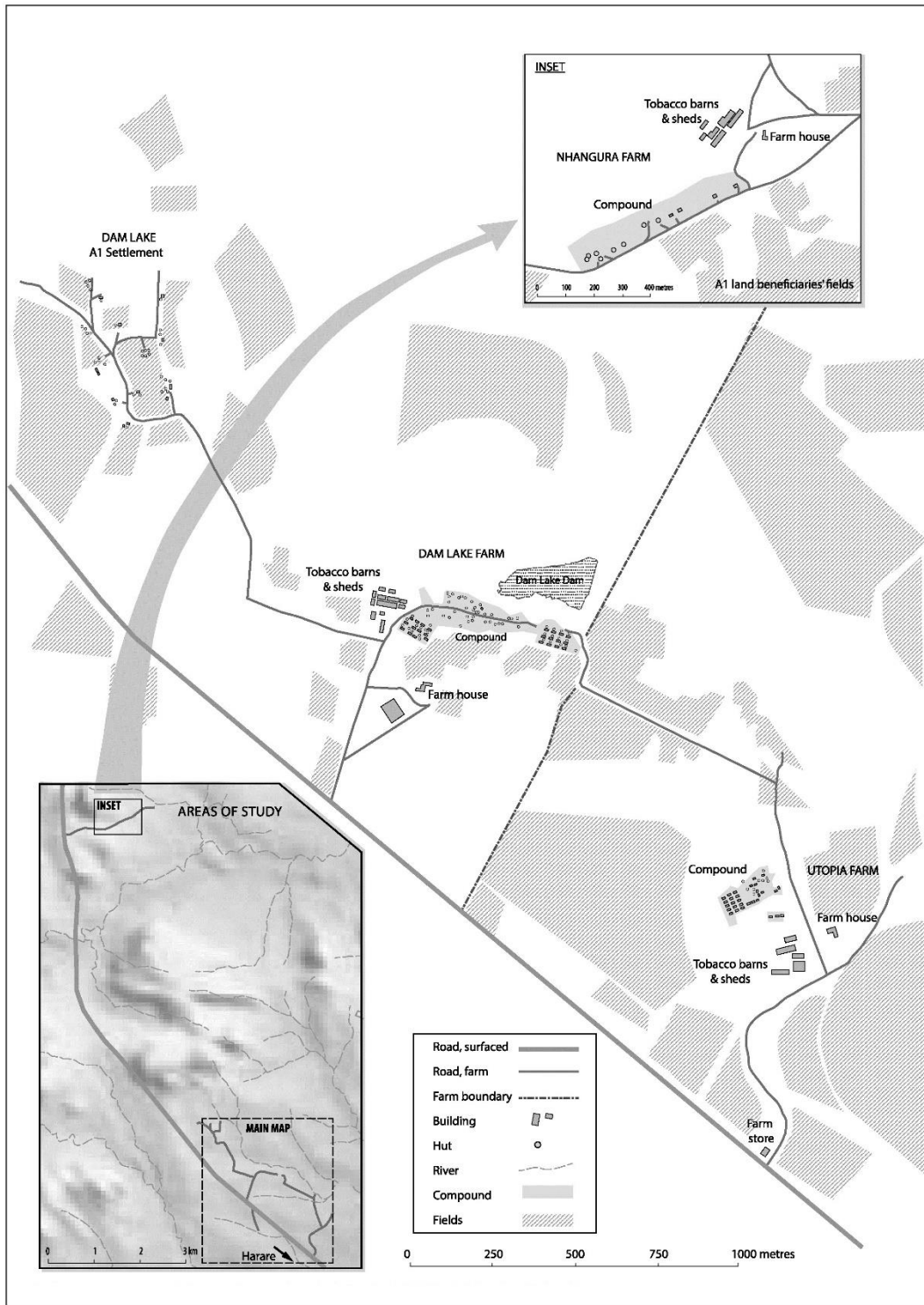


Fig. 1 Map showing Dam Lake and Utopia Farms, Mazowe. Source: Kevin Philip, 2016.

Chapter One: Introduction

Utopia Farm was situated just off a tarred road which divided the farm into two. On one side was the farm store, butchery and bakery; two farmhouses; one workers' compound and various farm buildings as well as hectares of fields. On the other, a dam (artificial reservoir) with a gazebo overlooking it and a second, smaller, farmworkers compound. A man known locally as the 'The Colonel' had moved into the main farmhouse. In 2004 he had been allocated 250 hectares of a 400 hectare farm that had been owned by a white farmer called Samuels. A woman called Amai Nzombe had moved into the second, smaller farmhouse and been allocated the remaining 150 hectares. The Colonel was a land beneficiary of Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform Program (FLTRP). In addition to the farmhouse, the Colonel had also taken over the running of the butchery and store which doubled as a beer hall (the bakery had closed down). This was the main weekend drinking spot for wealthier male farmworkers who remained living in the Utopia farmworkers' compound, and small-scale A1 land beneficiaries – those allocated six ha plots by the government on neighbouring farms. The Colonel rarely attended this weekly event but when he did, he stood with friends around his car, some distance from the drunken throng of bodies sprawled or leaning against the store veranda.

The farmhouse bore a resemblance to a mock Tudor cottage; it had a thatched roof with white walls and exposed black wooden beams. Surrounded by a high-fenced yard, the house stood apart from the rest of the farm. A road from the farmhouse led to the tractor sheds and tobacco barns in front of which hunks of rusted farm machinery lay strewn about. The Colonel had built a large square outdoor cattle kraal against one of the grading sheds, using a shed wall as a boundary, which saved on fencing. Two cottages, the former homes of Utopia's farm foremen, were now inhabited by the Colonel's own farm management team who had not been drawn from the farmworkers compound. Nonetheless, the Colonel claimed that the farmworker houses were now his and that those farmworkers who remained living in the Utopia compound were therefore compelled to work for him.

The compound itself consisted of approximately twenty brick houses built along either side of a dusty thoroughfare. A tap that provided running water to the farmworker families stood at one end of the thoroughfare. Next to the tap was a *madrassa* made of rammed earth which had been constructed by Samuels (the white farmer) to cater for the 70 or so Muslim farmworkers of Malawian origin that lived on Utopia and neighbouring farms. At the opposite end of the thoroughfare lay the farmworkers' 'gardens', fifty by fifty meter plots on which they

grew vegetables and maize for household consumption. Apart from these plots, the farmworkers had not been allocated any land. Beyond the farmworkers' 'gardens' stretched the fields allocated to the Colonel. These were interspersed with trees and divided by fences and roads, all of which had been built by Samuels.

This is a description of a commercial farm in Zimbabwe roughly a decade after Zimbabwe's 'fast track' land reform program began in the early 2000s. The relationships that made up commercial farms as socially bounded entities under the rule of white farmers were severely ruptured by 'fast track'. However, administratively, materially and ideationally, farms as single entities continued to exist. Commercial farming areas were renamed 'new resettlement areas', but were still administered as individual farms by the local district administration. The meaning of land reform for those living in new resettlement areas was not simply determined by the state, but was informed by their relationship to the history of previous settlements on the land. Fast track created farms as new socio-political entities composed of land beneficiaries and farmworkers living alongside one another. Yet historical continuities in land governance, and social hierarchies between farm 'owners' and farmworkers, also persisted. How did people living on farms understand their newly re-configured relationships to each other, the land and the state? And how did they negotiate these? These are the themes I seek to explore in this thesis.

In the late 1990s, war veterans in Zimbabwe spear-headed what would become known as the 'Fast Track Land Resettlement Program' (FTLRP) – a movement which saw the massive redistribution of mostly white-owned commercial farmland to black Zimbabweans.¹ Led by President Robert Mugabe and his Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF), the Zimbabwean government's land reform was extraordinary, both in scale and the speed with which the transformation of its agricultural and rural countryside sectors took place. A total of 11 million hectares of the most fertile land in the country was transferred from around 4,500 large-scale, mostly white, commercial farmers to about 300,000 black land beneficiaries.

¹ In the rest of this thesis I use the terms, FTLRP, 'fast track' and 'land reform' interchangeably to refer to the whole process of land redistribution beginning from the point at which land reform became state-led in 2002.

Employing aggressive wartime rhetoric, ZANU PF has described the program as an ‘agrarian revolution’ against colonial and imperialist rule (Sachikonye 2003a: 227). In addition to white farmers, between 75,000 and 200,000 farmworkers living on white-owned farms were displaced, approximately two thirds of the country’s total farmworker population. Approximately 100,000 (one third) remained living on farms (ibid.).² In most areas of the country, farmworkers were not allocated land.

Three major shifts recreated commercial farms, or ‘new resettlement areas’, as new social and political terrains for those that lived there. First, the redistribution of land by the ZANU PF state constructed a new relationship between the ZANU PF regime and those living in these areas. Whereas before ‘fast track’, white-owned commercial farms had largely existed as socially and politically bounded entities (Rutherford 2001), ‘fast track’ made those living in these areas directly beholden to the ZANU PF party and local district administration (in the hands of ZANU PF) to a much greater extent than before. Secondly, it put those to whom land was allocated (‘land beneficiaries’) and those denied land (farmworkers) in close proximity to one another. Land reform created new farm communities, composed of farmworkers who had no land rights but continued to live in farm compounds, and land beneficiaries who lived alongside each other as a result of the FTLRP and their affiliation to ZANU PF rather than kin relations. The third major shift concerned chiefs. Traditional leaders, whose jurisdiction had been confined to communal areas, took ‘fast track’ as an opportunity to ‘return’ to the lost lands of their ancestors, extending the realm of their influence to include newly resettled and remaining farmworker populations, and gain land for themselves. ZANU PF did not frame land reform in terms of land restitution or ‘return’. However, chiefs sought to claim authority over those who lived on farms, as well as over resources in these areas.

From the state’s perspective, ‘fast track’ created new publics, amenable to forms of governance and party politics in new ways. For those living in new resettlement areas, ‘fast track’ brought opportunities and losses. Many experienced ‘fast track’ in terms

² These figures are rough estimates. Statistics about farm-workers are politically controversial and hard to verify but the ratio of two thirds displaced versus one third remaining on farms is commonly cited across a selection of human rights reports.

of rupture even though historical continuities in land governance and social structures from before ‘fast track’ persisted. History also informed how people understood their relationships to the land, each other and the state, which often cut across state-led forms of governance. On the ground the nature of people’s relationships to each other and to the place in which they lived was not fixed but had to be negotiated. The meaning of land reform and people’s positions in new resettlement areas remained unclear. This thesis explores these tensions and negotiations as they played out through people’s daily lives a decade after the beginning of ‘fast track’.



Fig. 2 Map of Zimbabwe with provincial boundaries marked and Mazowe district circled. Source: Perry Castañeda Map Collection, 2002.

Land redistribution in Zimbabwe was officially framed in terms of a post-colonial re-balancing of the historical injustice of segregationist land policies under Rhodesian rule that excluded the majority of the population from the best agricultural land and resulted in 'land hunger', particularly in over populated communal areas. The government's stated aims of 'fast track' were poverty reduction, alleviation of overcrowding in communal areas, and the inclusion of black indigenous farmers into the commercial farming sector. Land dispossession had been one of the main focuses of the 1970s liberation struggle and it was war veterans' demands for land amongst other forms of compensation that kick-started 'fast track'. As in South Africa, land distribution in Zimbabwe was portrayed as the symbolic and material restoration of the sovereignty of the country from the hands of white settlers by ZANU PF and President Mugabe (Fay & James 2010). However, in Zimbabwe, land was not redistributed in terms of an inclusive notion of citizen's rights but in terms of an exclusive form of citizenship based on ZANU PF loyalty. Land reform thus created a new relationship between citizens and the state via the redistribution of land.

This thesis provides an ethnographic account of the moral and political lives of those living in a new resettlement area in Zimbabwe between 2012 and 2013. My fieldwork took place across a series of adjacent farms and the areas around them in Mazowe, Mashonaland South Province. By 2012/13, much of the dust from the initial years of land reform had settled. However, it had settled over a host of issues that remained unresolved. These issues concerned relationships between those living in new resettlement areas, the ZANU PF regime and chiefs. 'Fast track' created new resettlement areas as problematic socio-political terrains for those that lived there. Focusing on the three most intractable problems those living in Mazowe faced, this thesis investigates how people dealt with the uncertainties of belonging, community and authority, in a political and legal context that forced these issues under the surface.

2012/13 was a period in which ZANU PF were trying to regain national and regional legitimacy following the violent and contested elections of 2008. The transitional Government of National Unity (GNU) had been formed between ZANU PF and the two opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations in 2009, but was coming to an end. An internal battle within ZANU PF between two different factions

over Mugabe's succession was rife. ZANU PF's attempt to regain legitimacy and cover over its internal fractures manifested locally in the suppression of open discussion of ZANU PF factionalism as well as any form of criticism aimed at ZANU PF governance. This was particularly evident in rural areas which were under much heavier ZANU PF control than towns and cities. By suppressing direct and open conflict, which meant leaving a number of uncertainties and tensions unresolved, a contingent and artificial stability was created.

In Mazowe, land beneficiaries came from a variety of different places and had little 'shared history' (Alexander 2006: 191). Before 'fast track', most commercial farms had comprised bounded communities consisting of farmworkers and their white employers. With the departure of white farmers, and with no rights to land, farmworkers developed relationships of dependency with land beneficiaries. However, the nature of these relationships had to be negotiated. In addition, the longevity of farmworkers' residence on farms called the legitimacy of land beneficiaries' land allocations into question. How could those living on farms create a community when their claims to belong competed with each other?

The second problem concerned structures of authority. New resettlement areas were administered by local government. By 2012, most rural district councils were peopled by ZANU PF members. Most people living in Mazowe were (whether by choice or force) ZANU PF members, such that no distinction between 'the party' and 'the people' could be made. Yet, a chief, Chief Chigariro had also moved to Mazowe and claimed jurisdiction over those living there. Chief Chigariro was one of three chiefs from the Chiweshe communal lands that abutted Mazowe. For him, land reform presented an opportunity to return to the 'lost lands' of his ancestors and regain territory had been part of the Chiweshe chieftaincy before white settler farmers arrived in Mazowe in the early 1900s and slowly pushed those living there into the Chiweshe communal lands (formerly native reserves). However, Chief Chigariro did not officially have jurisdiction in Mazowe, even though he had unofficially been allowed to move into a farmhouse. In fact, the extent of traditional authorities' influence in new resettlement areas generally was highly contested. In this context, how were

communities constructed, by whom and on what terms? How did Chief Chigariro claim and exercise his authority and power in this particular context?

Finally, the resolution of these problems was constrained by the lack of structural dispute mechanisms and a political and social context that heavily discouraged any form of public confrontation. Public confrontation was cast as dangerous and disruptive to the social order, and glossed in common parlance using the English word *noise*. The threat of being accused of making *noise* influenced how claims over resources and to authority were made and challenged, and how people negotiated their relationships to one another. New resettlement areas tended to be ZANU PF strongholds, and daily life necessarily intertwined with local ZANU PF politics in Mazowe at a time when many were competing for positions within the party. Negotiating these dynamics was referred to by those living in Mazowe as doing ‘Politics’. The challenge those in Mazowe faced was how to navigate ‘Politics’ without making *noise*.

My thesis looks at these newly reconfigured relationships between the land and ZANU PF, land beneficiaries, farmworkers and chiefs roughly a decade after ‘fast track’ began. In this complex situation, how did people make claims about mutual obligations, responsibilities and rights, and on what basis? This question concerns the way people thought about their relationships with each other, the state and the land. And how did people legitimise their claims over authority and resources and on what grounds? What did people *do* to secure or realise their claims?

In this thesis I approach land as a medium through which different social relationships are worked out. Chris Hann (1998) has observed that property relations are social relations, and that people build social identities through ‘holding and using a variety of ‘things’ in their environment (p.3). Tania Li (2014) approaches land as a ‘provisional assemblage of heterogeneous elements including material substances, technologies, discourses and practices’ (p.589). Land, unlike other commodities, cannot be ‘rolled up like a mat. It has presence and location’ (ibid.). Different modes of inscription – maps, pegs, offer letters, laws – reformatted the social relations in which land as a material entity in Zimbabwe was entangled. I ask what the nature of these new social relations was. New authorities, new claims, new processes of

recognition, and new inclusions and exclusions characterized 'fast track'. However, the way in which land in new resettlement areas was 'assembled' and the social relations involved in this were, as Li points out, 'provisional', even as the Zimbabwean state presented them as fixed. At the same time, following Donald Moore (2005), I approach land as an historical entity, 'striated' or 'fractal', where 'environmental resources, human livelihood practices, and power relations from a succession of different governmental rationalities and administrative designations [...] are co-present, thus remaining 'consequential even as they are reworked' (p.3; see also Fontein 2009; Fontein 2015). My interest is with the constant interplay between the ZANU PF state's assemblage of the 'land', which structured people's relationships in particular ways, and peoples' reworking of them. In the process the meaning of land reform is constantly being reworked as well.

In examining these issues, I bring work on citizen-state relations in political and legal anthropology into discussion with the burgeoning work on the anthropology of morality and the vast literature on 'belonging' in Africa. As an over-arching theme, I examine the myriad 'modes of belonging', through which people became 'incorporated' into the Mazowe new resettlement area. While the state defined 'belonging' or 'incorporation' as dependent on state recognition of claims over resources and authority, for Blair Rutherford (2008a), becoming 'incorporated' on farms concerned the local recognition of rights, and involved participating in a shared moral economy by which claims are recognized. I draw on Rutherford's notion that those living in new resettlement areas had to engage and negotiate new 'modes of belonging' that did not always fit neatly with state definitions of who belonged and who did not (Rutherford 2008a: 79-80). I work with Didier Fassin's (2012) definition of a moral economy as the 'production, circulation and appropriation' of norms and values, sensibilities and emotions' (p.13). In this context, moral arguments became part of a wider process of political negotiation through which different kinds of claim were made, over things (houses, boreholes etc.) and over the nature of people's relationships. Since 'morality' was defined differently by different groups, it was a highly contested terrain. I track the process by which 'the moral' was carved out and used to legitimize or delegitimize claims to belong.

A second theme concerns power and authority. Multiple, overlapping authorities existed in Mazowe: a chief, local ZANU PF structures, and local government. The ‘ZANU PF state’ was by no means coherent or monolithic. Throughout this thesis I alternate between referring to the ‘ZANU PF state’ as a powerful if fragmented imaginary, and disaggregating it into its different institutions (Abrams 1988). These different authority structures were peopled by individuals who had their own political agendas, whom I refer to as ‘state actors’. This enables me to show the differences between and within government agencies that produced contradictory and uneven regimes of rule. Over the course of this thesis I show that ‘Politics’ in Mazowe consisted of contestations, alliances and allegiances between different state actors. Chiefs’ legitimacy in Zimbabwe draws from the state, the ancestors, local populations and spirit mediums. They can be considered state actors even as they also draw on the sovereignty of the ancestors. They embody different moral economies, and temporalities, at the same time. From the perspective of a single chief, I show that what was being contested between him and the other state actors operating in Mazowe was different visions of the state and citizens as these were being (re)made through the process of land reform. Finally, I examine what kinds of citizens were produced through these negotiations. In line with Juan Obarrio (2010; 2014) and other scholars, rather than opposing ‘customary’ vs. ‘state’, subjectivities in this context are shown to be emergent and composite, worked out in the space between different authorities’ regimes of governance, and in everyday relationships that crosscut and complicated them.

In order to grasp how resettlement areas came to be constructed as new and problematic socio-political terrains, it is necessary to take account of the immediate social and historical circumstances that resulted in ‘fast track’. These built on and were inflected by legacies inherited from racialized systems of European settler agriculture. ‘Fast track’ involved different phases. In each phase, different actors occupied the limelight, different languages of legitimacy with regards to land claims circulated, and different methods of dividing, claiming and/or allocating land took place. However, this latest land reform in Zimbabwe is far from ‘over’, and the instability of land allocations was on-going at the time of writing (see Cliffe et al. 2011: 915).

From Farm Occupations to the FTLRP

The first phase of land reform was marked by the sporadic occupation of white-owned farms by war veterans and peasant farmers in 1998. The first farms to be occupied were located to the east of Harare, the capital. This first wave of occupiers, framed their claims in terms of having fought for land in the liberation war as well as historic land dispossession, and their demands for land were aimed as much at the ZANU PF elite in government as they were at white farmers. However at this stage, Mugabe and the ZANU PF-led government's attitude towards the occupiers was ambivalent. These first occupiers were arrested and evicted by the police (as 'squatters' on commercial farms had been in earlier years).

The ZANU PF elites' failure to adequately re-integrate war veterans into civilian life following Independence in 1980 meant that, with some exceptions, war veterans had become an increasingly marginalized group, socially and economically. Land dispossession at the hands of white settlers had been one of the rallying points for guerrilla soldiers during the liberation war. However, Mugabe's reconciliation policy following Independence left white property rights intact for a further 10 years. A land reform program initiated in 1980 saw 8 million hectares (40% of the 19.77 million target) redistributed amongst 71,000 families who were resettled in Old Resettlement Areas (ORAs). However, these lands were mostly located in drier regions of the country, and much of the most fertile land remained in the hands of a few hundred white farmers. Plans for a larger scale land redistribution were brought back to the table in 1990. A donor conference was held in 1998 at which the Land Reform and Resettlement Program Phase 2 (LRRP-2) was planned. However, relations between Zimbabwe and its international donors – particularly the UK – soured as the first wave of occupations began and funding for the LRRP-2 never materialized.

Structural adjustment policies adopted by the Zimbabwean government at the start of the 1990s saw hundreds of war veterans (amongst others) laid off from government ministries at a time of widespread economic hardship. The economic decline that followed led to increasingly corrupt rural and urban government administration, which

further contributed to widespread discontent with ZANU PF and Mugabe. By the end of the 1990s, war veterans' frustration had reached boiling point and resulted in a mass march to Mugabe's private residence in 1997. Inspired and angered by the fact that Rhodesian ex-servicemen received land as compensation after their participation in World War II, war veterans demanded demobilisation packages, compensation for war injuries, and pensions (Sadomba 2011: 109). At the same time, more outspoken criticism from the urban middle class, civil society, students and intellectuals, and the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) left Mugabe and his ZANU PF party grasping for political legitimacy. Mugabe caved in to the demands of the war veterans and made huge un-budgeted pay-outs to them, taken from civil servants' salaries. This, in turn, led to public street protests led by the ZCTU and, eventually, the emergence of the opposition MDC party.

From the late 1990s non-governmental organisations (NGOs), churches and unions in Zimbabwe had begun to engage with the policy decisions of the state (Dorman 2002). In 1997 they formed the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) to initiate a national constitutional debate. Mass protests against the newly imposed authoritarian media law – the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) – and Zimbabwe's planned military intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo were staged. In response to these, the state launched the Constitutional Commission (CC) in 1999. The state's aim was to reclaim control of the political discourse (ibid.). A new constitution was to be voted upon by plebiscite in February 2000. The rejection of the CC's draft by the electorate was interpreted by the Mugabe-led government as a sign that the opposition MDC party had a good chance of winning the June 2000 parliamentary election and upcoming 2002 presidential election. Land and participation in the liberation war became focal points around which ZANU PF's campaign rhetoric was constructed, where race was elided with political views. This discourse pitted 'black' 'nationalists', those who supported ZANU PF, against 'white' 'imperialists' and their supporters (any who opposed ZANU PF).

It was in this period between the rejection of the CC's draft constitution, and the June 2000 parliamentary election that hundreds of white-owned farms across the country were occupied. This is commonly referred to as *jambanja*, meaning violence, chaos,

and lawlessness.³ *Jambanja* shot Zimbabwe into international news headlines. Vivid descriptions often accompanied distressing photographs of white farmers and their black employees being displaced from farms, by what international media portrayed as marauding and violent thugs. In June 2000, these widespread unofficial land occupations were formalized as part of a national accelerated Land Reform and Resettlement Implementation Plan, which was called the FTLRP or ‘fast track’ for short.

In July 2002, ‘fast track’ became more systematic. Surveys, planning and pegging transformed ‘invaded’ farms into legitimate, government resettlement areas (Chaumba et al. 2003: 544). The beginning of the technocratic phase of land reform was marked by the listing of 4,874 mostly white-owned farms for compulsory acquisition by government. The ‘Land Acquisition Amendment Act’ (2000) was passed, transferring ownership of all commercial farmland to the state and giving white farmers 90 days to vacate their farms. Commercial farms were divided into different sized plots, and these were allocated to what government referred to as ‘land beneficiaries’.

Land was distributed according to two models. Farms were divided into small holdings of approximately six hectares called A1 plots; and medium or large-scale holdings called A2 farms. A2 farms were anywhere from 250 hectares to 2,000 hectares in size, depending on the agro-ecological zone in which the farm was located. A2 farms were allocated to those with financial resources to develop them into commercial farms. A1 areas were defined by government as a ‘decongestant model for the majority of landless people’ living in over-crowded communal lands. A1 areas consisted of two variants: ‘villages’, in which dwellings were grouped together in a settlement area and grazing was shared, and ‘self-contained’, where grazing was subdivided and combined with arable plots to make small individual farms. A1 areas in Mazowe were organized as ‘villages’. Village ‘committees of seven’ were established to maintain order and resolve farm-level conflicts amongst land beneficiaries, as well as conflicts between land beneficiaries and between farmworkers (Matondi 2012: 38). Local ZANU PF party structures operated as a parallel, overlapping, structure of authority. A1 land

³ Alexander (2006) informs us that *jambanja* was a term that was ‘popularised in a chart-topping song about extra-marital affairs released at the time, and taken to mean a state of ‘disorder and lawlessness’ (p.185).

beneficiaries were given ‘offer letters’ that gave them use rights but explicitly stated that their ‘offer’ could be withdrawn without compensation by the state at any point.

A2 areas were intended to increase the participation of black indigenous farmers in the commercial farming sector (Matondi 2012: 9-10). Debate continues as to whether A2s largely comprised ZANU PF elite or not. Unlike A1 land beneficiaries, A2 land beneficiaries were expected to operate relatively independently from the state. They were given 25 and 99 year leases which allowed for the possibility of purchasing already existing farm improvements (barns, equipment) that could be used as collateral for financial borrowing (ibid.: 10). Thus, the model that had prevailed before land reform – of larger-scale self-sufficient commercial farms, and ‘villages’ of small-scale peasant farmers under control of the state – was maintained.

Who was allocated land? In practice, ZANU PF membership appears to have been essential for a successful land allocation, although this is a subject of much debate and almost impossible to verify. Government stipulated quotas of land beneficiaries who were to be drawn from those who participated in the liberation war as well as those who had been pushed into communal areas (formerly called ‘native reserves’) by the white settler government. Unlike South Africa’s land reform program, which included the Restitution of Land Rights Act (1994), land reform in Zimbabwe was never officially framed in terms of land restitution.⁴ Nonetheless, many newly resettled land beneficiaries viewed ‘fast track’ in terms of long held aspirations for a return to ancestral lands, or for land that had been promised by government in 1980 but never materialised (Fontein 2009; Fontein 2010; Fontein 2015; Moore 2005; Mujere 2010).

The dominant framework around farmworkers during ‘fast track’ portrayed them as ‘foreigners’, loyal to their white employers and against the African nationalist interests of ‘land reform’, because of a lack of political consciousness (Rutherford 2008a: 93-94; Willems 2004). This representation partly derived from farmworkers’ heritage as descendants of Malawian, Zambian and Mozambiquan migrants who provided cheap labor for European settlers in the 1940s. Although the majority were born in

⁴ Restitution of Land Rights Act 1994: <http://www.justice.gov.za/lcc/docs/1994-022.pdf> [Accessed 22.12.15]

Zimbabwe, of those allowed to remain living on farms, few were allocated land. When farmworkers were allocated land, their plots were often much smaller than the standard six hectares (Marongwe 2004: 8). Government subsequently asserted that farmworkers' continued residence in farm compounds was conditional on their provision of labour to land beneficiaries.

The extent of the involvement and influence of traditional leaders during 'fast track', and in new resettlement areas thereafter, was a bone of contention and a bargaining chip between chiefs and the state. Chiefs also viewed land reform in terms of the restitution of 'lost' ancestral lands (Fontein 2009; Fontein 2015; Mujere 2010). Land reform also gave chiefs the opportunity to extend their influence over those living in new resettlement areas, and to gain land for their own commercial or subsistence purposes. Historically chiefs have not had jurisdiction over commercial farmland in Zimbabwe, their authority having been restricted to communal areas by pre- and post-Independence legislation. However, the late 1990s saw a turn back to chiefs by Mugabe and the ZANU PF as a source of legitimacy in ZANU PF's pre-election, anti-imperialist/African nationalist campaign, and as a means of influencing rural voting patterns (Maxwell 1999; Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Willems 2009; Fontein 2015).

Chiefs were maintained in an ambiguous position in new resettlement areas. According to the pre-2013 constitution, chiefs did not have jurisdiction in new resettlement areas. Many nonetheless moved into new resettlement areas and claimed land as well as jurisdiction over those living there. The question of what kind of influence they could exert over those living in these areas however remained unclear.⁵ Thus new resettlement areas came to consist of three groups newly living alongside one another, each with different rights: A1 and A2 land beneficiaries, and farmworkers. These were governed by three overlapping authorities: chiefs, local government and local ZANU PF structures, most of whom were also land beneficiaries themselves.

⁵ After negotiations between chiefs and the state in the 2013 constitutional referendum the constitution was amended to state that chiefs could be granted authority in new resettlement areas if it was granted by the Minister of Lands by notice in the Gazette. However their authority still depended on their relationship with whatever regime was in power (Traditional Leaders Act 2013, Chapter 29: 17, 29, 1, (a)).

Land Reform: from Product to Process

In the early years of ‘fast track’, debates swung between celebrating the justified reversal of colonial land dispossession and condemning the violent and authoritarian disregard for the rule of law, particularly property rights, that it involved. Subsequently, empirical research focusing on questions of livelihood, productivity, and outputs, aimed at assessing ‘fast track’ in terms of success or failure has been produced (e.g. Scoones et al. 2010). This focus on agricultural productivity has inevitably de-politicised a process that continues to be informed and affected by ZANU PF party interests and power struggles. Research into the social relationships that underpin ‘agricultural productivity’ is gradually emerging (Chambati 2013; Scoones 2014). More thorough ethnographic work on the meaning of land reform for different actors involved has also been produced (e.g. Fontein 2009; Mujere 2010; Fontein 2015). Much of the fieldwork on which this research is based was conducted in the early years of resettlement, between 2000 and 2005, and therefore focuses on questions concerning the legitimacy of land reform and the way different actors legitimised and understood their claims to land. My research builds on this third wave of work on land reform. By 2012/13 however the concerns held by land beneficiaries about the legitimacy of their land claims and the possibility of the reversal of land reform had given way to others – how to make the land productive and how to make a profit. In addition, the political context of the GNU that came into being in 2009 was a significant influence on people’s daily lives, heralding as it did, a new approach to party politics. Finally, little empirical research has been conducted on the negotiation of day-to-day relationships between those living in such close proximity on farms.

Underpinning ‘livelihood strategies’ and questions of ‘agricultural productivity’ are people’s social relationships. These are governed by different moral economies, aspirations for the future, questions, assumptions and expectations about the nature of people’s relationships to each other, chiefs, local government, the ZANU PF party and ‘the state’. In this work I shift the focus from product to process by exploring how the meaning of land reform was being worked out through people’s daily lives. I highlight the dynamics of social relationships, the negotiations involved, and the ways these

were shaped but not determined by legal frameworks and official declarations. In so doing, I disaggregate ‘land reform’ and show how it concerned not only questions of land redistribution but also the reconfiguration of people’s social relationships. It is in part an attempt to complexify the ‘winners’ (land beneficiaries) and ‘losers’ (farmworkers) approach to Zimbabwean land reform by showing that even for land beneficiaries, life was far from certain or stable. Finally, I show how land reform meant lots of different things to different people, but these meanings were not fixed. It was not only about ‘returning’ to ‘lost lands’, new economic opportunities, or having fought in the liberation struggle. Instead, people slipped in and out of different meanings to serve their own ends at particular points in time.

Research Methods

This research was conducted across a series of farms in the Mazowe new resettlement area. It is based on living with and speaking to land beneficiaries, farmworkers and Chief Chigariro, his family and retinue of spirit mediums and advisors (most of whom were local land beneficiaries as well). Mazowe’s proximity to Harare and my long-established personal connection to a family newly resettled there made it an ideal place to conduct this research. In total my fieldwork in Mazowe lasted fourteen months.⁶ Typically I stayed with my host family, land beneficiaries whom I have called the Basims, on Dam Lake farm from Friday to Tuesday, during which time I attended one or other of Chief Chigariro’s courts. I would then return to Harare for three days to write notes, transcribe and recharge before driving back to Mazowe the following weekend.

While in Mazowe, I moved between the Basims’ homestead and the homes of land beneficiaries and farmworkers who lived on neighbouring farms. Much of my time was spent on these two farms although in total I visited six different farms in the area. I met many of my informants through Chief Chigariro’s court which I attended bi-weekly on weekends and would often later visit their homes on different farms to

⁶ This was interrupted by a month long break in the UK over September 2012.

conduct interviews. I also spent a considerable amount of time with the Chief in his private residence in Mazowe and made numerous visits to the home of one of his spirit mediums in Harare. In addition to these, I visited the District Administrator's (DAs) offices and the Basims' primary family home, located in a nearby town.

For the first three months of fieldwork I took scratch notes which I wrote up as diary entries. I spent my time moving between the Basims' homestead and the Chief's court up the road. As fieldwork progressed I began to take fuller notes in casual conversations with the Basims' neighbours, farmworkers on Dam Lake or those who attended the Chief's court. After six months I began to conduct semi-formal interviews in which I wrote detailed notes. Eventually, I began to use my recorder in pre-arranged formal interviews with those I had come to know best. For this interview period I employed an experienced research assistant, Nyaradzo Shayanewako, who came from Wedza District in Mashonaland East. Nyaradzo's comparative knowledge from previous work as a research assistant in a series of 'old resettlement areas' near Harare was extremely useful.

My formal interviews took place in people's homes, or offices in the case of government administration. I used interviews to clarify specific points towards the end of my fieldwork and record detailed personal histories. In total I recorded conversations with nine different A1 land beneficiaries, six headmen, spirit mediums and 'policemen' working in the capacity of the Chief's court, three Agricultural Technical and Extension (AREX) officers – employed by the Ministry of Agriculture – and the DA. I made fourteen recordings of court sessions. I also carried out 10 formal interviews with different farmworker families although these were not recorded. The longevity of my stay meant that I had unaccountable informal conversations with land beneficiaries, farmworkers and the Chief, and was able to piece together much information from daily chats as well as gossip which I would later verify with those I knew best. In total my informants numbered approximately 20 individuals whom I came to know well, not including their families and those I spoke to during and after court sessions. I attended 3 funerals, one of which was Chief Chigariro's just before the end of my fieldwork. I was present at two AREX 'field days' – events where AREX officers celebrate individual land beneficiaries who have been particularly productive

as an example to other land beneficiaries in the area – as well as a number of much smaller-scale events, such as the distribution of seeds. In Harare I spent time in the National Archives, the state-run Herald newspaper archives and in my second home, where I typed up my notes.

I did not, however, attend any ZANU PF meetings, even though these occurred regularly. ZANU PF has become a notoriously racist party. My race and the fact that I am Zimbabwean meant that many living in Mazowe assumed from the outset I was an MDC sympathizer if not an outright supporter. It is highly unlikely that I would have been allowed to attend ZANU PF meetings. The period between 2011 and 2013 was a period of internal re-grouping and severe internal factionalism over Mugabe's succession within ZANU PF. In this lead up to the 2013 constitutional referendum and dissolution of the GNU through a general election, ZANU PF were particularly keen to prevent the numerous cracks in their party from being exposed and used against them by the opposition. This was a time of high suspicion within the party, and between the party and 'outsiders' like myself. However, I also did not ask if I could attend. This was partly because in order to attend I would have had to have expressed loyalty for a party and a regime that I am highly critical of. In addition, even the request to attend would have cast the purpose of my research into deep suspicion. Indeed, both Baba Basim and Nyaradzo often emphasized when asked what my research was on, that I was not conducting research on party politics.

As a result, it was difficult for me map out the tensions between the party at a local, district and national level – between the 'centre' and the 'periphery' – and how these affected day-to-day relationships in Mazowe. I was however, still able to witness first-hand the interactions between politicians, local and national, and civilian populations at a local level at other public events, such as field days and the Chiefs funeral. Initially I was solely reliant on Baba Basim to explain the goings-on of the party. However, as time passed and I built more trusted relationships with people, references to specific party directives or arguments between different members were made and explained. Undoubtedly these accounts will have been biased. In addition, it was impossible for me to ascertain what the 'silences' in their accounts were. However, this is not an ethnography of the ZANU PF regime in Mazowe. It is a record and an analysis of how

the tensions of land reform were worked out in people's day-to-day relationships in 'new resettlement areas' after the dust had settled so to speak. Furthermore, what my exclusion from ZANU PF party meetings allowed me to see was the manner in which party politics was both pervasive and compartmentalized at the same time. People went to party meetings at specific places and times and there was an air of threat and secrecy about these. Party politics was also discussed in hushed tones in everyday conversation or else obliquely referred to, but it was rarely openly discussed in everyday life. I was unable to examine the internal workings of the party, only the effects of the regime in daily life and the manner in which these effects were dealt with. This was very different from David Maxwell's work in north-east Zimbabwe in the 1990s, for example, where he was able to attend meetings and directly observe the relationship between party politicians, chiefs and local populations.

I arrived in Harare in November 2011 and moved in with family friends. My last visit had been in 2008 – a time of scarcity and fear, when there was hyperinflation, no fuel, shop shelves were empty and the country was in shock from the violent June run-off election and the equally violent Operation *Murambatsvina* that left thousands homeless and destitute. By 2011 the US dollar (USD) had been adopted and shop shelves were full, albeit with costly imported goods. Fuel was available and the GNU had brought some semblance of political stability. I spent the first three months organizing a research visa and affiliated with the Midlands State University (MSU), three hours' drive from Harare. In coded and indirect conversation, the graduate students at MSU and I acknowledged the challenges of conducting research in a paranoid political environment without directly talking about party politics. In this way we mirrored the manner in which such conversations took place in Mazowe.

For the first six months, while living with the Basims on Dam Lake I participated in much of the daily life on the farm: walking to the farm shop, collecting water, witnessing if not participating in chopping wood, weeding, harvesting and drying tobacco. For a time my questions were open and undirected. My own family's longstanding relationship with the Basims meant that initial questions of trust and comfort were much less problematic than they might have been. Baba Basim was a village headman appointed by Chief Chigariro. In addition to witnessing and

participating in daily farm life I became involved in their relationship with their workers and could witness if not fully participate in the tobacco farming process. Baba Basim was often visited by a mixture of farmworkers and land beneficiaries seeking advice on a variety of issues. Through the Basims I met many of my initial informants and came to grasp the nuances of daily farm life, the problems and difficulties land beneficiaries faced, the way they related to the land, to farmworkers and to the various public authorities operating in the area. Various restrictions the Basims placed on my movements on the farm were highly informative even as they were frustrating. I was, for example, forbidden from eating meals in farmworker's homes, the Basims' reasons ranging from the possibility of witchcraft, to poisoning, to concerns of propriety regarding the Basims' provision of food. Thus I was introduced to the contradictory positioning of farmworkers by land beneficiaries, often framed in terms of their lack of morality, even as they often simultaneously enjoyed close friendships and working relationships with them.

Daily trips to the farm shop accompanied by the Basims' workers, involved passing through the compound and I slowly came to know a number of farmworker families on Dam Lake. Farmworkers are a notoriously difficult group to research. Under the 'domestic government' of white farmers, Rutherford (2001) found it extremely difficult first to gain access to farmworkers, and then to distinguish himself from the white farmers. To start with I faced similar problems, although my positioning was further complicated by my association with the Chief and land beneficiaries. However, as time passed and trust was established, a few individuals began to talk about their experiences of *jambanja* and the problems they faced living in Mazowe. For the three months we worked together, Nyaradzo kept daily field notes and often went to speak with women in the Dam Lake compound in the evenings without me, reporting back the day's gossip and information about who worked where. Her maternal presence put people at ease and she was far less conspicuous than I was. White farmers' perceived support of the opposition party meant that, as a white person, I too was associated with the MDC party. These associations could be transferred on to those with whom I worked – farmworkers as well as the Basims. While the Basims were largely above suspicion, farmworkers were still viewed as possible opposition party supporters. Thus I tried to draw as little attention as possible to those farmworker families with whom I

worked. As a result, my fieldwork amongst farmworkers was somewhat unsystematic. It is drawn from those living on Dam Lake and the neighbouring Utopia Farm, with the exception of one court case involving farmworkers who lived near the Chief.

Initially I did not have a specific research question. Instead I was driven by the desire to understand how people lived together in such close proximity, given their diverse backgrounds and differential rights. My early field notes consisted of recording everyday life within the Basim household or on Dam Lake farm, for example discussions between neighbors over seed distribution, arguments about pay that I overheard in the compound and what the Basims' workers did from day to day. I slowly came to realise that while daily life seemed stable, there were a number of underlying tensions that threatened to disrupt the apparent calm when they came to the surface. Gradually I was drawn into questions and practices of morality and the sticky topic of 'Politics', either because these were given as explanations in response to my questions about different conflicts and tensions, or because I observed them being used between informants in discussion about conflicts between people. 'Ah, that is just politics' was the most common answer to many of my questions. This presented a methodological problem: people used the term 'Politics' as a way of preventing further questions. I came to see 'Politics' as a discursive black-box, a way of compartmentalizing issues that were not to be spoken of in public. There was a parallel here in the way that people spoke about witchcraft. Yet, I was also presented with a conundrum, 'Politics' seemed to be everywhere! As time passed and trust grew I was able to press for more specific details about power struggles, although these conversations were always broached in a round-about way within the privacy of people's homes or else on walks to and from places.

A number of social hierarchies operated in Mazowe. I discovered that these hierarchies were contested, even if not openly. The question of *unhu* (moral personhood) was connected to a moral economy of respect: to have *unhu* was to respect hierarchies, whether in the local party or in the home. While power struggles and questions of morality were clearly linked, what emerged was that these were separated by those living in Mazowe as a mechanism for dealing with the uncertainties and tensions provoked by land reform in a political context in which open conflict was heavily

deterred. This allowed a contingent stability to emerge on farms, albeit fragile and easily disrupted.

In more formal interviews I asked land beneficiaries about their household, their background and what their hopes and aspirations were. These revealed the diversity of people living in Mazowe, as well as the diverse meanings of land reform for different people all living in the same place. With farmworkers I either asked *in situ* questions about their work (if I met them on the road on the way back from a days labour), or, in formal interviews, I would begin with their life histories. Thus I was able to broach the topic of *jambanja* and the departure of white farmers indirectly by situating these as passing events within longer historical trajectories. In later interviews I often asked people who they thought was in charge in the area. In this way I was introduced to the complex politics of authority in Mazowe. Some replied ‘the DA’, others replied, ‘the Chief’. Most treated these as different kinds of authority, used for different ends. A good number outright dismissed the Chief as having no authority in Mazowe at all.

After the first week of my stay, Baba Basim took me to Chief Chigariro’s court (*dare*). Most of my court data was collected at the court closest to the Basims although I attended a court in each of the other locations at least once. For six months I penned notes during court sessions, frantically translating from chiZezuru into English. Chief Chigariro’s courts were excellent places to meet people living beyond Dam Lake farm. Despite the official status of chiefly authority in new resettlement areas being so heavily in question, the court was well-attended during the time of my fieldwork. On average, between fifteen and twenty cases were heard per session and each session lasted 3 to 5 hours. Those who attended were fairly representative of the general demographic of A1 small-scale land beneficiaries living in the area, a mix of old and young, male and female. Farmworkers, A2 land beneficiaries and those living and working on mines and other companies in the area also attended but less frequently. The court was extremely revealing because Chief Chigariro used this as an arena in which to assert his authority over those living in Mazowe, and to decry the attempts of the party and the DA to undermine him. It also revealed how traditional authority was constituted in this context; in other words what traditional authority meant to those living in Mazowe. In *in situ* interviews with people after the court session I asked why

they attended and what they thought of the judgement of their own or others' cases. I thus understood that for most, the authority of the Chief was considered to be of a different kind than that of the state. In spending time with the Chief and his spirit mediums outside the court, what was striking was how they explicitly and frequently emphasized his 'project of return' as a moral rather than a political project. Here again, 'morality' was used as a political mechanism to depoliticize claims to power.

Research Ethics

The Basims' good standing with local party structures and Chief Chigariro was a large part of the reason I was able to conduct long term fieldwork in a ZANU PF stronghold in a year that preceded a national election and in which a national constitutional referendum was held. Most significantly, the last white people who had spent any amount of time on the farms were the banished white farmers. Nonetheless, conducting fieldwork as a white Zimbabwean woman in a new resettlement area meant that I was viewed with suspicion by many, particularly those in local party structures who did not know the Basims. In addition, while the Chief encouraged my presence in the court, I was not allowed to attend events, such as *bira* (spiritual) ceremonies. This was put down to my race, which would draw too much attention from important ZANU PF elite in attendance. An underlying suspicion in the first six months of my work was that I was an NGO worker, a British spy, or someone associated with the MDC. However, my *chiZezuru* improved dramatically over the course of my fieldwork and importantly, I learned both how to speak and hold my body in a manner appropriate to a deferential woman. Undoubtedly my age, gender and performance of humility assisted my research and eventually I was not perceived as a threat. I relied on Baba Basim to advise me of when I needed to make my presence in the area scarce, for example during the constitutional referendum. Instances like this were often explained before and after with shrugs and wry laughter, 'You know how it is with politics, it is better you are not here'. I was careful to leave intervals between my house visits to a number of different farmworker households to prevent drawing attention to my

presence amongst them as much as possible. To my knowledge this work has not negatively impacted upon anyone.

Apart from well-known public figures such as Chief Chigariro, all other names, including farm names, have been anonymized in this thesis. Land reform has taken very different trajectories in different parts of Zimbabwe. Part of the historical value of this thesis lies in its exploration of a particular locality and, as such, I decided not to anonymise the area in which I was working. A post-fieldwork concern is the extent to which those I worked with were aware of the potentially critical bent of my research. As Jonathan Spencer (1990) recounted of his doctoral work in Sri Lanka, conducting fieldwork in politically turbulent times places researchers in awkward positions vis-a-vis their research subjects. Chief Chigariro hoped my work could be used to promote a particular version of cultural nationalism in which chiefs played a crucial role. In addition, working and living with a family poses more intimate ethical concerns and much detail regarding the Basim family has been cut out for this reason.

Zimbabwean 'land reform' is an extremely controversial and heavily politicized topic. Political polarization in academic work on the subject is just as prevalent as it is 'on the ground'. During fieldwork I was continuously moving between the perspectives of the Chief, land beneficiaries and farmworkers – groups whose views and orientations to the place, history and the future overlapped but also often radically diverged. This presented difficulties in writing and I have tried as far as possible to capture these different perspectives and present them honestly and evenly alongside one another.

Mazowe Exceptionalism

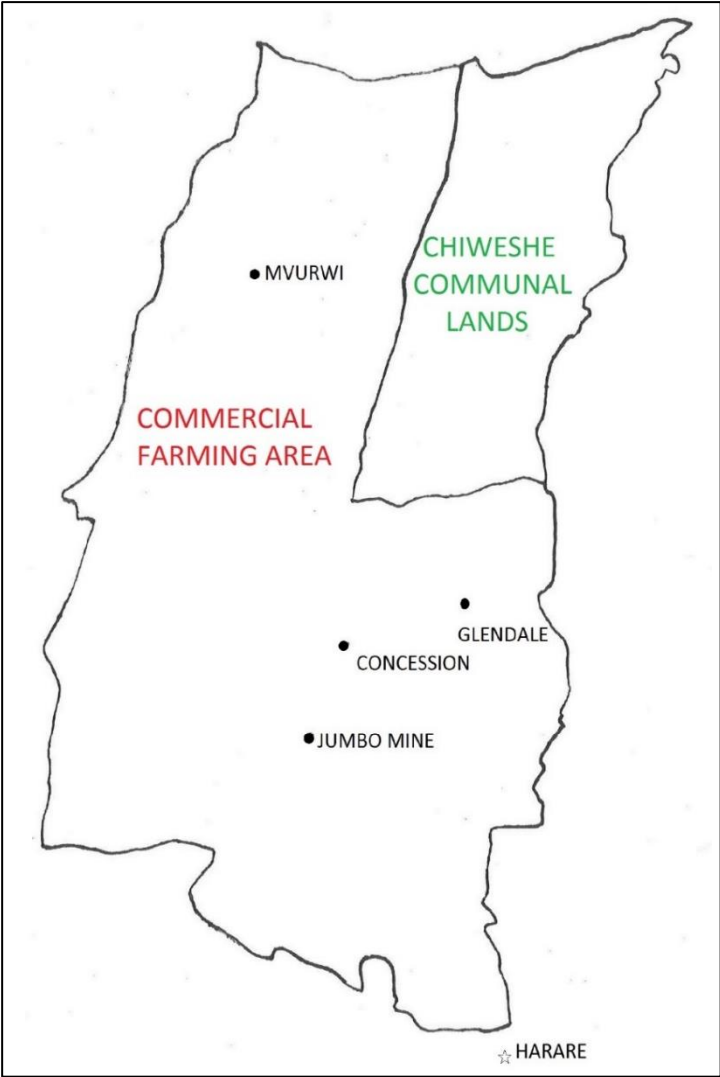


Fig. 3: Map showing position of Chiweshe communal lands relative to Mazowe commercial farming district. Source: Author, 2016.

Mazowe is located in Mashonaland Central province, approximately one and a half hours drive from the capital. Located on the central plateau between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers, it has a high average rainfall and generally fertile clay loam soils. 51% of the farms located in Mashonaland Central province are located in the Mazowe district (Matondi 2012: 41). It is a prime farming area, particularly for tobacco, farmed in the southern half, but also for grain and dairy, farmed in the north. A number of

urban centers in and around the district mean it has good roads and telecommunication services. Its success as a farming district meant it was excluded from the 1980s resettlement program, and ‘fast track’ marked the first official large-scale set of land occupations in the area since the arrival of the European settlers.

The first permanent white settlement occurred in Mazowe in 1894, making it one of the earliest established white settler farming areas in the country. Early European settlers are recorded as having tried to establish labour tenancy ‘agreements’ with those living in the area, although by the 1920s, those who refused to work for white farmers were evicted and slowly the people of the Hwata, Nyachuru, Negomo and Makope chiefdoms were pushed into the Chiweshe native reserve to the north-east of the district (Bessant 1987: 62-63). By 1908, 33% of those farming in Mazowe were growing tobacco. By 1922/1923 Mazowe ranked as the top Virginia leaf producing district in the colony, remaining one of the top four until the 1928 tobacco market crash. Two major labour migration routes channelling ‘voluntary’ workers from Nyasaland to South African mines, one via Tete in Mozambique, passed through Mazowe. By 1945, 38, 190 migrant labourers and their families worked in Mazowe annually. The farmworkers I worked with in 2011 were descendents of these labourers and their families.

Mazowe was considered a highly prized area in which to be allocated land during ‘fast track’. It represented the heartland of white farming capital and war veterans are reported as having viewed the occupation of farms in the area as having potent symbolic force as well as ‘proving to sceptics that land reform was a reality’ (Matondi 2012: 30). Accounts differ as to the nature of the 2,000 farm occupations but compared to other areas, land transfers in Mazowe were relatively calm with few instances of physical violence (see Selby 2006; Sadomba 2011; Matondi 2012).⁷ However, land administration was completely chaotic and no standardised record system of land allocations at district level exist (Matondi 2012: 66-67). In some cases, white farmers

⁷ Prosper Matondi (2012) suggests this was due to the Mazowe District Lands Committee assisting government to control land occupations, for example by forbidding further occupations after 2002 (p.30). The efforts of late Vice President Joseph Msika, who hailed from Mazowe, are given as a further reason for the relatively calm manner in which occupations occurred compared to other areas of the country (ibid.: 48).

reached agreements with occupiers, and/or farmworkers are recorded as having assisted occupiers (Sadomba 2011). However, this was more common amongst smaller-scale peasant occupiers keen for white farmers' expertise and eventually many of these arrangements collapsed as subsequent land occupiers arrived, particularly elites interested in large-scale holdings. A number of high ranking ZANU PF elites were allocated land in Mazowe, most notably the President's wife, Grace Mugabe, and Joseph Chinotimba, a nationally famous war veteran.

The first farm occupations occurred on farms bordering the Chiweshe communal area. Conducting fieldwork in 1984, Leslie Bessant (1987) describes land shortages, created by 1930s centralisation policies and the NLHA, as the largest problem faced by those living in the Chiweshe reserve (p.11). Residents of overcrowded communal areas were intended as the prime land beneficiaries of the A1 settlement schemes, but in Mazowe traditional leaders complained that *vana vemuchiweshe* (people originating from Chiweshe) were marginalised in land allocations (G.Matondi 2010: 10). 69% of arable farm land in Mazowe was allocated to medium to large-scale A2 land beneficiaries, while 31% was allocated to small-scale A1 land beneficiaries (Agritex 2004 in Matondi 2012: 66-67). Of these small-scale land beneficiaries, only 21.5% originated from Chiweshe (although given 68% of Matondi's respondents (n=251) did not fit into any of the categories provided, the number may well be higher). Nonetheless, compared to other areas such as Masvingo province in the south, where 49.9% (n=376) of land beneficiaries are recorded as having come from communal areas (Scoones 2010: 53), the numbers of those allocated land who might claim original inheritance of Mazowe were relatively small. This fact, combined with the timing of my research may go some way to explaining the relative paucity of autochthonous claims to land during my research period as compared to that recorded by other scholars.⁸ A1 land beneficiaries in Mazowe came from different parts of the country, different class backgrounds and were of different ages. Many hailed from the Mt. Darwin area to the north of the country. Others moved from nearby townships or the capital city. Although the chiKorekore dialect from Mt. Darwin was common,

⁸ For example autochthonous claims of original inhabitancy were extremely prevalent amongst those allocated land in in Masvingo (Fontein 2015).

especially amongst those on Dam Lake Farm, the predominant language of communication was chiZezuru.

In Mazowe the majority of land was allocated to A2 settlers, the inverse of Masvingo in the south where the majority of land was allocated to A1 settlers (Scoones 2010: 42). A2 farmers across the country tended to have a higher local social status because they came from wealthier backgrounds and/or had better political connections than A1 farmers, and a number of class tensions existed between these two groups. In Mazowe it was common, for example, to hear A1 farmers complaining that A2 farmers did not know how to farm and that the land they had been allocated was wasted. These tensions echo observations made by Scoones et al. of the relationship between A1 and A2 farmers in Masvingo.⁹ In Mazowe, A1 and A2 farmers also occasionally competed for farmworkers' labour (Chapter Four). A2 farmers largely considered themselves beyond the remit of Chief Chigariro's authority (Chapter Six) while A1 farmers, especially those from communal areas, were much more willing to accept it, partly because they were already used to living under the authority of a chief in the communal areas.

Land reform was not uniform across the country. A core strength of this thesis are the detailed insights I provide into the local dynamics of farms in Mazowe. A1 and A2 farmers were allocated land alongside each other in the same farming areas across the country. However, Dam Lake and Utopia farms were exceptional even in Mazowe, because these were single farms divided between A1 and A2 farmers. This meant that on these farms, A1 and A2 farmers lived in much closer physical proximity to one another, and directly competed for resources such as water, tobacco barns and farmworkers' labour. As such, the tensions between these groups might have been more pronounced in my fieldsite. My fieldwork primarily took place with A1 farmers. This was because A2 farmers were far more reluctant to speak with me, in part because many, especially in Mazowe, held high party positions and viewed me with considerable suspicion if not outright enmity. Their high positions also meant that if

⁹ Scoones et al. (2010) for example record one A1 farmer complaining that, 'They hire us to plough for them, but then accuse us of poach grazing. These people are similar to whites. They have land they are not using, but they do not want others to use it' (p.48).

and when a dispute arose with an A1 land beneficiary, the A1 beneficiary was at considerable disadvantage.

Politically, Mazowe and Chiweshe have long been ZANU PF strongholds (Bessant 1987; Matondi 2012). In May 2008, Zimbabwe held harmonized parliamentary and presidential elections. While the MDC-T won the majority in both, Morgan Tsvangiri was just shy of winning the over 50% majority required for him to be elected as president. A run-off election was scheduled for June 2008 from which Tsvangiri withdrew citing extreme political violence against suspected MDC activists. Mazowe and the whole of Mashonaland Central Province, as traditional ZANU PF strongholds, were particularly hit.¹⁰ In 2000 and 2005, ZANU PF had dominated the Mazowe constituency in national elections, but in 2008 the MDC-T candidate Shepherd Mushonga won the seat for Mazowe Central. While Prosper Matondi (2012) attributes this to the diversity of different political party supporters in the area, and shifting political allegiances (p.78), my informants explained this as an anomaly produced by ZANU PF factionalism in which voters were pushed to vote for an unpopular candidate resulting in a low voter turnout from traditional ZANU PF supporters that led to the hitherto marginalised MDC candidate winning the seat.

ZANU PF blamed a campaign known *bhora musango* (lit. kick the ball into the bushes/off the pitch) for its failure to secure a parliamentary or presidential majority in the May 2008 elections. *Bhora musango* referred to a protest movement within ZANU PF in which individual politicians, angered by Mugabe's refusal to step down, apparently campaigned for voters to vote for them individually as MPs but not to vote for Mugabe as President. In the years leading up to 2008, concerns about Mugabe's health and age became questions about his suitability to run as ZANU PF's presidential candidate. He was nonetheless endorsed as candidate in ZANU PF's 2007 annual congress. In protest, Simba Makoni – formerly one of Mugabe's political protégés – formed the Mavambo/Kusile/Dawn (MKD) party in the months before the 2008 elections.

¹⁰ Human Rights Watch Report on violence in Mashonaland Central, https://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/zimbabwe0808/3.htm#_ftnref30 [Accessed 05/05/16].

ZANU PF's losses in the 2008 election were initially attributed to the splitting of the party through the formation of the MKD. However, rivalry for the position of vice-president (with the eventual aim of becoming president) also marked the years leading up to the 2008 election. This primarily involved the 'Mujuru' faction – led by Joyce Mujuru – and the 'Mnangwagwa' faction led by speaker of parliament Emmerson Mnangagwa. It is highly likely that the refusal by Mazowe Central's electorate to vote for the incumbent ZANU PF candidate in 2008 was a spin-off of the broader *bhora musango* phenomenon, which saw stalwart ZANU PF constituencies revolting against the political elites for pushing particular candidates on them.

In 2003, one of the two positions of vice-presidency became free in Zimbabwe. In 2004, under extremely suspicious intra-party maneuverings, Mujuru, a former war veteran who became Minister of Information, was elected vice-President (see Matyszak 2015). This came as a shock to many, not least Mnangagwa and his supporters, who had assumed that Mnangagwa, apparently Mugabe's favourite, would be elected. Mujuru's election was followed by the sacking of those provincial chairmen and senior members of the party who had supported Mnangagwa. This marked the beginning of an on-going factional war between these two figures that played out at a national and local level. Factionalism is notoriously difficult to study, not least because of the high stakes involved. Mazowe is located in Mashonaland Central, Mujuru's home province. Nonetheless, Mazowe was not spared from in-fighting between her supporters and those of Mnangagwa. This was most obviously marked by the struggles over the position of provincial chairman in the lead up to the 2013 elections. The position is extremely important since in order to be voted vice-president, a candidate must be nominated by six out of ten provincial chairmen.

The extent to which I was able to ask directly about intra-party factionalism apart from conversations with Baba Basim was limited. This was particularly the case between 2011 and 2013 where Mugabe's regime went to great efforts to cover over and deny their factional wars, also glossed as *noise*, ahead of the 2013 elections. In addition, it was often difficult to ascertain whether intra-party politicking simply concerned individuals hoping to gain positions for themselves, or whether it was part of a broader factional fight that connected up to the provincial level. Nonetheless, in Mazowe

central, tensions between Mnangangwa-aligned Dickson Mafios and Mujuru-aligned Martin Dinha marked the period leading up to the ZANU PF Provincial Executive Committee Elections of 2013 which saw Dinha win the position, affirming the fact that Mazowe was a largely Mujuru-aligned area (Matyszak 2014: 35-43).

Chapter Outline

This thesis explores the daily relationships of land beneficiaries, farmworkers and Chief Chigariro to each other, the land, local government, and the ZANU PF regime in a new resettlement area a decade after the beginning of ‘fast track’ land reform in Zimbabwe. The first half of the thesis focuses on how people lived and worked together in the Mazowe new resettlement area. I explore the uncertainties and tensions underlying people’s lives, and how they managed these. The second half of this thesis examines the position of chiefs in the ‘fast track’ process and their authority in new resettlement areas thereafter.

Chapter Two lays out the conceptual framework of this thesis. I review the literature on belonging, morality and traditional authority and show how my thesis draws from and critically engages with these bodies of work. I place land reform and the relationship between chiefs and the state into broad historical perspective. While land reform was experienced in terms of rupture, and a shift from stability to instability, especially for those living on farms, I show how belonging, entitlement, security of tenure and stability have long been contested and debatable in Zimbabwe’s rural areas.

In Chapter Three, I use people’s attachments to their houses in Mazowe and their ideas of ‘home’ to lay out the problematic political, sentimental/emotional, and economic aspects of ‘belonging’ for those living in Mazowe. I show how the question of belonging was ambiguous and unresolved in spite of the state’s attempts to portray this as otherwise. I suggest that the ZANU PF state purposefully exacerbated these uncertainties of belonging in order to maintain land beneficiaries, farmworkers and the Chief as dependent on the state. At the same time, I show how these different actors

used their houses to build against such uncertainty in order to assert their belonging as independent from the state in this area.

Chapter Four focuses on one complicated nexus of the question of belonging in Mazowe as it played out in relationships between A1 land beneficiaries and farmworkers. The lived/practiced intimacies of these relationships cut across the state's casting of who belonged on farms and who did not. Land beneficiaries and farmworkers shared mutual relations of dependency through which tenuous forms of social belonging were generated for both groups. However, farmworkers' lack of land rights and the broader political context in which their claims to belong were constructed as dependent on their provision of labour to land beneficiaries meant these relationships were extremely asymmetric and fraught. I explore how these two groups navigated and made sense of these asymmetries. I argue that the (ir)resolution of conflicts between them enabled a certain level of social stability to be generated on farms even though this was easily disrupted.

Chapter Five examines citizen-state relationships in the context of land reform. A1 land beneficiaries received land; this put them in a particular relation with the state in which the state was positioned as provider and A1 farmers were grateful land beneficiaries. A1 land beneficiaries' security of tenure depended on their relationship to the state rather than formal legal title. I show how A1 land beneficiaries had to perform a particular mode of citizenship that created a particular image of the state in order to maintain and secure their claims over the land they were allocated.

Chief Chigariro viewed land reform as a return to the landscape of his ancestors. At the same time he was a political actor, trying to gain a piece of land from the government and establish himself as an authority over those living in Mazowe. Chapter Six examines the relationship between the Chief, the ZANU PF party and local government in Mazowe. The Chief was also a state actor. In the conflictual relationship between these three parties what was being fought over was different visions of the state as it was being remade through the process of land reform, and the position of chiefs within it.

Chapter Seven focuses on Chief Chigariro's relationship with those living in Mazowe. I examine how Chief Chigariro constructed his authority through his customary court (*dare*). Chief Chigariro was trying to establish the court as a significant arbiter of people's day-to-day relationships. Through the court, the Chief attempted to cement his position amongst those living in Mazowe, and forge an alternative localized script of belonging in which he was the ultimate authority. I examine what kind of community and subject positions were being shaped through the court, and how the Chief claimed his authority and exercised his power within it.

Chief Chigariro died in the last weeks of my fieldwork. The Chief had two funerals, a secret private burial conducted by his family and spirit mediums, and a public state-sponsored funeral. Both of these reflected the tensions and complexity of the chief's position in Mazowe, and his relationship with local government, and the ZANU PF party. Chapter Eight focuses on his two funerals and their political significance for processes of state-making and the constitution of 'traditional' authority in the context of land reform. I examine the entanglement of multiple moral economies and temporalities that comprise traditional authority in this context, and the tensions between these.

Chapter Two: Re-making Citizens, Re-making the State

Control over land has long been a direct concern of central government in Zimbabwe, Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia. As Jocelyn Alexander (2006) and Joost Fontein (2015) have observed, state-making in Zimbabwe has always involved land, just as the politics of land in Zimbabwe has always been about state-making (Alexander 2006: 10; Fontein 2015: 12). Land reform also involved the making of political subjectivities or ‘citizen-making’. Here, I refer to *de facto* rather than *de jure* citizenship. By *de facto* citizenship I mean both the felt sense of belonging to the (ZANU PF) nation because you have been allocated land, and the ability to access one’s rights. As James Holston (2009) has noted, even where people have the same *de jure* citizens’ rights encoded in law, in practice this does not mean that they are all equally able to access the same rights. What ZANU PF and Mugabe succeeded in doing was creating a form of differentiated citizenship (Holston 2009:255) in new resettlement areas based on whether one had been allocated land or not. Landless farmworkers were viewed and treated as non-citizens even if they formally did have *de jure* citizenship. Understanding the relationship between property, sovereignty and political subjectivity is crucial to understanding these processes.

‘Fast track’ was not only about correcting historical injustices by redistributing land: it also ‘allowed the state and ruling party to try and control this land and its inhabitants to an even greater extent than they have in the past’ (Rutherford 2008a: 93). Whether this was the intention or simply the outcome, by making all commercial farmland state land, and by allocating land on the basis of ZANU PF membership, the regime created rural populations whose loyalty was, in theory, guaranteed, at least to the extent that their land allocations depended on the performance of loyalty through active local participation with the party (Rutherford 2008a; Matondi 2012; Mkodzongi 2012). At stake was the consolidation of power and the suppression of the MDC (Rutherford 2008a: 93). For those living in Mazowe, at stake were claims over resources and authority mediated by their relationship to a variety of local public authorities who were ultimately answerable to ZANU PF. The creation of this particular public

involved a particular framing of the meaning of land reform, and the legal/technical creation of land as a resource that could be allocated (and revoked) by the state to 'its' people. In effect, farmworkers were rendered *de facto* non-citizens by their exclusion from land allocations, even in cases where they did have *de jure* citizenship. Farmworkers' exclusion was less about their legal status than their negative moral status, attributable in part to their associations with white farmers and the opposition party.

In the mid-1990s, Nancy Peluso and Peter Vandergeest (1995) suggested a re-centering of territory in analyses of state control and the formation of political identities (p.385). Drawing on the work of Robert Sack, Peluso and Vandergeest define 'territorialisation' as the 'attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area' (Sack 1986: 19 as cited in Peluso & Vandergeest 1995: 387). 'Territorial sovereignty' Peluso and Vandergeest assert, is crucial to a state's claims of authority over people and resources, and defines people's political identities as citizens within particular boundaries (1995: 385). It involves processes of legalization, by which claims are recognized as rights, and violence. Drawing from this work, Christian Lund (2011) has written of the way in which access to land concerns two fundamental aspects of state formation: the creation of political subjectivities, and property, each of these enabling the other. According to Lund, what is at stake in land reform is sovereignty:

When people accept land allocation (by force or consent), they recognize the power of the institution allocating land to them. They also recognize the power of the complex of institutions involved in the exercise which lies in their ability to define and enforce collectively binding rules. In other words, people recognise the institutional actors' authority to grant rights and hope it will also protect them. This is a major change in which political subjectivities are created (p.886).

In the case of land reform, access to land 'interpolates people's political relations to public authority, and their rights to resources with recognition from a political authority' (ibid.: 887). Lund highlights the power relationship inherent in Hann's (1998) observation that property relations are social relations by pointing out that property is distinguished from other ways of 'holding' things because it is sanctioned

by a political authority: whether society, government, custom or law (Lund 2011: 888). It is in the mutual recognition between public authorities and those whose land claims are recognised that authority, property, and political subjects/subjectivities are created. According to Lund, these processes produce sovereignty, rather than simply reflecting or representing it. Drawing on Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat (2005), Lund shifts from classical approaches to sovereignty where sovereignty is considered as a *de jure* claim ‘reflecting an ideology of law’, and therefore either present and absolute or not, to *de facto* sovereignty (2011: 887). Sovereignty here is understood as an ideal that is never absolute but always emergent and reliant on ‘the disciplining and subordination of other forms of authority’ (Hansen & Stepputat 2005: 3). In post-colonial societies in particular, sovereign power is described by Hansen and Stepputat as being particularly fragmented and ‘distributed among many, mostly informal but effective, forms of local authority’ (ibid.). Thus Lund suggests moving away from a unitary theory of sovereignty as single and absolute power invested in government structures and apparatus, to considering ‘fragmented sovereignty’ whereby multiple institutions compete for the authority to ‘create a structural framework of rules through which collectively binding decisions are made’, only one of which might be government (ibid.: 887). These multiple institutions, Lund suggests, engage in the co-production of property and political subjects. Sovereignty is therefore fragmented among them, and these different institutions might reinforce or dominate one another (ibid.; see also Oomen 2005; Alexander 2006; Obarrio 2014). Indeed, Lund concludes that ‘struggles over property relations and political subjectivity are as much about the scope and constitution of authority as about access to membership and resources’ (ibid.: 888).

The idea of multiple co-existing entities that may be ‘state-like’, and are competing for authority, would seem to provide a useful frame of analysis in a context where ZANU PF, local and national government, as well as chiefs and other traditional authorities (such as spirit mediums) operated. However, in Mazowe, local government (controlled as it was by ZANU PF) was the dominant ‘institution’ allocating land. It was precisely in successfully preventing any other authority from being able to do this (such as chiefs), that ZANU PF retained its control over those living in new resettlement areas. At the same time, however, chiefs and the state were not opposed.

Chiefs in Zimbabwe, as elsewhere, derive their legitimacy from both the state and the ancestors. As Deborah James (2011) has observed in South Africa, chiefs ratify and endorse the bureaucratic state as well as the norms of the ‘customary’ (p.319). They can be considered state actors. Chiefs in Zimbabwe can also be considered state actors. However, the authority of the state and that of chiefs in Zimbabwe are also of different *kinds* in that they serve different ends. Rather than being opposed to the ZANU PF state, as I will go on to show, a large part of the politics of authority in Mazowe concerned struggles between Chief Chigariro and individuals in local government over chiefs’ position *within* the state as it was being re-made through the process of land reform. As Alexander (2006) has recorded, the story of state-making and citizen-making through land in Zimbabwe doubles as a story about the role of chiefs and the extent of their authority vis-a-vis government, political parties and the rural civilian population.

The legacies of white settler state control over land, the relationship between chiefs and the state, and the history of labour migration in Zimbabwe are crucial to understanding the character of new resettlement areas today. Here I give a birds-eye view of the longer historical context in which ‘fast track’ was embedded not only to provide a deeper understanding of why land is such an issue in Zimbabwe, and to situate my own work within this history, but also because those living in new resettlement areas actively drew upon these histories in legitimizing claims over resources and authority in new resettlement areas. As Sara Berry (2002) has written, ‘The significance of land conflicts for contemporary processes of governance and development in Africa lies not only in the way they have been shaped by past events, but also their salience as arenas for the production of history’ (p.640). The history of racialized land dispossession was the most prominent discourse of legitimacy employed by the ZANU PF-led government, war veterans, peasants and chiefs in claims over white-owned farmland, particularly in the early stages of ‘fast track’. This history also profoundly shaped state discourses about who had rights to land and who did not in new resettlement areas. In taking a historiographical approach, I do not wish to deny the validity of racialized land dispossession. For many involved in the land occupations, as well as those allocated land, ‘fast track’ was understood in terms of a long overdue response by government for a return to ancestral lands, and/or for land

in general (even if not necessarily tied to ancestral claims). This had been promised to rural populations by the ZANU PF-led government in 1980 but for the majority, never materialised (Moore 2005; Fontein 2009; Fontein 2010; Fontein 2015). However, my interest is in the political ends to which ‘history’ has been put in legitimizing the land reform project.

Terence Ranger (2004) has coined the term ‘patriotic history’ to describe the ideological articulation of the ZANU PF regime’s ‘tactics of exclusive nationalism’ (Dorman 2003) that rose to prominence in the interim period between the constitutional referendum in February 2000 (when the threat of an opposition party victory was first perceived by the ZANU PF regime) and the June 2000 elections. Here the past was narrowed into a series of struggles between ‘revolutionaries’ and ‘sell-outs’, ‘patriots’ and ‘traitors’, over the land, race and the rejection of so-called ‘Western imperialism’ and ‘Western’ ideals (Ranger 2004 in Tendi 2010: 3). In this formulation Britain and the rest of the ‘Western world’ opposed ‘fast track’ to protect the interests of their British kinsmen, financially supporting the MDC in order to ‘thwart equitable land reform in the country’ (Tendi 2010: 3). The MDC, along with their supporters, were portrayed as agents of ‘Western imperialism’, illegitimate ‘traitors’ to the revolution. Their lack of war credentials rendered them a party ‘with no history’ (ibid.). Thus history came to legitimate power, with prominent mouth pieces of the ZANU PF, such as Tafataona Mahoso, claiming in the state-run national newspaper that ‘the West’ and their ‘Zimbabwean puppets’ (such as the MDC) stand for ‘the end of history’, an ‘a-historicised globalised morality’, narrow and divisive in its effect (Mahoso quoted in Ranger 2004: 223). Employing aggressive wartime rhetoric, the program was described by the ruling ZANU PF party as an ‘agrarian revolution’, or the Third *Chimurenga*, (the third uprising) against colonial and imperialist rule. This placed it in line with the country’s First and Second *Chimurenga* movements; the first a large-scale rebellion against the British South Africa Company (BSAC) in 1896, the second, the 1970’s war of liberation against settler colonialism (Sachikonye 2003a: 227). Framing ‘fast track’ in terms of war not only aimed to legitimise land redistribution, but also the violence that marked the early land occupations (Hammar 2005: 11). Mirroring this, the history of racialized land dispossession has also featured

heavily in a nationalist strand of scholarly research on ‘fast track’ that has abounded since the early 2000s (e.g. Chambati & Moyo 2013).

In 2011/12/13, racialized dispossession continued to be invoked by those living in new resettlement areas, often framed within autochthonous claims to particular pieces of land from which people were displaced, and/or in terms of having suffered for land during the liberation war. However, since by this stage most land had already been transferred from the white minority, such discourses were less prominent than they had been in the early 2000s. Yet, while the history of racialized land dispossession only cropped up occasionally, the material remnants of past settlements and regimes of rule in Mazowe – ruined homesteads, graves, and the continued presence of farmworkers – continued to impinge on people’s lives in the present. In spite of the ZANU PF regime, as well as some scholars’ framing of ‘fast track’ in terms of agrarian ‘revolution’, with its suggestion of new beginnings and its attempt to delegitimize white settlement on the land, features of colonial and Rhodesian era land management practices and structures of authority remained evident in the state’s organisation of land and people in ‘fast track’ new resettlement areas (Chaumba et al. 2003). Colonial legacies continued to affect people’s everyday lives on farms in terms of how farms were spatially and socially organised by the state, the material remnants of white settler and farmworkers’ lives, and the use of these different histories to make and justify claims over resources and authority. In this next section I trace the history of land dispossession and resettlement in Zimbabwe from 1890-1990 and examine the significant role chiefs have played in these processes.

The British South Africa Company (BSAC) – the result of the combination of Cecil Rhodes’ Central Search Association and the London-based Exploring Company Ltd. – began its territorial conquest of what was then called Mashonaland and Matabeleland (and later became Southern Rhodesia) in 1890 and 1893 respectively, in the hopes of discovering a ‘second Rand’ comparable to the highly lucrative gold mines of the Transvaal. Their failure to do so, and the First *Chimurenga* uprisings of 1896/7 against BSAC military subjugation, led the BSAC to shift its focus to promoting settler agriculture. The move from mining to settler agriculture produced two requirements: fertile land suitable for large-scale agriculture, and labour. Alienating land and

alienating people's labour went hand in hand in the development of settler economy. Native reserves for Africans were created under BSAC rule as a temporary solution to make space for white settler agriculture while peasants were slowly drawn into the exchange economy (Kramer 1998). In 1923, the BSAC's concession expired and the 'responsible government' of Southern Rhodesia was brought into being.

Just prior to this, an administrative wing called the Native Affairs Department (NAD), answerable to the British Imperial Government and concerned with 'African interests', was established in reaction to a sense of BSAC abuse and misrule of Africans. The NAD worked through Native Commissioners (NCs) who played an important part in mediating the relationship between chiefs, civilian populations and the state, and determining the role of customary authority in rural Zimbabwe. Alexander (2006) describes the NAD's philosophy as a mixture of paternalism and authoritarianism, charged with both maintaining order and extracting taxes and labour, as well as 'developing' their African wards, resulting in a complex and fraught relationship between NCs and government over the 'Native problem' (p.21).

Native reserves became permanent with the passing of the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, a segregationist measure which divided land between freehold farms for whites and 'communal' reserves for Africans (later called communal lands or areas). With this shift, the role of the reserves and the philosophy behind them changed from spaces in which Africans were to be 'developed' from 'tribal communalism' to European 'individualism', to places of 'seperate development' where Africans 'could develop in their own manner' (Kramer 1998: 84; Alexander 2006: 21-23). The reserves facilitated a system of cheap male migrant labour to white settler farms, mines and urban centres. African men migrated for work, leaving women to farm in the reserves, subsidising men's meagre salaries (Potts 2000; Alexander 2006). The making permanent of the reserves also marked a move towards chiefs and 'traditionalism' since labour migration depended in part on the shoring up of a patriarchal model of family and domesticated labour that prevented women from becoming labour migrants. However, Alexander (2006) asserts that any strengthening of chiefs' powers during this period was unanticipated and unintended. Chiefs and headmen were

subordinate to the NC; customary courts did not operate, and in theory, criminal law applied to black and white populations (pp.22-23).

As the boundaries of the reserves were settled, NCs were faced with the subject of their governance. In theory, 'each reserve corresponded to a tribal 'division', headed by a 'paramount chief' (Hughes 2006a: 53). David Hughes (2006a) suggests that the creation of the 'cadastre' in the form of native reserves eventually led to a shift in chiefs' power from being held in people (Gluckman 1965; Goody 1971; Kopytoff & Miers 1977; Guyer 1993; Guyer 1995; Ferguson 2013) to being held in land, as control over land came to equate to control over people. Thus Hughes describes NC's 'tinkering with tradition in order to fix chiefs' authority to geographic boundaries' (ibid.), although numerous other writers have described chiefs before, during and after colonialism, ruling over geographically demarcated areas (*nyika*). In these ancestral 'spirit territories', or 'geneological geographies' (Fontein 2015: 32), specific geographical features, such as hills, trees, rivers, delineated sacred landscapes that fell under the guardianship of originary ancestors that operated in particular regions (Lan 1985; Maxwell 1999; Fontein 2006; Fontein 2015; Mazarire 2013). Fontein (2015) advocates a dialectical relationship between control over land and control over people, rather than conceiving of one having replaced the other historically (p.150). Indeed, Hughes (2006a) himself suggests that in the present day, control over land and control over people signify ideal types, and distinctions between them reflect 'forms of political culture' rather than social reality (p.11). Nonetheless, the demarcation of colonial reserves did not necessarily align with chiefs' spiritual territories and there was a shift in how their territorial sovereignty was recognised by the state, which eventually led to shifts in the way their authority was articulated and recognised by their subjects. Indeed, this marked the beginning of the mutually constituting dynamic between chiefs and the state that continues in present day Zimbabwe.

A policy of 'separate development' took firm hold after the 1933 elections which were won by Godfrey Huggin's Rhodesia Party, his success partly due to his exploitation of the fear of black competition to white settler agriculture in the wake of the early 1920s depression (Alexander 2006: 21-23). White producers' fears of being undercut, as well as a desire for protection against the falling international price of maize, led to

implementation of the 1931 Maize Control Act which established higher prices for white maize sales and gave white traders a monopoly on maize purchases in the reserves (Bessant 1987; Drinkwater 1989). Unsurprisingly, acts such as this, alongside compulsory de-stocking, were viewed by those in the reserves as designed specifically to oppress and impoverish them (ibid.). The shift from the 'protective phase' of the early colonial period to the 'technical development' phase that followed it set up land use patterns that continued to be used in communal areas well after independence and have served as a model in new resettlement areas too (Chaumba et al. 2003), even though it was precisely the opposition to enforced colonial land use planning that inspired much of colonial resistance, eventually leading to the nationalist struggle of the 1970s (Drinkwater 1989: 287).

The Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau (RNLB) had been established in 1906, initially to provide *chibaro* (forced contract) labour for the mining industry, but also to farmers (Van Onselen 1976). However, increased migration of young men from the reserves to South African mines, combined with local populations' reluctance to work on settler farms due to the inadequacy of the tenancy 'agreements' offered them, meant that Southern Rhodesia faced a generalized labour shortage. In response to the worldwide economic depression of the 1930s, the *Ulere* transport system was established by the governments of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (west Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi) to provide labour to assist with the economic recovery of the colony (Rubert 1998: 30-41). *Ulere* provided transport, stop-over points and a pass (*situpa*) for those migrating south, eventually encouraging not only men but their wives and families to settle on white farms once these had developed enough to support them. As a result, most farms' 'voluntary' labour in Southern Rhodesia came from Nyasaland and Mozambique (Rubert 1998: 19).

In the reserves, 'technical development' consisted of agricultural demonstration, centralisation and land husbandry. Politically, 'technical development' was underwritten by the concern that environmental degradation and overstocking would eventually require more land to be allocated to the African population (Drinkwater 1989: 293). The creation of the reserves divided the land such that 46.6% agricultural land was given over to African reserve, while 46.5% of agricultural was given over to

white settlers, with a comparative population settlement ratio of 20:1 respectively (Mandaza 1987: 168 as cited in Daneel 1996: 351). NCs were tasked with reconciling government policies that aimed to both impoverish and develop the rural population, and Michael Drinkwater suggests their only solution was to separate the ‘technical’ from the ‘political’ such that however much natives were suffering, NCs ‘must believe that their problems would be solved if they adopted modern agricultural and pastoral methods’ (Drinkwater 1989: 298). During this period, Alexander records that in Insiza province in the southwest, land claims began to be framed in terms of the adoption of technical advice, as well as histories of settlement and ideas of justice and rights (Alexander 2006: 31). Forced *chibaro* labour was taken from the reserves for conservation measures and in 1942 the Compulsory Labour Act was passed to provide labour on settler farms for increased maize production during the war (Bessant 1987: 98).

‘Centralisation’ in the reserves involved the separation of land into arable and grazing areas, with villages organised into ‘lines’ (*maline*), and roads ‘centralised’ between the two areas, a model continued by the post-colonial government in the ORAs of the 1980s, and the new resettlement areas of ‘fast track’. Chiefs and headmen were consulted on the policy, and demarcation often took place in tandem with headmen such that they were granted new authority in the allocation of land (Alexander 2006: 24). The office of the *sabhuku* (literally holder of the tax book) was dated to this period, in which the creation of ‘lines’ ‘established a firm identification of the *sabhuku* with a residential area’ (ibid.: 53; Bourdillon 1987: 77). The creation of ‘lines’ led to the practice of male elders appointing their own ‘line representative’ who had no formal connection to the chief or headman and posed a significant challenge to headmen and chiefs in later debates over land rights and authority (ibid.). In present day Zimbabwe there is no distinction between the *sabhuku* and the headman.

In 1951 the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) was passed, Rhodesia’s ‘high-point of “technical development”’ (Alexander 2006: 44). This emphasised the state’s responsibility in ensuring African agricultural productivity. Compulsory de-stocking, initiated in the 1940s to increase internal beef sales during the war, became more vigorous, while farming and grazing rights for particular pieces of land were

registered, marking a shift from 'customary' and 'communal' land rights to individual rights. Chiefs' and headmens' authority was much reduced at the same time as they were more fully incorporated into the 'secular state' in order to enforce the NLHA (Alexander 2006: 46-49). Attempts were made to 'rationalise' chiefs' authority by establishing provincial chiefs' assemblies, increasing their subsidies, or abolishing their titles where they had lost followers. The NLHA also marked a shift from an attempt to fill reserves with as many Africans as possible, to an approach that saw the 'problem' with the reserves in terms of overpopulation, leading to land and stock rights being issued to only a limited number of people. 'Those excluded from land would provide a stable workforce for industry' (Alexander 2006: 46). This rendered large numbers of people, particularly migrant labourers, 'legally landless' (ibid.: 69). While centralisation policies, though extremely disruptive, were more or less observed at the start, compulsory de-stocking led to widespread opposition to the NLHA and fomented African nationalist sentiments which contributed to the emergence of a 'land based nationalism' (Alexander 2006; Drinkwater 1989). Zimbabwe's 'land based' nationalism drew from pre-colonial language and culture and history in order to mobilize fighters against the colonial regime. Sabelo Ndlovu Gatsheni and Wendy Willems (2009) highlight the role played by the First Chimurenga struggle against BSAC rule in legitimating the nationalist project and trace the re-emergence of 'cultural nationalism' in the 2000s (pp.948-949). This saw 'fast track' framed in terms of the Third Chimurenga, back to its rise during the 1960s and 1970s (ibid.). Indeed, Wilbert Sadomba (2011), ex-combatant turned academic, describes land dispossession as having been seen as the icon of settler colonialism and one of the 'rallying points of forces' in the armed struggle (p.119).

African nationalism and independence movements gained traction across the continent after World War II. In 1957, the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress (SRANC) was formed. It was the first mass organisation committed to the black nationalist cause. Banned by the Rhodesian government in 1959, its formation nonetheless marked the beginning of the nationalist struggle and was followed by the National Democratic Party (NDP), the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). A decade after their implementation, NLHA policies were revoked and chiefs' powers were restored in an attempt by the

state to regain legitimacy amongst rural populations and prevent the spread of African nationalism. Nationalism gradually shifted from alignment with Christian elites to 'locally grounded cultural nationalism' which drew from pre-colonial language, culture and history in order to mobilize fighters against the colonial regime (Alexander 2006: 55 as cited in Fontein 2015: 231). The First *Chimurenga* struggle against BSAC rule was heavily drawn to legitimate the 1970s nationalist project, referred to as the Second *Chimurenga*, a theme that re-emerged in the 2000s as well (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Willems 2009: 948-949).

In 1959, following a series of civil disturbances blamed on the SRANC, the Rhodesian government called a state of emergency, arrested those identified with the African nationalist cause and put repressive laws in place to prevent further nationalist organisation. Against the nationalist tide sweeping over the rest of Africa, the Southern Rhodesian government indignantly sought to retain its power and declared independence from Britain in 1965. Experts from the USA and the UK were called in to advise on the failure of the NLHA and in 1962 the Native Affairs Department was renamed the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), while NC's became District Commissioners (DCs). This saw a shift from 'technical development' to 'community development' policies. The failure of the NLHA was blamed on what came to be referred to as the 'human factor' and 'cultural' issues (Alexander 2006: 66).

Chiefs were drawn on to legitimise the government in relation to its rural native population. A phase of 'ultra-traditionalism' was ushered in that saw chiefly powers were considerably increased to include powers of jurisdiction, land allocation and soil conservation (Fontein 2015: 246). Salaries were increased and a chiefs' council was established. In addition, to counter African nationalism, 'the government set about recruiting chiefs into national politics' (Alexander 2006: 67). It was in this period that Hughes (2006a) records the chief's court (*dare*) emerging as a place to take land boundary disputes and chiefs were given authority to allocate land (pp.68-69). The Rhodesian turn towards 'ultra-traditionalism' also led to the large-scale investment in the documentation of 'African custom' and 'tribal structures'. The exhaustive production of chiefly geneologies took the form of a massive delineation exercise in 1965, and the compilation of the 'Spirit Index' by C.J.K.Latham (a district officer) in

the early 1970s for the MIA (Fontein 2015: 245-249). This latter document, later collated into the 'Shamanism book', detailed the major religious rain shrines and their connections across the country, and revealed 'the extent of Rhodesian efforts to penetrate, understand and *fix* African customs into landscape' (ibid.: 248). Fontein (2015) suggests that the simultaneous rise of cultural nationalism, Rhodesian 'ultra-traditionalism' and a spate of liberal minded scholarship that set about recording oral histories during this period fueled one another (p.247). In combination with cultural nationalism, such documentation efforts 'introduced powerful repertoires for asserting belonging, authority and a claim to the land, which continued to reverberate powerfully in the 2000s' (ibid.: 245). Chiefs in the 1960s drew on alternative versions of history, technical languages of Rhodesian land-use planning and 'flexible claims of nationalism' to claim their authority in reserves. Civilian populations in the reserves used nationalism as a means of claiming authority and land, and areas banned from cultivation and husbandry under the NLHA were 'opened', a process referred to as 'freedom farming'. Land claims of this period, writes Alexander (2006), 'drew on a bewildering range of grounds – nationalist, technical, historical, and customary – and they were made by an equally bewildering range of authorities' (p. 88).

The Zimbabwean liberation war lasted from 1964 to 1979 and was fought between three armies: ZANU PF's military wing, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), ZAPU's military wing, the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), and the Rhodesian Army. In December 1979 the Lancaster Agreement signed by Mugabe (ZANU PF), Joshua Nkomo (ZAPU), Abel Muzorewa and Ian Smith (Zimbabwe Rhodesia Government) marked a ceasefire that ostensibly brought the war to an end. Extolling the nation to 'forgive and forget' in the name of national unity, Mugabe assured the white and black populations of the country that 'the hand of reconciliation' rather than retribution would be extended to all following the war. The Lancaster House settlement left Rhodesian bureaucracies and a white-controlled private sector intact for another ten years after the ceasefire. Specifically, land could be acquired for resettlement on a willing-buyer-willing-seller basis and only underutilized land could be compulsorily acquired. This effectively created a whites only land market. However, 'reconciliation' between soldiers who fought in the two guerilla armies, ZANLA and ZIPRA, as well as between these, the Rhodesian army,

and the civilian population were largely ignored. Attempts to integrate the three armies was extremely fraught and the nationalist elite failed to socially, politically and economically cater for the thousands of ex-combatants who were increasingly marginalized over the course of the 1980s and early 1990s. In spite of Mugabe's declaration of a nationalist-driven reconciliation, in the eyes of ex-combatants, this was extended only to white settlers and the Rhodesian security forces but not to ZAPU or war veterans (Sadomba 2011).

Scholars have taken different positions on the relationship between chiefs, the state, civilian populations and nationalists during the war. David Lan (1985) and Ranger (1982) have argued that when the Rhodesian state turned to chiefs in order to gain legitimacy amongst rural populations following the disastrous NLHA, chiefs lost much of their legitimacy amongst rural populations. Lan and Ranger's works have been criticized for their simplistic rendering of these relationships (Bourdillon 1987; Kriger 1992; Maxwell 1999).

Urging scholars to move beyond viewing chief/state relations in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe simply in terms of co-option, particularly during the liberation war and subsequent demise of chiefly legitimacy (e.g. Lan 1985; Bhebe 1979; Ranger 1982), both Alexander (2006) and Fontein (2015) have written of the uneasy position in which chiefs and headmen were placed under Rhodesian 'ultra-traditionalism'. Chiefs were neither a legitimating stamp for colonial rule, nor did they wholesale oppose the Rhodesian state. They were both vulnerable because of their strategic position between rural populations and government, and used to voice criticism and undermine state authority. They were caught between the contradictory demands of nationalists, Rhodesian forces and local populations (Fontein 2015: 50). In the early post-liberation war years (1980s), chiefs in communal areas were stripped of significant powers by the ZANU PF government in favour of socialist-style village and ward development committees (VIDCOs and WADCOs). The period from the early 1980s to the 1990s saw a gradual reduction of chiefs' powers by the state in rural Zimbabwe. However, by the late 1990s, David Maxwell (1999) records that government, local bureaucracy and traditional leaders all sought 'political legitimacy' by making appeals to 'tradition' (p.149). My work contributes to this body of scholarship by examining chief-state-

party relations in the period from 2000-2013 in the context of new resettlement areas. Chiefs remained caught between political parties, the government, spiritual imperatives and the needs of their people. At a time when involvement in ‘Politics’ was understood as being socially corrosive, the balance they had to strike was between legitimising their authority through allegiance with the ZANU PF regime and the more ‘neutral’ spiritual authority of the ancestors.

Colonial Legacies

Drinkwater (1989) has suggested that the crucial legacy inherited by Zimbabwe from Rhodesia was not a segregationist economic divide between black and white, but a country in which the state was the ‘dominant source of power in the country and its generally centralised institutions in the habit of exercising this power through purposive-rational action’ (p.288). In Mahmood Mamdani’s (1999) model of the ‘bifurcated state’ (mostly based on South African apartheid) colonial states split rural ‘subjects’ (mostly black people) who lived in reserves under the patriarchal and authoritarian rule of chiefs, from urban citizens (mostly white people) who lived in towns under the rule of modern law and the state. Numerous empirical studies since have challenged Mamdani’s simplified model, arguing in the main that while a ‘bifurcated state’ may well have been an ideal of the colonial state, in practice this was never achieved (e.g. Alexander 2006; Berry 2002). However, in South Africa, James (2009) observes that land did become a symbol of citizenship over the course of the twentieth century, mostly because Africans were systematically excluded from the right to own it (p.230). Although the nature of colonialism was markedly different in Zimbabwe, in this regard the effect was the same. James criticizes Mamdani’s overemphasis of the monolithic character of colonial power. However, she suggests that in South Africa, this did create ‘an inexorably divided sense of territory and in the process denied citizenship or assigned it on a second-class basis’ (2009: 230). In South Africa land ownership became a symbol of citizenship (ibid.). In Zimbabwe, William

Munro (2008) has similarly observed that citizenship for rural Zimbabweans, has always been linked to their ability to secure access to land (p.147).

Chiefs played a crucial role in the process of state-making in rural Zimbabwe, and chiefs and the state gradually came to legitimate one another's authority amongst rural populations. Alexander (2006) has criticized Drinkwater (1989), Mamdani (1996) and Munro (1998) for showing how the 'customary' and the 'modern' were used to constitute one another in the history of state-making, but underplaying 'the uses of custom itself in state-making and [conversely] neglect[ing] the vital role of nationalism in its varied forms as a means of claiming land and power' for chiefs (p. 122; Moore 2005; Fontein 2015). Historically, scholars have approached chiefs' authority in Africa in terms of opposition and/or co-optation in relation to the state. Mamdani (1999) suggested that the colonial state co-opted chiefs as a form of indirect rule over rural African populations. In this conception, chiefs' authority is described as an 'all-embracing' form of 'decentralised despotism' (p. 871). Mamdani also suggests that in the post-colonial context, the key to democracy was the abolishment of customary authority without which 'decentralised despotism' of chiefs would re-emerge (1999: 289). Since Mamdani, scholars have shown how, instead of an 'all-embracing' and 'totalitarian' model of chiefly authority, Africans moved between and manipulated these different regimes of rule to suit their own interests (Falk Moore 1978; Alexander 2006).

More recent work on traditional authority in southern Africa has moved beyond opposition and co-optation to examine the ways in which traditional and state authority are entwined. James (2011) suggests approaching chiefs as 'brokers' who ratify and endorse the bureaucratic demands of the state while blending 'egalitarianism and rights-based concerns with the hierarchical political authority of traditional leaders and patriarchs, while simultaneously foregrounding the economic individualism and choice orientation associated with neoliberalism' (ibid.: 319). This shift in scholarship can partly be attributed to a re-centring of traditional authority in processes of post-colonial state-making as states in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Mozambique have sought to use the 'customary' as a source of legitimacy (Maxwell 1999; Alexander 2006; Myers 2008; Oomen 2005; Obarrio 2014). This has been reflected in *de jure* law

that has given chiefs renewed authority in these countries in recent years. At the same time, rapid and large-scale economic shifts have created insecurities and uncertainties that have led people to turn to traditionalism and patriarchal forms of political authority (James 2011: 319; Oomen 2005).

In new resettlement areas, chiefs were positioned by the ZANU PF regime to bolster its legitimacy and assist in its control over a rural electorate, whilst remaining within the state's control. However, chiefs' authority was more precarious than in communal areas. Indeed, the challenge Chief Chigariro faced in Mazowe was how to establish his authority amongst people with little common history and without the ability to allocate or rule over land disputes. The customary court that Chief Chigariro established was an especially important place through which he could establish regular contact with those living in Mazowe. Rather than undertaking a state-centered analysis, I show how, through the chief's court, the bounds of traditional authority in new resettlement areas were negotiated between the chief and the civilian population. Key here is the fact that this depended on what kinds of cases people brought to the court, and whether they followed his rulings. What was also being negotiated were people's subjectivities. The place of this alternative 'script of belonging' (Oomen 2005: 8) in new resettlement areas was still emergent and subject to contestation. Central to the construction of this script was a self-conscious re-imagination of 'tradition' by the Chief (Ranger 1993: 24). 'Tradition' was constructed as a transcendent moral realm in opposition to the temporal and socially destructive realm of 'politics' and the state, even as the Chief himself was very personally embroiled in local and national party politics. Bounding the 'political' and discursively positioning it as being outside of the court constructed the Chief's authority as separate from that of the state, and constructed the court as the arena for a different kind of community, answerable to different norms from that of the ZANU PF state, even as, in reality, this alternative form was not separate, and often articulated with the moral economy of the state. At the heart of these complex processes, what was being negotiated was the meaning of land reform and who had the authority to define this.

‘Fast Track’ Resettlement: a Problem of Belonging?

Blair Rutherford (2008a) suggests we approach the transformed socio-political landscape of new resettlement areas in terms of changing conditions of ‘belonging’. His particular interest is with farmworkers and the conditions of their continued lives on farms during and after *jambanja*, the period of widespread farm invasions in the early 2000s. In this section, I focus on the usefulness of the concept of belonging for understanding the shifting, and for those living in Mazowe, problematic, socio-political landscape in which they found themselves a decade after the first land occupations. Belonging became a compelling and widespread concept in anthropology towards the end of the 1990s, although the question of belonging could be said to underpin much of the work of social and political scientists. In its broadest sense, belonging concerns a sense of connection, to a person, place, thing, group, and even to oneself. It has come to replace ‘identity’ as the primary analytic through which people are said to understand themselves, their relationships to others and to particular places or things. Claims of belonging are political because they imply entitlement to certain rights, and the ‘politics of belonging’ (Geschiere & Gugler 1998: 309) concerns rights and their recognition (Englund 2004; 1-23). Expressions of belonging are often (though not always) as much about exclusion as they are about inclusion (Geschiere 2009).

I focus on processes of community formation, and claims to authority and resources in Mazowe. Taken in its broadest sense then, this work can be said to concern the politics of belonging. Yet the problem with belonging as a concept is its amorphous nature. Like ‘identity’ before it, if everything is about belonging then there is the danger that scholars will fail to examine the precise ways in which claims to rights are made (be that in words or actions). Furthermore, much anthropological work on belonging separates claims to rights, from concomitant duties and responsibilities that come with these, and has thus only covered half of the story. Those in Mazowe were not only struggling with questions of legitimacy regarding their claims over resources and to authority, but with processes of social belonging as well. I argue that the recognition of explicit claims to belong, and more subtle implicit processes of social belonging

entailed in these are inseparable. Thus in order to understand the complex politics of belonging involved in resettlement, it is necessary to pay attention to both. Within Africanist anthropology, the focus has mostly been on explicit claims of autochthonous 'belonging' such that there is often an assumption that work on 'belonging', particularly in Africa, automatically and solely concerns autochthonous claims. In Mazowe in 2012/13, autochthony was only one of several different expressions of belonging used to justify claims to resources and authority, and certainly not the most prevalent one.

Peter Geschiere (2009) has attributed Africanist anthropology's focus on autochthonous belonging to its rise in prevalence as a language through which to claim 'special access to national or global circuits of exchange' are made (p.27). Gabrielle Lynch (2011) who works in Kenya, suggests that in contexts of heightened competition over resources, due in part to the uneven impact of globalization and development, people increasingly have to defend their claims over resources as against those of another. In such contexts, unstable discourses of 'culturally distinct communities' are drawn on by civilians and manipulated by politicians seeking to promote particular groups over others in their bid to remain in power (p.392). In Cameroon, the rise of autochthony as a prevalent discourse is linked by Piet Konings (2001) and Geschiere (2004) to increased democratisation, and the attempt by those in power to prevent certain groups from succeeding them by preventing them from having full citizenship rights on the basis of their being 'strangers'.

Autochthonous belonging is linked to the claim of having been first 'owners' of a place and having prior and superior rights compared to other potential claimants. In this conception, belonging takes on a located and thus a territorial form. It is rooted to a particular physical location, to the land, from which people are said to have originated. As Geschiere (2009) has written, the link between autochthony and the land, 'gives it a strong territorialising capacity, outlining – in a more or less symbolic way – a clearly defined 'home'' (p.29). Indeed, claims about authentic 'homes' often underlie claims of belonging. The connection to the land serves to naturalise 'chthonic' belonging in spite of its socially and historically constructed nature. A second common theme that emerges from work on autochthonous belonging in Africa is the importance of bodies

buried in the land as a way of materialising and securing autochthonous claims. Funerals have been described as ‘festivals of belonging’ in which the ‘soil’ and ‘body’ are linked in ‘all sorts of naturalising ways’ (Geschiere 2009: 18; Cohen & Odhiambo 1992; Shipton 2009).

Within Africanist anthropology then, ‘belonging’ is often used as a shorthand for ‘chthonic’ claims. However, writers such as Liisa Malkki (1992) and John Lonsdale (2008) have argued for a move away from autochthony as the sole explanatory force in the politics of belonging in Africa. Malkki (1992), working amongst Rwandan refugees, has criticised scholars for assuming in people a singular sense of attachment and rootedness to a particular place, and thus failing to take account of de-territorialized people’s ability to construct new attachments to place and people. Lonsdale (2008) has shown how in Kenya, claims over land are based on notions of productivity and having ‘improved’ the land or developed the area rather than solely autochthony (p.306). More recently, in the context of Zimbabwe, Sara Dorman (2015) has highlighted role of colonial era urban/rural divides in settler states in which the rural ‘home’ came to be located in communal reserves, while urban centres were defined as places of work (p.3). Thus, she argues, the idea that ‘citizenship is rooted in the soil is not simply a primordial ‘African trait’ but one inherited from settler rule (ibid.). In addition, Dorman suggests such re-assertions of ‘order’ by the state were central to processes of state-making and citizen-making, which in this case were founded on notions of citizens being ‘productive’ as well. Here Dorman is writing of the ability of citizens to access their rights, *de facto* rather than *de jure* citizenship. This is the inverse of the situation described by Holston (2009) who, referring to the work of Henri Lefebvre (1996), describes poor urban residents in Brazil fighting for a ‘right to the city’ or a ‘right to have rights’ as a form of ‘insurgent citizenship (p.247). During the colonial period, urban residence was conferred to African populations on the basis of provision of labour. By the 2000s, urban ‘productivity’ was linked to rate-paying, and people’s disqualification from urban citizenship concerned their failure to contribute enough to the state. At the same time, in defining what counted as a real ‘home’ the state reinforced a link between citizenship, ‘tradition’, and the liberation war, which was fought to gain control over land (ibid.:12). The effect of this was that government spokespersons were able to claim that they had not made anyone

'homeless' in their 2005 urban clean-up Operation *Murambatsvina* in which 'illegal' urban dwellings around the country were bulldozed and knocked down, since urban centres were 'areas which were not homes' (2015: 5). *De facto* citizenship in Africa is not necessarily or solely tied to autochthony. Multiple delimitations of national belonging might simultaneously be at play and competing ideas of citizenship can also co-exist within the same country (Shafir & Peled 2002: 6).

Numerous scholars have written of the way in which the politics of land reform in Zimbabwe was underwritten by questions of belonging (Moore 2005; Hughes 2006b; Hughes 2010; Rutherford 2008a; Rutherford 2008b; Fontein 2009; Fontein 2015). White farmers' claims over land were dismissed on the basis of colonial land dispossession. The state and war veterans ultimately asserted that white farmers did not belong to the country, and specifically to the land. Farmworkers were similarly displaced from farms, and of those who remained, few were allocated land on the basis that they were not legitimate citizens due to their Malawian and Zambian heritage. From 2000 on, being a legitimate citizen in the eyes of the ZANU PF state was aligned with being a ZANU PF member in ZANU PF's tactics of exclusive nationalism (Dorman 2003: 856; Ranger 2004; Hammar 2005). Thus it was not only white farmers and farmworkers but opposition party supporters and any who dared challenge the ZANU PF regime whose *de facto* citizenship was effectively stripped, even if they retained formal documents of national identification. Many farmworkers did not have formal identification documents (ID) and their foreign heritage was 'presented as the reason for their exclusion from land allocations. However, farmworkers in Mazowe felt it was their *en masse* identification with their former white employers' support for the opposition party that disqualified them for land allocations in the eyes of the government (Sachikonye 2003b; Marongwe 2004; Rutherford 2004; Rutherford 2008a; Rutherford 2008b). Of those that did have formal identification documents many were still not allocated land. Furthermore, in Mazowe in 2012, many reported having been instructed by the local governor to hand in their paper IDs, marked 'Citizen' for more durable plastic IDs, only to have these returned marked with 'Citizen' altered to 'Alien'. As such, some were also stripped of their *de jure* citizenship which they understood in terms of ZANU PF trying to prevent them from being able to vote in the upcoming 2013 national elections.

Thus, on the one hand land reform articulated the narrowing of the parameters of national belonging that had occurred across the country as a whole in the late 1990s and early 2000s while the ZANU PF regime tightened its control over the population. At the same time, even though land reform was never officially framed in terms of land restitution, on the ground, many of those newly resettled after 2000 viewed ‘fast track’ as the fulfilment of long held aspirations for a return to ancestral lands. In some areas of the country, the autochthonous knowledge of traditional leaders and in some cases, the knowledge of the landscape held by farmworkers who had been resident in the area for a long time, was called on by new settlers to make the land ‘safe’ for those unfamiliar with the area (Fontein 2015: 242). As such, land restitution did play a part in Zimbabwe’s land reform, even if this was not officially recognised by the state. Unofficially, chiefs’ claims over land and houses were often recognised by the state and local government, even if the question of their authority over these areas remained unresolved.

By 2012 most farmland in Mazowe had been transferred from the white minority and discourses of racialized dispossession and autochthony were far less prominent in everyday conversation than they might have been in the 2000s. People were concerned with protecting their land allocations from the attempts of neighbouring land beneficiaries (often wealthier political elites) to dispossess them of their newly allocated plots.¹¹ Administrative complexities around land redistribution continued to complicate the lives of land beneficiaries well after they had been resettled. In spite of legal and administrative instruments that appeared to clarify people’s claims over land and other resources, the unstable political context, in which ZANU PF factionalism and elite-grabbing were rife, meant that land beneficiaries’ futures in new resettlement areas were experienced by them as uncertain. As Dorman, has discussed, drawing on the work of Deborah Potts (2000) and William Munro (1998), state-making in Zimbabwe has long been founded on notions of rural productivity. In Zimbabwe, making the land ‘productive’ stands alongside having invested one’s labour on the

¹¹ Most notably Grace Mugabe has established a farm in Mazowe and has attempted to move 150 families off their newly allocated lands (Mail and Guardian, Jan 16th 2015, <http://mg.co.za/article/2015-01-16-grace-mugabe-evicts-her-supporters> [Accessed: 10/01/15]).

land, as opposed to being of/in the land, as a way of legitimising and securing claims to land, resources and authority. While in theory, it would seem that Lockean logics of ‘working the land’ in order to justify a claim over it might exist in tension with autochthonous claims, in reality multiple bases for claims over land co-exist. Newly resettled land beneficiaries in Mazowe in 2012 attempted to secure their claims over resources and authority in different ways, including having ‘worked the land’ since having been resettled, and having made it ‘productive’, and having fought for the land during the war. In this way they drew on the same kinds of discourses that white farmers’ had used before them.

Hughes (2006b; 2010) writes of the way in which white settler farmers literally constructed their belonging through transforming the land as well as conserving and protecting it, rather than integrating themselves with black Africans. In the construction of dams, contour ridges, terraces and squared off fields understood to enhance productivity, white settlers forged a sense of belonging (and entitlement) over farmland. Farmworkers’ labour was not recognised by white settlers nor by the ZANU PF regime as legitimising a claim over farmland. However, compared to newly resettled land beneficiaries, the longevity of farmworkers’ lives on farms, their labour on the land, their knowledge of the area and, in many cases, the burial of their dead in the land all stood as a counter to claims over the land on the basis of having fought in the liberation war and ZANU PF membership. Although land reform exemplified ZANU PF’s increasingly ‘exclusive nationalism’, the material traces of white farmers’ working lives on farms, as well as farmworkers’ continued presence and knowledge of the area, meant that despite ZANU PF’s best efforts, the question of who belonged in resettlement areas – and therefore who had a legitimate claim over farmland, houses, tobacco barns and other resources – remained unresolved. This was particularly the case in areas such as Mazowe where farmworkers continued to live on farms.

Rutherford (2008a) suggests that ‘fast track’ marked a shift from farmworkers’ previous ‘mode of belonging’, and dependency under a white farmer, to a new ‘mode of belonging’ under war veterans (p.75). He suggests that examining shifting ‘modes’ of the ‘conditional belonging’ of farmworkers on farms assists us in more accurately understanding new power dynamics on farms than the polarised discussions of

farmworkers as ‘foreigners’ or ‘victims’ propounded by the ZANU PF and human rights organisations respectively (Rutherford 2008a: 93-94). ‘Modes of belonging’ refers to rights and their recognition. In Rutherford’s words, they are the ‘routinized discourses, social practices and institutional arrangements through which people make claims for resources and rights, the ways through which they become ‘incorporated’ in particular places’ (ibid.: 79-80). In new resettlement areas, modes of belonging inform access to land and involve forms of territorialisation (Peluso 2003: 233), ‘spatialized forms of power and authority, imbricating attempts at control over land with control over people’ (Rutherford 2008: 79-80; see also Hughes, 2006a:11). Importantly for my analysis, Rutherford points out that these power dynamics operate through particular cultural styles of interaction that become privileged and recognized as proper forms of decorum and morality, informing dependencies and interdependencies (ibid.; Ferguson 1999; Hammar 2002). Rutherford distinguishes between ‘modes of belonging’ (2008a) and ‘senses of belonging’ (2008b). ‘Modes of belonging’ concern behaviours, while ‘senses of belonging’ concern feelings associated with a sense of entitlement. Specific ‘modes of belonging’ can generate ‘senses of belonging’ (Rutherford 2008b: 403). Such sentiments may be informed by dominant practices and discourses shaping ways of life in a particular locale as well as by memories and attachments to other places (ibid.). Rutherford makes two points that I draw on throughout this thesis. First, that ‘modes of belonging’ involve social values and judgements about appropriate behaviour, what could be understood as moral economies. Secondly, that ‘modes of belonging’ involve dependencies and interdependencies. In other words, Rutherford suggests that the politics of belonging in new resettlement areas concerned not only claim-making and the recognition of rights, but also involves expectations, obligations and responsibilities towards others as well as subscription to particular kinds of public behaviour.

What was particularly striking about narratives of belonging during my fieldwork was the way in which ideas of morality figured in these. Despite the ZANU PF regime’s best efforts, it was not clear whose claims to belong in new resettlement areas were more legitimate. Land beneficiaries used moral arguments to justify a situation in which they lived in close physical proximity with farmworkers, shared various things (water sources, tobacco barns) and depended on each other (for labour, shared farm

equipment, loans of money, friendship), in a political and legal context that differentiated their rights. Chief Chigariro framed his claim to authority in Mazowe in terms of a return to the 'lost lands of his ancestors'. This 'project of return' was constructed as an explicitly moral, rather than political project. Drawing on Rutherford (2008a; 2008b), I argue the case for approaching belonging as a social process in which moral evaluations, vocabularies and practices are central. Rather than examining explicit claims to belong, as many others working on land reform have done, I suggest that the question of belonging in new resettlement areas was contingent and dynamic and depended on local social processes. In Rutherford's work he suggests that only farmworkers' 'belonging' on farms became conditional after 'fast track'. I argue that it was not only farmworkers but also land beneficiaries and chiefs whose belonging in new resettlement areas was uncertain. Land beneficiaries also had to 'incorporate' themselves in new resettlement areas even though their land allocations had been approved by the state. They constructed tenuous forms of belonging through a variety of means: investing in the land, building houses, and investing in relationships with others living in the area in order to counter-act the uncertainty of their futures in new resettlement areas.

Alexander Robertson (1978), in his study of migrant communities in rural Uganda, suggests that:

However important finding and securing rights to a piece of land might be, the establishment of the immigrant ultimately depended on the elaboration of other, more complex bonds between himself and the community around him. As time passed he became less dependent on ties with home and slowly he and his growing family built up new relationships within the village (p.72).

According to Robertson, to understand people's sense of belonging, it is necessary to examine local networks of dependence as well as official state-led delimitations of who belongs and who does not. Unlike ethnographies on community and shared moral economies that have focused on people who are already settled, or who construct a shared history through which a moral community is generated (James 1999), my work, like Robertson's, focuses on people who were trying to 'settle' themselves through relationships in the present. However, in new resettlement areas, people's histories

were constructed as being in tension, and their claims to belong competing. I explore how land beneficiaries, farmworkers and the Chief navigated this tension. I show how the (ir)resolution of such tensions allowed for a degree of stability that in turn enabled tenuous forms of belonging to be generated on farms even as this was fragile and easily disrupted.

Belonging, Morality and Politics in Mazowe

In Mazowe, what the norms and values of farm communities were was still being figured out. The negotiations around the nature of people's relations and to different public authorities can be understood in terms of contested systems of value and unwritten and emergent social contracts concerning rights and obligations. Thus, on the one hand, my interest in 'morality' is in what these contested 'systems of value' (or 'moral economies') were. On the other hand, in Mazowe, conflicts that were caused in part by broader structural issues (corrupt land administration, lack of dispute resolution mechanisms, unequal land rights between people living in close proximity), were presented as conflicts over systems of values. In other words, they were depoliticized and explicitly framed as 'moral' rather than 'political' problems. As such, arguments framed explicitly in terms of 'morality' became part of a wider process of political negotiation in which claims over resources, authority and the nature of people's relationships were made. This enabled a certain level of stability to be generated on farms, even as tensions bubbled under the surface. However, the question then was who defined 'the moral'?

The concept of the 'moral economy' brings questions of morality into conversation with questions of power. It is a term most commonly associated with the social historian Edward Thompson (1963, 1971). Thompson studied social change through the lens of transition, emphasising process and historical continuity rather than rupture and crisis (Millar 2015). Famously, he traced the emergence, or 'making', of English working class consciousness to the clash between workers' long-held traditions of equity and justice, the moral economy, and the political economy of industrial

capitalism at the turn of the 19th century. Thompsons' work highlighted legitimizing notions of social norms and obligations that motivated communal action against dominant classes when such notions were infringed upon or destroyed by the elite. This constituted 'the moral economy of the poor' (1971: 79). For Thompson, the moral economy was opposed to the political economy, and formed the basis for collective action.

Within anthropology, James Scott (1976) applied the concept of the 'moral economy' to the peasant revolts in Burma and Vietnam in the 1930s, arguing like Thompson that peasant revolts must be understood according to peasant systems of value, which are irrevocably linked to their sustenance needs. Scott later shifted his interest from open rebellion to covert, everyday forms of peasant resistance in his study of the village of Sedaka in the context of the Green Revolution in Malaysia (1986). Like Thompson, Scott examined shifts in value systems. The revolution caused increasing wealth disparities, and shifts in relations of production between wealthier and poorer peasants that disadvantaged the poor. They drew on a shared system of values which enshrined traditional concepts of mutual assistance and obligation between rich and poor to try and force wealthier villagers to uphold their obligations to them. The rich refused to abide by these traditional claims of community, denying they had the means to do so. Both manipulated the same system of values for their own ends. The 'moral economy' in Scott's work becomes a contested terrain. It does not form the basis for collective action but it does provide a means by which the weak are able to hold the elite to account.

In social history and political science, the concept of a 'moral economy' has been applied to understanding processes of state-formation. Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer (1985) have famously written that, 'Moral regulation is coextensive with state formation, and state forms are always animated and legitimated by a particular moral ethos' (p.4). Their work examines the gradual, decades-long process by which a capitalist state-centered social order comes to define concepts of right and property regimes, and to underwrite the nature and membership of communities. William Munro (1998) has used the concept to understand state-formation in Zimbabwe. His interest is in the tension between coercion and consent, and the challenge of 'how to

incorporate people into a polity and economy in such a way that they accept the particular forms of political and legal authority that center on the state' (Munro 1998: 14). Munro's concern is with legitimacy. He writes that making citizens and making states involves processes by which the state is secured as the 'final arbiter of social order and public good' (ibid.). Taking a similar approach but examining the 'moral economy' in terms of a dominant ideology that allows exploitation, Charles Van Onselen (1992) suggests that the failure of the white minority to retain power over the black majority in South Africa could be understood in terms of its failure to 'transform its physical strength into moral legitimacy' (p.127). Quoting Rousseau's observation that the maintenance of the position of master requires the conversion of 'strength into right, and obedience into duty' (ibid.), Van Onselen makes two important points: that this is a never-ending struggle, and that dominant classes 'endeavour to create, interpret, legitimize and maintain order in ways that remain broadly congruent with the beliefs, culture and values of the powerful' (1992: 128). In this treatment, the 'moral economy' is approached as a dominant ideology posing as a social contract that enables relations of exploitation (see also Du Toit 1993; Sewell Jr. 1980).

More recently within anthropology, the concept of the 'moral economy' has been delinked from its associations with the emergence of class consciousness and collective action. Fassin (Fassin & Rechtman 2009; 2012) has broadened the concept to refer to the study of norms and values and applied it to examine the production and manipulation of affects in public discourses, particularly forms of humanitarian assistance. His approach has sharpened critical approaches to political violence that have moved discussions beyond the victim: oppressor dichotomy. In applying the concept of a 'moral economy' to new resettlement areas, I bring these different approaches to the 'moral economy' together. I use the term to link macro-social and political processes to the micro-politics of people's everyday relationships. I draw on Fassin's (2012) definition of a moral economy as, the 'production, circulation and appropriation' of norms and values, sensibilities and emotions' (p.13) but I examine the political implications of these systems of value. In Scott and Thompsons' work, poorer peasants use 'the moral economy' (the implication is that there is a single moral economy) to assert community values against larger (corrosive) political and economic change (an assertion of 'this is who we are'). In Mazowe, multiple, and sometimes

conflicting moral values and norms were pulled into people's evaluations of each other, drawn from the law, ZANU PF discourses, historical notions of 'productivity' drawn from white settlers and subsequent developmentalist discourses, and 'traditional' notions of morality promoted by the Chief. Being 'moral' in this context had political implications. I examine state forms of morality and 'good citizenship', in other words, what the moral economy between the ZANU PF regime and those living in new resettlement areas was. I then explore how these were reconfigured through people's day-to-day relationships.

Noise and 'Politics' in Zimbabwe from 2009-2013

This study took place at a particular point in Zimbabwe's history and the way in which those living in Mazowe dealt with the problems they faced was affected by the broader political context in which these took place. While the problems they dealt with may not have been new, the manner in which they were dealt with was informed by a broader notion of what it meant to be a 'good citizen' at this particular point in time. The period between 2002 and 2012 in Zimbabwe history was marked by extreme economic and political instability. World record hyper-inflation, a fuel crisis and a vast shrinkage in GDP led to a general disintegration of public services, including health and education. In spite of 'fast track', which created new resettlement areas as ZANU PF strongholds, the MDC continued to pose a potent electoral threat. National elections in 2005 and 2008 were marked by extreme violence and social disruption, and in common parlance the word 'Politics' – referring to the general arena of things concerning political parties – began to take on an extremely pejorative meaning. 'Politics' came to be associated with the possibility of noise, violence, and disruption of the socio-political order.

Throughout this thesis I distinguish between 'Politics' (capital P) as an ethnographic category used by those living in Mazowe to refer exclusively to the realm of power struggles concerning political parties, and 'politics' (small p) as an analytical category that I use to refer to generalised power struggles, for example between family members. Those in Mazowe decried the early farm occupations and the elections of

2002, 2005 and 2008 as a ‘time of politics’: disorderly, unpredictable and dangerous. Temporally compartmentalising ‘politics’ in this way marked these periods off as separate from the present, something apart from daily life that was not continuous or on-going. In Chapters Five, Seven and Eight I develop this emic conception of ‘Politics’ further, examining how it is understood and dealt with outside specific ‘times of politics’. It is this emic conceptualisation that constitutes the focal point of my discussions about the links between politics and the moral economy in the area.

In 2008, following highly contested elections, the Government of National Unity (GNU) was formed. This ‘power sharing’ government was composed of the principals of the three main political parties in Zimbabwe: Robert Mugabe’s ZANU PF and the two formations of the opposition, MDC-M and MDC-T, led by Arthur Mutambara and Morgan Tsvangirai respectively.¹² In spite of the GNU, Mugabe retained much of his legislative power as well as control of the police, military and intelligence. Norma Kriger (2012) has noted how ZANU PF rule increasingly worked through ‘informal networks rather than institutions qua institutions’ amounting to ‘a parallel government that effectively sabotage[d] the IG [Inclusive Government]’ (pp.11-12). However, the ‘ZANU PF state’ was by no means coherent or monolithic. Throughout the rest of this thesis I alternate between referring to the ‘ZANU PF state’ as a powerful if fragmented imaginary, and disaggregating it into its different institutions (Abrams 1988). I also highlight the individuals who have their own personal agendas within these institutions, whom I refer to as ‘state actors’. This enables me to show the differences between and within government agencies that produced contradictory and uneven regimes of rule.

Whilst the GNU brought a semblance of political and economic stability, most obviously through the introduction of the US dollar (USD), it also developed a political culture in which calls for public accountability with regards to the political violence of the past decade were suppressed by calls for ‘unity’ and ‘peace’, across the political spectrum. This was a period in which ZANU PF was attempting to regain national and

¹² The MDC split in 2005 into the MDC-T, led by Morgan Tsvangirai, and the MDC-M, led by Arthur Mutambara and currently led by Welshman Ncube, as the MDC-N.

regional legitimacy whilst retaining its political dominance. ZANU PF factionalism was pervasive but forbidden from public discussion. Calls for any form of accountability directed at government and particularly at ZANU PF, were dismissed by political elites as attempts to make *noise*. Thus, a boundary was drawn around what constituted acceptable open political discourse (Bailey 1981: 52 as cited in Haugerud 1995: 66).



Fig. 4 Billboard next to main road just outside of Harare that reads: 'Mothers, you are the experts at peace'. The photograph was taken in the months before the 2013 general election. Source: Author, February 2013.

This led to practices of concealment that produced particular ways of talking about and dealing with 'politics' in Mazowe. 'Politics' pervaded daily life but was something of a public secret. It was only talked about with particular people in particular spaces, even as all claims over resources and authority required doing and/or navigating 'politics'. 'Politics' was temporally and relationally compartmentalized. Moreover, if people openly decried 'politics', they risked being accused of making *noise*. As a farmworker who lived in Mazowe told me, 'You can say it is quiet here. Yes there is

no *noise*, but it is not peaceful'.¹³ However, it is important to note that those living in Mazowe were not only concerned about avoiding *noise* and its destructive effects *per se*, they were also concerned that they should not be held responsible for any *noise* made. Those who made *noise* were understood as trouble-makers in the post-2008 period in which ZANU PF were attempting to regain their legitimacy and present a united front in spite of rife internal factionalism. Thus, from 2011 – 2013, being a 'good citizen' in Mazowe consisted of not only being a ZANU PF supporter, but also refraining from making *noise*, or at least trying to avoid being accused of making *noise*. On the other hand, land beneficiaries could use this to their advantage. The period leading up to an election was the time when ZANU PF most wanted to avoid *noise*. For small-scale farmers at the bottom of the political hierarchy, this meant that pre-election periods were, on the one hand, perfect times to threaten to make *noise* as a way of gaining attention and being responded to by those higher up in the party who would do everything they could to avoid it and would therefore be more likely to respond to their requests for assistance. On the other hand, being recognised as someone who could have but refrained from making *noise* could have even more positive effects in terms of gaining recognition as a 'good citizen'. Navigating this delicate balance was crucial to political and social (and therefore economic) success – or being recognised as a 'good citizen' – in Mazowe, and is the subject of Chapter Five.

'Fast track' was the product of a series of complex political processes, and had different meanings for different people. The problems people in Mazowe faced were the product of 'after-the-fact regularisation' (Cliffe et al. 2011: 913), a lack of dispute resolution mechanisms for land issues, and a political culture that sought to suppress these problems from open public discussion. As a result, the uncertainties those living in new resettlement areas faced were worked out in their day-to-day relationships. I suggest, however, that those living in Mazowe were not necessarily seeking clarity for the various uncertainties they faced, even though they sought stability. Stability does not necessarily follow from clarity, exposure or explicitness, as ZANU PF has argued.

¹³ The chiZezuru noun for 'peace' *runyararo* has etymological links to the verb to be quiet *nyara* and the imperative 'be quiet' *nyararai*.

Instead, throughout this thesis I show how lack of clarity was productive of stability, while explicitness and exposure was thought to cause social friction and threaten *noise*.

Chapter Three: The House

Sitting in the dining room of a farmhouse in Mazowe, I am waited on by a small woman in a dark blue uniform with a white apron. She kneels before me with a bowl of hot water and a cup, pouring water over my hands before offering me a towel to dry them on. Now clean, I clap, a small gesture that acknowledges the preparer of the food, and begin eating the *sadza* (stiff mealie meal porridge) and meat stew that has been placed before me. The maid leaves the room to a kitchen closing the door behind her. My host is Chief Chigariro and we are eating in the dining room of the farmhouse that was home to a white farmer and his family till 2004 when Chief Chigariro and his family moved in.

The dining room is furnished with a large table covered in a white cloth. Behind me stands a wooden dresser, with a small trophy and two cut glass vases standing on one of its shelves. On the walls are A4 print-outs of a poem in *chiZezuru* in which people are described as soldiers of the environment, the last words read ‘trees are life, life is trees’. The only other decoration is a small basket hanging on the wall with the words, ‘Women are the home’ woven through it. The room opens on to a living-room furnished with a mint green velvet three piece suite with a fireplace built into one wall. Large framed photographs of the Chief and his family decorate the mantelpiece and lace curtains adorn the windows. Though sparse, the decor is typical of a middle-class Shona home, while items such as the basket and the poems speak of the Chief as ‘traditionalist’. Having lived in the house for six years, by 2012 the Chief and his family had clearly comfortably established themselves. [Fieldnotes, 20.04.12]

On first visiting the Chief in the farmhouse I felt uncomfortable and self-conscious. Uncomfortable because I considered it the home of the white farming family, and self-conscious because my race acted as a stark reminder of the previous occupants of the house. The Chief, however, had a different view. In one of our first conversations he asked why I thought it was ok for my grandparents to have stolen ‘our’ land. Awkwardly, I replied that it was not. As far as the Chief was concerned, his move into the farmhouse was justified both in terms of white farmers not having a legitimate claim over the land, and in terms of the injustice of their bad treatment of the black population. For the Chief, land reform was a return ‘home’; this particular farmhouse was located near the ruined houses (*matongo*) and graves (*mapa*) of his ancestors.

The Chief's house, and his relationship to it, contrasted sharply to the houses of small-scale A1 land beneficiaries. After the initial temporary settlements built during *jambanja* – the chaotic early years of the first land occupations – A1 land beneficiaries who were allocated six hectare plots built their own rammed earth huts in government-stipulated areas of residence. More recently, in Mazowe, some had begun to invest in larger, more permanent brick houses. Officially these areas were called 'villages'; locally they were called *maline*, meaning 'built in a line'. *Maline* was a reference to Rhodesian-era 'centralisation' policies in communal areas, which inspired the 'villages' organisation. A1 land beneficiaries' houses materialised a new governmental order on farm landscapes, even though it was based on an older model. Land beneficiaries who moved into Mazowe came from a variety of backgrounds. Some moved from nearby urban centres, others moved from over-crowded communal areas such as Chiweshe or Mt. Darwin further north. For those whose families claimed originary links with Mazowe, resettlement in this place was understood as a 'return home' as well as an opportunity to gain land that had been denied them in the past. However, most also retained links with the places from which they came.

Joseph Chaumba et al. (2003b) have noted that for land beneficiaries who claimed originary links to resettlement areas, resettlement has thrown up the question 'where is 'home' (*kumusha*)?' and opened the possibility of multiple 'homes' (p.12). In Mazowe, for the majority who did not claim originary links with the area, moving to the area was perceived as an opportunity to construct a new sense of belonging to this place. Many A1 land beneficiaries also remained pragmatically ambivalent about the extent to which they invested in their new 'homes'. Finally, those farmworkers who remained on farms continued to live in concrete and brick houses built for them by their former employers in farm compounds (*comboni*). These houses had often been paid for out of farmworkers' pay and materialised their long working relationships with white farmers and their lives on farms. Farmworkers had invested in compound houses as permanent 'homes'. Many had lived and died in compound houses for a couple of generations.

In this chapter I use people's attachments to their houses in Mazowe as a way of laying out the uncertainties and tensions underlying their lives in this place. These

attachments were not only emotional and pragmatic, but also had political implications. Land reform meant different things for different people. These multiple meanings were indexed in people's relationship to their houses. People's *de jure* property rights (over land and houses) and their sense of belonging did not neatly align. A distinction is made in Zimbabwe between 'houses' (*imba*) and 'homes' (*musha*). By making houses into 'homes', or by claiming that houses were already 'homes', people made a claim to permanent domicile in these areas. This in turn implied a level of independence from the state's control over the definition of who belonged and who did not belong in Mazowe, and can be understood as a reworking of the meaning of land reform. I show how people's sense of belonging in Mazowe was informed by their relationship to the history of past settlements on the land, older 'houses', as well as present day state definitions of who belonged and why.

Houses have been conceived of as sites of culture, through which kinship, identity and a sense of community are made (Carsten 2004: 31-56; Miller 1988; Miller 2001). However, houses are not always 'homes'. As Janet Carsten (2004) has written, houses 'are not just about warmth and intimacy, nor are they, in reality, static structures closed off from historical forces in the outside world' (p.27). Houses also 'embody our personal histories' and the memories of houses are likely to take on great personal significance when moving to or from a house has been necessitated by political upheaval (*ibid.*). Houses, then, lie at the intersection between personal family life and broader political processes. Daniel Miller (1988) has shown how the inhabitants of a London Council estate re-worked their positions in relation to the state by re-working the interiors of their houses. By decorating their houses, and so making their houses their 'homes', inhabitants of the estate attempted to transform 'alienable goods into inalienable culture' (p.353). In Miller's analysis, the 'appropriation of the home' is crucial to the construction of 'household identity, which in turn provides a foundation for the formation of larger networks' (2001: 134). In the UK, the idea of 'home' suggests permanence and an 'anchor for senses of belonging' (Jacobs & Smith 2008: 515). Indeed, houses are often understood as a loci of stability in juxtaposition to the 'dislocations of history' (Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995: 34). Yet, through their links with the wider economy and polity, houses 'can also be fragile, vulnerable to attack and disruption' (*ibid.*: 55). A similar distinction between houses (*imba*) and 'homes'

(*musha*) is made in Zimbabwe, although as I will discuss, important spiritual as well as emotional and social investments are made in one's *musha*, such that what is at stake is qualitatively different from what is at stake in the distinction between a house and a 'home' in the UK. In addition, in Zimbabwe, as in other parts of Africa, ideas of 'home' and claims over land often come together in claims of 'belonging' (Geschiere 2009: 29). As such, claiming that one's homestead in a new resettlement areas was one's *musha* implied a claim over land as well.

Farms as Sedimented Landscapes

Houses in new resettlement areas were the most visibly prominent materialisation of different claims over the land. At a glance, four types of houses existed in Mazowe in 2012: farmhouses, compound houses, rammed earth huts and occasional brick houses built by A1 and A2 land beneficiaries. I write 'at a glance' because the ruined homes (*matongo*) of autochthonous ancestors were also present and constituted a fifth type of 'house', although they were not as visible. Although the Zimbabwean government and some scholars have portrayed 'fast track' in terms of rupture and revolution (e.g. Scoones et al., 2011: 2), these older settlements shared a material landscape with the other, more recent settlements. As such, farms in new resettlement areas can be considered a 'striated' landscape in which all these different histories of settlement are entangled and co-present (Moore 2005: 22).

By examining the shared material landscape of these settlements in Masvingo (to the south of the country), Fontein (2011) has shown how the history of autochthonous and European settlements was much more entwined and embedded than either group would openly admit in the context of the 'politics of differentiation' that has characterised the rendering of these histories in Zimbabwe in recent years (p.717). The departure of white farmers radically changed the social relations that made up 'farms', and farms became spaces controlled and influenced by government and ZANU PF to a much greater extent than before. White farmers' claims over land were dismissed by ZANU PF as illegitimate. However, in spite of this, material and legal remnants of

white farmers' claims over the land remained. These disturbed the state's attempts to ignore or deny their legitimacy.

While many individuals who had lived on farms left after 'fast track', the sociality of commercial farms remained present in the physical presence of those farmworkers who continued living on farms after the white farmers had left. To re-work Yael Navaro Yashin's (2009) description of the Turkish-Cypriot occupation of Greek-Cypriots houses in Northern Cyprus after the 1974 partition of Cyprus (p.2), the remnants of the relations between white farmers and the land were not only material objects (farmhouses, farm equipment, buildings, fences) and physical alterations to the landscape (roads, fields, contours, dams) but also the farmworkers and their memories of the sociality of 'the farm' which until the recent past had included white farmers. Farmworkers' physical presence and memories, together with these objects and physical inscriptions on the land, existed as a constant reminder of a different set of claims to it, legitimated in different terms from those laid out by the state during land reform. White farmers in turn had also sought to deny the claims of those who inhabited the land before them, in order to justify their own claims and entrench their sense of belonging to the land, and the land belonging to them (Hughes 2006b; 2010).

In the Virginia tobacco-growing farms east of Harare, in the early 2000's, Hughes (2010) examined white farmers' 'enduring sense of entitlement' to land after (and in spite of) *jambanja* and 'fast track'. As with all settlers, white settlers in Zimbabwe sought to establish 'a credible sense of entitlement' to the land they settled (Hughes 2010: 1). Hughes suggests this sense of entitlement was constructed through physically transforming the land, as well as, paradoxically, through conserving and/or protecting it. White farmers integrated themselves through the environment rather than through an engagement with black society' (Hughes 2010: xiv). White farmers constructed their farms as private havens, entities socially and physically bounded from government. They did not recognise that it was farmworkers' labour that went into white farmers' projects; it was they, white farmers, who transformed the land, and much of their aesthetic sensibility was, Hughes suggests, aimed to render black labour invisible (2006b: 276). The construction of dams, terraces and squared-off fields was believed to enhance productivity, facilitate easier calibration of piecework by

farmworkers, protect the soil, and construct a pleasing aesthetic. Through such constructions, white settlers forged a sense of ownership over farmland. With Lockean logic, their idea of ‘working the land’ versus ‘ranging on the land’ meant that natives did not have any right to the land because they had neither developed it nor made it productive in ways white farmers could recognise (Hughes 2010: 7). Through transforming and protecting the land, a particularly geographical sense of ‘belonging’ was constructed (Hughes 2006b). ‘Belonging’ here not only related to a personal sense of entitlement and the forging of a white farming community, but also had political and legal implications. At Independence in 1980 the Lancaster House Agreement protected white farmers by putting in place a willing buyer, willing seller policy over land that effectively gave white farmers the power of veto over land acquisitions. The expiry of the Lancaster Agreement in 1990 made way for the 1992 Land Acquisition Act that permitted the state to take land without compensation. However, the state would have to compensate for ‘improvements to the land’ (Hughes 2006b: 277). Hughes suggests that white farmers, in an effort to protect their land from compulsory acquisition by the state, began to heavily invest in ‘improvements to the land’ in order to prevent the state from being able to afford compensation and thereby obstruct the acquisition of farm lands (ibid.). The high costs of compensation and the legal battles in which white farmers engaged to protect land from state acquisition did indeed delay land reform in the 1990s, but did not succeed against the occupations of the 2000s.

Ann Stoler (2008) and Navaro-Yashin’s (2009) work on ‘ruins’ calls for more attention to the effects of the past on the present, particularly as materialised in objects, but also in ideas and discourses. These scholars suggest that rather than treating ‘the past’ as static object, we must engage with what Stoler calls ‘the social afterlife of structures, sensibilities, and things and their ‘vital refiguration’ in the present (2008: 193-194). ‘Ruins’ as an analytic refers to both metaphor and material reality, or what people are “left with” (ibid: 194), from architectural structures, to social structures, to figuratively ruined minds such as those of people scarred by the effects of war. ‘Ruins’ have effects in the present (ibid.: 195). In new resettlement areas, the ‘ruins’ of white farmers’ settlements (which included farmworkers’ houses) and the ‘ruins’ of autochthonous settlements were both co-present with the new houses of A1 land beneficiaries. These

two sets of ‘ruins’ were used by different actors as the basis for claims of belonging that were different from those deemed legitimate by the state.

Rebecca Bryant (2014) has argued that objects are temporal; they enfold particular moments in time (p.683). The way that people related to these ‘ruins’ in Mazowe revealed the way they related to the history of these past settlements, and how they viewed their place in history. What was at stake in these claims of belonging, articulated through claims over houses, was not only a place to live or ownership of land, but people’s place in history. When the state declared that some claims to belong were legitimate, and others were illegitimate, people’s place in history was being rewritten. Yet, even as the state and the different people living in new resettlement areas (like the Chief) attempted to delegitimize the history of white farmers’ claims to belong in Mazowe (as white farmers had done to indigenous people in the past), the ‘ruins’ of these settlements remained as an uncomfortable reminder not only of a different set of claims to belong, but of their fragility, and the possibility that such claims would one day be declared illegitimate. In particular, Navaro-Yashin’s work draws attention to the normalisation and rationalisation of the appropriations by the state of other people’s belongings, which discounts as illegitimate the history of one community’s settlement, but can exist alongside a competing local moral discourse that questions the legitimacy of state appropriations (2009: 4).

In examining the way in which people related to these different settlements (including their own houses) as materialisations of different histories I show, drawing on Bryant (2014), how some people in Mazowe understood their present lives in new resettlement areas in relation to the ‘arc of history’, and how these historical understandings of themselves in turn informed their understanding of land reform and their aspirations for their futures in the area.

Legal Frameworks around Houses on Farms

The properties left by white farmers existed in a state of legal ambiguity. While all commercial farm land was rendered state land, farmhouses and compounds were

legally grouped with other objects and alterations to the landscape (such as dams, roads, fences, farm equipment) as ‘improvements to the land’. The 2000 Constitutional Amendment 16A obliged the government to pay white farmers for such improvements. White farmers were forbidden to remove or destroy farm equipment on commercial farms by the Acquisition of Farm Equipment or Material Regulations (2004).¹⁴ Compensation was supposed to be paid following an evaluation by the Acquisition Authority. However, these evaluations often took place after the white farmers had left and their outcomes were often challenged (Matondi 2012: 173).¹⁵ A2 land beneficiary’s allocated medium- to large-scale plots were supposed to pay market values for movable assets such as farm equipment that had been left on farms. The market values were to be evaluated by the Acquisition Authority, but so far this has not happened. As such, in 2012/13, the question of compensation for immovable assets, farmhouses, compound houses, dams and tobacco barns remained unresolved. These properties hung in a legal vacuum and continued to exist as a bone of contention between the white farmers and government. In the early 2000’s there was much debate about what to do with these immovable properties. Officially, the decision was that farm buildings would be used for schools, clinics or housing for similar service providers. However, in Mazowe, it was extremely common for wealthier and better connected A2 land beneficiaries to occupy farmhouses and/or claim ownership over barns, dams and other outbuildings. While government has tended to ignore the issue, the legal status of farmhouses and other buildings was sometimes drawn on by small-scale A1 land beneficiaries and farmworkers in evaluating A2 beneficiaries’ claims. As in Navaro-Yashin’s work (2009), in spite of the normalization and rationalization of the appropriation of these properties by the state and individuals like Chief Chigariro who moved into farmhouses a subdued but present competing local moral discourse also questioned the legitimacy of these appropriations (p.4). A1 land beneficiaries on Dam Lake expressed disapproval towards those A2 land beneficiaries

¹⁴ Acquisition of Farm Equipment or Material Act 7/2004 ([Chapter 18:23]. <http://www.cfuzim.org/index.php/legal-the-law/106-acquisition-of-farm-equipment-or-material-act-chapter-1823> [Accessed: 28.02.16]).

¹⁵ Matondi (2012) suggests that the government felt most of this equipment had originally been purchased using government subsidies and therefore the government were justified in trying to prevent white farmers from ‘smuggling’ the equipment out of the country (p.173). He also suggests that the law was intended to support new small-scale A1 land beneficiaries who could use farm equipment, dams and tobacco barns, but would not have been able to afford to purchase the equipment themselves (ibid).

around them who sold the furniture left in farmhouses, for example. ‘They have no respect, those A2s’, Amai Basim told me. ‘Those things do not belong to them’. This sense of A2 land beneficiaries having no respect for other people’s property was combined with a general scorn for their inability to farm, as expressed by both A1 land beneficiaries and farmworkers. ‘They don’t know how to farm’, individuals from both groups would often comment as we walked through empty fields. ‘These used to be full, now look at them. If they gave me this land you would see’, Baba Basim frequently told me.

The Letters of Offer (‘offer letters’) sent to A1 land beneficiaries explicitly stated that the government could retract their allocated plots of land without compensation for ‘improvements’ or investments to the property. Matondi (2012) suggests that this was possibly a backlash after the legal wrangles with white farmers (p.98). Matondi also maintains that the terms of the ‘offer letters’ meant that the ZANU PF state could maintain a grip of power over A1 land beneficiaries through the threat of re-acquiring the land they had been allocated (pp. 98-99). In effect, the terms of the ‘offer letter’ meant that A1 beneficiaries’ tenure security depended on their relationship with the state (Chapter Five).

In Mazowe, A1 land beneficiaries reported that in the early years of resettlement, around election time, ZANU PF party personnel fanned rumours that an opposition electoral victory would lead to the ‘reversal’ of land reform and the return of recently acquired lands to white farmers. This was just one example of the ‘politics of uncertainty’ ZANU PF played with land beneficiaries in which the state created a situation in which A1 land beneficiaries relied on the state to dispel the uncertainty they felt, even though the state itself exacerbated these uncertainties. Thus, for A1 land beneficiaries, explicitly at least, the reasons cited for lack of heavy investment in their homesteads were fear of the possibility of an opposition electoral victory or the success of white farmers’ legal challenges to the state, rather than the terms of their ‘offer letters’.

While the legal statuses of these properties were sometimes drawn on in making and evaluating people’s claims over houses, on the ground, as I go on to show, the means by which people actually secured their claims over houses in Mazowe differed for

different groups. Land beneficiaries' claims depended on official recognition of their land allocation by the state. Chiefs' claims depended on a mixture of official and unofficial state recognition. Farmworkers' claims depended on their relationships with those land beneficiaries who lived closest to them.

Dam Lake was a large farm (almost 1000 hectares) that had passed through the hands of three different white farming families since 1980. Its layout was typical of most other farms in Mazowe and resembled the commercial tobacco farms described by Rutherford (2001), who conducted research on a series of white-owned farms in the Hurungwe District northwest of Harare in the 1990s. As in Rutherford's description, Dam Lake consisted of four clearly demarcated areas: the farm owner's living area, the farmworkers' compound, the work area (tobacco barns, grading sheds, equipment sheds) and the fields. In 2002, Dam Lake was divided and redistributed to land beneficiaries. Half of the farm was allocated to 35 small-scale A1 land beneficiaries who received six ha each. Initially, the white farmer Derek Williams negotiated an agreement with these A1 land beneficiaries that allowed him to remain on the second half of the farm in exchange for assistance with seed, fertilizer, use of his tractors and farming expertise. However, in 2004, Williams' half was allocated to a senior ZANU PF official, Edison Nhafu. Williams left the farm and Nhafu moved into the farmhouse, Williams' former home.

Williams had farmed tobacco and employed a permanent work force of 60 farmworkers who lived on the farm with their families in the compound. After 2004, Dam Lake was divided into three different living areas: A1 'villages', the compound, and the farmhouse. Thus, in 2012/13, when inquiring where someone lived on Dam Lake, the response always specified the area: '[He/she] lives in *maline*', indicating that the person in question was an A1 land beneficiary, or '[He/she] lives in *comboni*,' indicating that they were a farmworker. The compound lay in an area just beyond the farmhouse, about one and a half kilometers from *maline*, which were located in what had previously been fields.



Fig. 5: Dam Lake Farm. Source: Google Maps, February 2014.

In spite of the fragmentation of ‘the farm’ amongst multiple ‘owners’, Nhafu erected a sign on the main farm gate that read, ‘Dam Lake Farm: Mr. E.D. Nhafu’. Walking away from the Dam Lake Farm compound towards *maline*, one passed a large group of tobacco barns. These were shared by the A1 land beneficiaries and Nhafu, although Nhafu claimed the barns belonged to him. The barns were falling into disrepair. Legally, along with farmhouses, they were classed as ‘improvements to the land’ and remained the property of white farmers. However, Nhafu used his claim over the barns to try and create paternalistic relationship with the A1 land beneficiaries whom he magnanimously ‘allowed’ to use the barns. Either way, no one maintained the barns and they were becoming hazardous. A number of farmworkers had hurt themselves as beams collapsed. Nhafu also claimed that the compound houses belonged to him, although the farmworkers disagreed.

Many of the younger generation of farmworkers were born in Zimbabwe and grew up on farm compounds, where their parents worked and where they were schooled until they too began to work on the same or nearby farms. While the older generation traced their life histories back to these other countries, few of them had ever returned to their natal homes and almost none of their children or grandchildren had ever set foot

outside Zimbabwe. Some had lived and worked together on Dam Lake Farm for over thirty years.

***Comboni*: Houses in the Compound**

‘Ah, Leila, yes, you’ve come’, Sekuru Kenny exclaimed, arms wide open in welcome. An elegant old man with blue-white cataract eyes, Sekuru Kenny, a retired farm foreman, welcomed me enthusiastically, insisting at the end of our talk that I take photographs of him in front of his house. Stepping off the dusty path that split the compound in two, I entered Sekuru Kenny’s yard. He had been sitting on a small wooden bench under a gnarled tree that cast a welcome shadow over the small open space in front of his house. Shooing away a chicken, he pulled a chair up to his bench and I sat down. The house was built of red brick. At first glance it was structurally identical to the thirty or so other houses that made up the Dam Lake compound. However, as I grew familiar with the compound, the distinctiveness of each household began to emerge.

The compound houses had all been built for the permanent workforce of the farm by Williams, the white farmer and former owner of Dam Lake. Constructed of red brick with tin rooves, each house consisted of three continuous rooms, one leading to the other. While the brick houses were structurally identical, the families that occupied them had invested these houses as their permanent homes and each one had been adjusted to accommodate different family’s needs. Most families, for example, had constructed extra buildings in their yards: rammed earth huts to accommodate extra family members, thatch wash-houses, dish drying racks and chicken coops. The brick houses, then, were only one building in a complex of constructions that made up farmworkers homesteads.

Sekuru Kenny’s household comprised him, his wife, Ambuya Kenny, their son, daughter-in-law and their two children, as well as three more grandchildren from their deceased eldest son. Kenny, the eldest of their grandchildren, lived and worked with the Basims, the A1 land beneficiaries with whom I resided in *maline*. Sekuru Kenny’s

eldest son and his wife, Kenny's parents, had passed away leaving Sekuru Kenny to look after their children. His surviving son had lived in one of the larger houses built to accommodate the farm management under Williams, but these had been taken over by Nhafu, the A2 land beneficiary who now occupied Williams' farmhouse, so the son had moved back to his parents' house with his wife and children.

Daily life took place in the front yard. An old bicycle, a bench, a washing line and a bougainvillea bush delineated Sekuru Kenny's yard from the next. The Kennys had constructed a thatch wash-house that stood between them and their neighbours, a small thatch cooking hut that stood a few metres in front of the brick house, and a round rammed earth hut to accommodate their numerous grandchildren. Meals were prepared by the women of the household in the cooking hut. In the daytime, the women ate their meals in the hut, while the men were served outside and sat together on benches under the tree.

The distinctiveness of the Kenny's home was also evident in the interior of their compound house. The metal front door opened on to a living room where important guests were received. In this room, an arm chair had been placed against one wall, a couch against another. A small TV balanced on a wooden table, the tangle of wires and the aerial that emerged from the top of it merging with more wires and cables that draped at odd angles across the ceiling. To the left of the front door a small set of shelves had been built in which dishes, tea towels, and a plastic jug were kept. Opposite, a large wooden dresser stood covered in glassware, odd pieces of crockery and a few photographs, including a battered framed photograph of Sekuru Kenny. An out of date Agricultural Show calendar hung from a nail on an unpainted cement wall. This was the room where the family gathered in the evenings to watch television or listen to the radio. Floral sheets hung from door frames marking off the two bedrooms, to the left and to the right.

The houses of Dam Lake compound, like most farmworker compounds in Zimbabwe, were neatly arranged around a central thoroughfare. Maxim Bolt (2013a) describes the design of labour compounds on farms in the South African borderland with Zimbabwe in terms of spatial control and racial segregation, typical of black living areas across Southern Africa in which residences are laid out for ease of surveillance by farmers,

foremen or police (p.207). Referring to a rich history of work on this subject, Bolt draws attention to the fact that such residences are characterised by 'regularity, austerity and the residents' lack of any permanent rights of residence' (ibid). However, for the permanent workforce who lived there, the compounds were viewed as a 'place of everyday domicile' in which, like township dwellers during Apartheid, a sense of belonging was asserted through personal adaptations to houses that bound personal histories into the landscape of the place (ibid.).

In Zimbabwe, 'European identity' was inscribed on farms through spatial boundaries, designed to separate 'Europeans' from 'Africans' and assert 'Europeans' authority over 'Africans' (Rutherford 2001: 64-65). Rutherford describes farmhouses in Hurungwe as 'mini-compounds', typically surrounded by high fences due to the insecurity white farmers felt during the liberation war. He suggests that their continuation during times of peace spoke of white farmers' continued fear of being targeted by thieves (possibly workers) or land occupiers. The farmhouse on Dam Lake was situated down the road from the compound and was similarly fenced. In contrast, the compound was open to the fields and the farm road which led to a main tarred road. Like Rutherford's field site, the area around the tobacco barns and tractor sheds was fenced. Rutherford attributes this to white farmers' fears of workers stealing their property. In his analysis, the compound was 'marked not just as a place of workers, a site of Africans, but also as an area of possible danger' (2001: 69). Yet, in addition to surveillance and control, Rutherford suggests that the compound can also be understood in terms of white farmer's paternalistic attempts to edify their workers through the particular form of domesticity that characterized their houses (ibid.: 69). In his analysis, farmhouses and compound houses brought 'European' ideas of domesticating the wild together with the idea of domesticating the people by the houses they built, and the positioning of white men and women in that domesticity (ibid.: 64-74). Indeed, he suggests that 'the distance between the 'mini-compounds' of the operators and the compound for the workers was inscribed with an evolutionary trope' (ibid: 95).

White farmers proudly referred to their efforts to improve their workers' living conditions, and Rutherford suggests that the edification of 'their' 'Africans' was

central to their modernising mission in which they saw themselves as pioneers on an 'advancing border of civilization' (2001: 82-83). On Rutherford's field-site he reports that white farmers' gendered assumptions and practices about proper behaviour influenced notions of proper behaviour amongst farmworkers, even though he reports having rarely seen direct attempts by white farmers to mould their workers' domestic arrangements (ibid.: 172). Of particular relevance, he describes the way those farmworkers closest to the white farmer (those at the top of the workers' hierarchy) replicated forms of domesticity that they observed in their white employer's homes through particular modes of consumption evident in styles of décor and culinary practices, as well as a household division of labour in which women were 'housewives' who did not 'work' (ibid.:190). Those lower down in the hierarchy were not able to replicate these, but nonetheless aspired to them. Order was maintained in the compound to 'ensure the smooth running of production (and accumulation), but white farmers were also concerned about the proper 'modern' arrangements of family and lifestyle that were being learned by their 'traditional' workers on their farm' (ibid: 199).

On Dam Lake, as with the permanent workforce on the farms of the South African borderland, farmworker families had invested in their houses as permanent residences. Farmworkers like Sekuru Kenny were extremely proud of their houses. In addition to the extra buildings, small shrubs and flower beds had been planted around the outer edges of yards, and cooking huts, washing houses and chicken coops had been added. Well-trodden paths leading between houses and out of the compound cut across the central thoroughfare, subverting the original 'surveillance' layout. The compound had an air of lived in joviality. Some families had lived alongside one another for twenty years. During the day children ran along the maze of small paths, mothers shouting after them. Young men strolled between houses doing 'deals' – selling marijuana and pirated CDs, borrowing and lending money – and on Sundays older men gathered in front of an old barn to drink *chibuku* (commercially produced brand of traditional beer) and watch youngsters play football matches as part of the local league between different farm compounds. A mixture of *chiZezuru* (the dialect most prevalently spoken in the Mashonaland Central Province) and *chiNyanja* (a Malawian language)

was spoken, testament to the migrant history of many of the older generation of farmworkers.

Older farmworkers' life histories were narrated in relation to the white farmers they had worked for. Many moved to Zimbabwe in the 1930s and 1940s, part of the wave of migrant labourers recruited from neighbouring countries because of labour shortages on settlers' farms at the time (Van Onselen, 1976; Rubert, 1998; Rutherford, 2001; 2008a). Sekuru Kenny had worked for Williams as a foreman and tractor driver for 20 years. He had moved with his wife from Mozambique to Shamva in 1946, tempted by the higher wages European settlers were said to pay compared to the Portuguese. The couple moved to Dam Lake in the early 1960s, then farmed by Mr Jacob. In time Jacob's son Michael took over the farm. It was then sold to a man called Jackson and finally to Williams who was, in Sekuru Kenny's words, 'removed by *jambanja*'. Having lived on the farm through the liberation war, Sekuru Kenny was surprised at the success of 'fast track': 'We did not think things would change. We thought we would just stay with the white farmer'.

Baba Dobi, who lived with his family a few houses down, was the second longest resident in the compound. Dobi's father came from Zambia to work on a farm in the 1940s where he met and married Dobi's mother, from Mozambique. When his father died in 1951, his mother took him and his three siblings back to her rural home in Mozambique, where he was raised. Dobi returned to what was then Rhodesia as a young man and was employed on Buffalo Farm in Guruve, where he met his wife, Amai Dobi. On Buffalo, Dobi was made foreman of the tobacco growers. When his employer retired to Salisbury (Harare), Dobi moved to Smith's Farm in Centenary where a relative of his father worked. There he was trained as a cook for Smith, the white farmer. Smith emigrated and, recognizing Dobi's skills as a foreman, his close friend Williams invited Dobi and his wife to work on Dam Lake in Mazowe. Both Baba Dobi and Sekuru Kenny had developed close relationships with Williams. For them and many of the older generation of farmworkers, Dam Lake Farm had become home after years of moving between different farms. While they traced their roots back to the countries from which they and their parents originated, a return to these places

of origin was not an option. Few older farmworkers had the necessary paperwork to make the move, let alone the desire or any living connection to their places of origin.

Younger farmworkers in Mazowe who were born in Zimbabwe had often grown up on farm compounds. For most, with their lives completely rooted in one farm and the surrounding areas, their parents' or grandparents' birthplaces were faraway places to which they felt little connection. Baba and Amai Luckwell's relationship to their 'original homes' in Malawi, and the difficult position they had been placed in by 'fast track', exemplifies many younger married couples' situation and views on the matter. Baba and Amai Luckwell were in their mid-thirties and lived in a house in the compound of Utopia Farm, next to Dam Lake. Baba Luckwell had worked as a baker for David Samuels, the white farmer and former owner of Utopia. In his words, 'The pay was fine, at least I could pay for some things. But then the land invasions began and the Colonel took over. He moved into the farmhouse and took over the bakery. The pay was so bad that we couldn't work together well, so I left.' Baba Luckwell's wife chimed in at this point, 'We were pained when the whites left. They looked after us well. When they left we were given packages because we had stayed with them long. And we were left with the houses'. Baba Luckwell had worked for Samuels for five years before *jambanja*. In 2000, Samuels and his family were, in local parlance, chased (*kudziringwa*) from Utopia. A year later, the farm was divided into two large-scale holdings. These A2 plots were allocated to 'The Colonel', a serving member of the national army who had fought in the 1970s liberation war, and to Amai Nzombe, a widow well connected to the ZANU PF elite. The main farmhouse, previously the home of Samuels and his family, was on the Colonel's plot. A second, smaller farmhouse, previously home to members of Samuel's extended family, lay on Amai Nzombe's plot. The Colonel moved into the main farmhouse and Amai Nzombe moved into one section of the smaller farmhouse, renting the rest to a local AREX officer and a number of other land beneficiaries in the area. At the time of our conversation, Baba Luckwell worked as baker in a nearby town while his wife bought wholesale foodstuffs in town and sold them for a small profit to people living on Utopia and Dam Lake. Both Amai Nzombe and the Colonel claimed the compound houses found on Utopia Farm belonged to them and that farmworkers could only

remain living in them if they provided labour. Baba Luckwell explained of the compound house in which he and his wife lived:

I own this house. Previously it was a problem. I used to work for the Colonel but we failed to get along. He claims that these compound houses belong to him. But the reason he won't go into the story of the houses is because he doesn't pay his workers so he can't tell us to leave. Amai Nzombe says that the houses belong to her because she moved into the farmhouse, but she cannot evict us again because of the issue of pay. She has not paid some of the workers here for three months, so she cannot evict us from these houses. But, she says if we do not work for her then she will cut our electricity or worse.

At this Amai Luckwell laughed ruefully, adding, 'We are Zimbabwean, where else can we go? Back to Malawi? I have never been there, I don't even know the name of my father's village'.

'Fast track' constituted a major disruption in the imagined trajectories of many farmworkers' lives. On Dam Lake and Utopia, farmworkers of the older generation reported not having applied for land. Loyalty to their former employers, fear that the invasions were temporary and that applying for land would threaten their relationships with their white employers, and a general sense of confusion and fear of violence from those leading the land invasions were given as reasons. A strong sense of community and fear of the unknown were also cited: 'It was hard for us to leave the others [living in the compound]. We were afraid of living with people we did not know', Baba Dobi told me. In addition, many older farmworkers simply did not have the necessary documents to prove their citizenship. Of the younger generation, some applied but none were successful. This, individuals like Baba Luckwell felt, was because of their relationships with the white farmers and the fact that they were perceived to be foreigners.

Of his house, the older farmworker Dobi said, 'This is the house Williams gave me and he told me not to leave the house. I was told that if someone comes to take your house, you must report it to the police because it is your house. Money to pay for the house was taken from my allowance, so I own the house.' The same sentiment was expressed by Sekuru Kenny: 'This is my house. Williams told me that if anyone tried to tell me to leave I should refuse. The money to build these houses was taken from

our pay packets. But Williams did not leave us with papers. That is where he failed'. Amai Luckwell summarised the problem in the following terms:

Nzombe says this is her house. We say it is ours. This is our house. We won't leave. But it is a problem for inheritance. Our children have no house and have no fields to inherit.

Williams left Dam Lake farm between 2004 and 2005. Baba Dobi's eldest son was forced to leave with him because he, along with six other workers, was seen to be too close to the white farmer. 'Youth from far away were given a list of names by *vatenges* [sell-outs] and those people were told not to return', Baba Dobi explained. Amai Dobi chipped in, 'Those are the laws of the youth — they just come and tell people to leave'. In 2006, several farmworkers on Utopia spoke of having been asked to hand in their paper IDs by local ZANU PF officials, ostensibly to exchange them for more durable plastic copies. For those born in Zimbabwe, their original paper IDs were marked 'citizen' but the plastic ones returned to them were marked 'alien'. This, the residents of Utopia explained, was an advance measure put in place to prevent farmworkers from being able to vote in the 2008 elections.

Five evictions had occurred in the Dam Lake compound in the run up to the 2008 election. This followed a *pungwe*, an all-night vigil, commonly held during the liberation war by guerrilla fighters and more recently referred to as ZANU PF 're-education' sessions, in which all the residents of Dam Lake were gathered at the tobacco sheds by ZANU PF youth. Those publicly accused of being MDC, most of whom were farmworkers, were told to leave the farm. Sekuru Kenny was amongst these. After hiding with different people for a month, he returned and asked permission from Baba Basim, as the Chief's headman and head of the village committee of seven, if he could resume residence in his house in the Dam Lake compound. Basim agreed and Sekuru Kenny promptly obtained ZANU PF membership. Of the other four families only one did not return to the compound. Baba Luckwell explained that farmworkers could not complain about their lack of pay by land beneficiaries because, 'There is this story of politics. If you complain too much, they will chase you from the farm. If you go on strike then they want politics again.' Personally, he aspired to a 'good living', rather than 'having politics all the time'.

Farmworkers on Utopia and Dam Lake performed as ZANU PF members even as they wished to avoid 'politics'. This was aptly described in a conversation between Amai Luckwell, Baba Luckwell and one of their neighbours, Amai Mary:

Amai Luckwell: I can say I am now a member of ZANU PF but I didn't used to be in politics. The Colonel and the Chief and the others said you cannot live on the farms if you are not a member of ZANU PF but before this time, I had never voted in my life.

Baba Luckwell: They used to threaten us in the early days. Now, instead of threatening us, they give us positions in the party. So me, I have a position. Everyone has a position.

Amai Mary: Me, I don't want a place in the party. Those things, they will kill you in the morning. I don't have a party but I go to meetings.

Baba Thomas, formerly an employee of Samuels (Utopia), described how he had been an active MDC member until he was severely beaten by the police in 2002. After this he switched to ZANU PF. In 2008, the Colonel offered him protection in exchange for his leading a ZANU PF campaign on the surrounding farms, accompanied by a group of soldiers. Following a successful campaign, in which a number of farmworkers were publicly beaten, he was given a job by the Colonel as foreman and a position as youth leader in local ZANU PF structures. Ironically, he was not able to vote because his citizenship had been revoked.

Fear of being evicted from one's house, or of one's house being burnt down, was a recurring theme in conversations with farmworkers about their current. Their approach to 'politics' was entirely pragmatic. Unlike the open, public conversation with Sekuru Kenny in his yard, conversations about 'politics' only ever took place inside compound houses, amongst close friends and relatives who were also farmworkers. As Baba Luckwell summarised:

We have that silence associated with hiding. If you are quiet it is hard for people to see what you are thinking. But then if someone is just quiet, they don't know what side you are on. So it is associated with politics as well. They will suspect you. So you must be there but you don't have to be loud. They say it is peaceful now, but we cannot say this quietness is peaceful. It's like you are being forced to be quiet. People fear.

Rutherford (2008a) notes that performative demonstrations of support to ZANU PF became one of the conditions of farmworkers 'belonging' on farms, alongside their relationships of dependency with land beneficiaries (p.95; see also Mkodzongi 2012). What was striking during my fieldwork was that, while the threat of eviction and the memory of past evictions during times of 'politics' loomed large, in reality, farmworkers were rarely evicted and were usually allowed to resume residence in their houses if they were. In addition, in instances when farmworkers had left the farms, A1 land beneficiaries were reluctant to take over their houses, preferring to build new ones in government stipulated 'villages'. Local A1 beneficiaries jokingly referred to farmworkers as *ma A3s* (the A3s). This highlighted the uncomfortable position of farmworkers as having no allocated land, yet nonetheless remaining on farms. On questioning Baba Basim as to why he had allowed Sekuru Kenny and the other evictees to return to their houses, he explained that although farmworkers did not own their houses, 'we just allow them to live there'. However, underlying this presentation of magnanimity, more complex processes of recognition and relationships of dependency were at play (Chapter Four).

In the social and political context in which farmworkers found themselves after 2000, their houses took on heightened significance as a source of stability and rootedness amidst a socio-political situation of violence and uncertainty in which their futures on farms appeared to be in question. The departure of white farmers left them in a vulnerable position. With no land, insecure employment, and the wrong kind of 'politics', their attachments to their houses were pragmatic as well as emotional. It was for this reason that threats of eviction were so poignant. However, in the post-2000 context of commercial farms, farmworkers claims over their houses became political as well. In farmworkers' eyes, eviction from houses threatened their very futures, not just on farms. Yet farmworkers' continued presence on farms showed that eviction was more often a threat than a reality. Instead, the threat of eviction can be understood as a means of control and forced persuasion on the part of the regime.

Farmworkers' claims to belong did not consist of claims over farm land so much as claiming to belong to the 'farm'. They framed their lives in relation to the history of

their employment on the land by white settlers. Since the departure of white farmers, their houses came to represent lives lived, materializations of the past or, as James Fox would have it ‘structures for remembering’ (Fox 1993: 22-23 as cited in Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995: 26). For the farmworkers on Dam Lake and Utopia, a house in the compound became a significant symbol of reward for years of loyal hard work for white farmers after ‘fast track’. Compound houses were the most visible evidence of farmworkers’ relationship with white farmers. Farmworkers’ claims over their houses, through which their continued presence on farms was asserted, existed as an uncomfortable reminder of white farmers’ claims over land (and farmworkers’ potential claims over land) which the ZANU PF state and those who led initial farm invasions of the *jambanja* period had sought to delegitimise. Land beneficiaries recognised farmworkers claims of belonging on farmland, even though they would not recognize the potential for farmworkers to therefore have legitimate claims to land as well. To have done so would have been to question the legitimacy of their own land allocations.

Fontein (2015), working in the early years of ‘fast track’, just after *jambanja*, has reported that land beneficiaries initially relied on farmworkers’ local knowledge of the land, not only to make farms productive, but to make their occupations spiritually ‘safe’ (p.242). In 2012/13 in Mazowe, such issues were no longer being discussed, although they might well have been in the initial period of settlement. Pragmatic concerns such as the provision of labour (Chapter Four) had taken over. Farmworkers rarely openly challenged their exclusion by the state from land allocations. While their claims over their compound houses were occasionally threatened to keep them in line, their relationships with land beneficiaries enabled a stable, if sometimes fraught, continued existence on farms.

Maline: A1 Land Beneficiaries’ Houses

The contrast between farmworkers, A1 land beneficiaries and A2 land beneficiaries was most visibly clear in the type and arrangement of their residences. Areas divided

into A1 small holdings were ‘villagised’ into *maline*. In the 1980s and 1990s households in ORAs were settled on the basis of wealth status, in line with the new government’s socialist principles which ignored clan and kinship affiliation in favour of treating households as individual units rather than parts of communities (Geza 1986). New resettlement areas brought together diverse households that were unrelated and came from different backgrounds (Matondi 2012: 209). The organisation of A1 households into ‘villages’ with houses in *maline* was the most obvious marker of state governance on farms. Chaumba et al. (2003a: 542) describe how early land occupiers in Chiredzi district in the south-east of the country felt extremely vulnerable to the state because the government had not yet given them recognition of their farm occupations’ legitimacy. In contrast to the first wave of dwellings constructed by such early land occupiers, later houses built in *maline* were definitely sanctioned by the state.

On Dam Lake, by 2012, a reasonably well-established village of 35 A1 land beneficiaries answerable to Baba Basim, the headman and head of the village committee of seven was set in place. The ‘village’ on Dam Lake was located in what had been tobacco fields, one kilometer from the ‘barns’ and the farmworkers’ compound. The Basims considered themselves lucky because the fields they had been allocated bordered their homestead; most had to walk some way to reach their fields which, in line with the Rhodesian-era derived spatial organization of villages, were separated from their living areas. Many A1 land beneficiaries were envious of farmworkers’ houses because they were made of bricks and were considered to be ‘proper’ houses. Farmworkers also had more access to electricity and immediate water sources than A1 land beneficiaries. Yet in Mazowe, A1s preferred to build their own houses rather than occupy the few abandoned compound houses. In addition to pragmatic concerns of proximity to their fields, and ‘obeying’ government directives, A1 land beneficiaries were inscribing their presence on farms through the construction

of their own houses. In this way they built their own sense of entitlement over the lands they were allocated.¹⁶

The Basim's homestead on Dam Lake Farm was typical of most A1 land beneficiaries in the area. Their household consisted of Baba Basim and his wife, Amai Basim, Ambuya (grandmother), Amai Basim's mother, and 'the boys' (*vakomana*), Kenny (Sekuru Kenny's grandchild) and Dougie, who lived and worked for the Basims and was recruited from the compound. The area in which the houses stood was bordered by the dust road that halved the 'village', a small portion of land behind the huts, the beginning of the Basims' fields in front of the 'yard', and a fence that marked the end of their plot and the beginning of the next. A grass wash-house (*chinjahouse* – lit. change house) and, separately, a long-drop toilet surrounded by a grass wall stood in this smaller portion of land behind the huts in which we slept.

As in the compound, most day-to-day life took place in the household yard (*panze*), the area immediately around and between the huts. On one side was a chicken coop that provided eggs and the occasional chicken for special occasions. The scotch-cart Baba Basim had bought with the profits of previous year's tobacco sales was parked beside it. In addition, an outdoor wooden drying rack stood near a small tree, where the household dishes were scrubbed daily (see Figure 5). Baba Basim and Amai Basim slept in a rectangular sleeping hut in the centre of the outer ring of the 'yard' nearest to the fields. This was a private hut to which I was not privy. To the right of the 'conjugal hut', was a large circular hut where guests were received and grain and fertiliser stored. This was the hut which I call the 'guest hut'. A small wooden dresser displayed a good collection of crockery (for special guests) as well as tin cups and plates for daily use. A well-polished broken generator and a large radio sat in full view on a shelf built out of the wall. In the darkness of one side of the hut, large bags of fertiliser and seed were stored. This was the hut that I occupied and which the 'boys' were forbidden to enter in case anything of mine went missing. The 'guest hut' and the 'conjugal' hut were both locked if Baba and Amai Basim were absent. Next to this

¹⁶ Gareth James' (2015) doctoral research records that in Bikita a 'local moral discourse' existed amongst A1 land beneficiaries in favour of building their own houses and against moving into farm-workers houses although he does not elucidate beyond this observation (p.179).

was a much smaller brick hut where Ambuya lived. In a predominantly patrilineal and patrilocal culture it was unusual for a mother-in-law to reside at her son-in-law's (*mukwasha*) home. A series of taboos between Ambuya and Baba Basim, her son-in-law, meant the sleeping quarters of the two had to be built on separate sides of the yard. In addition, Ambuya ate separately in her hut and refused to use the wash-house or toilet, since Baba Basim used these. A rather cantankerous old lady, she fiercely guarded her privacy and stowed her belongings deep in the dark recesses of her hut, where a small fire often burned. Ambuya spent most of the day sitting on a mat outside her hut, often shouting at 'the boys' across the yard or participating in discussions between the Basims and their various daily visitors. She herself had a small entourage of friends from the compound who regularly visited her and passed on farm gossip. To the left of the main sleeping hut was a small square hut where Kenny and Dougie slept. This hut was not furnished. The 'boys'' few possessions were kept in separate corners. In front of Kenny and Dougie's sleeping hut, towards the centre of the yard, was a small round cooking hut where Amai Basim prepared household meals on a wood fire. Evenings were spent sitting round the fire, sometimes listening to the radio if it had been solar charged in the day.



Fig. 6: A1 land beneficiary's home, Dam Lake Farm Source: Author, September 2012.

Beyond the 'yard' lay the Basims' fields. In the fields closest to the yard, maize, sweet potatoes, pumpkins and other foods for domestic use were grown. Amai Basim had a small 'garden' up the road alongside those of other women in the settlement, in which they grew household vegetables such as rape (*muriwo*) and tomatoes. This doubled as a nursery for tobacco seedlings which were tended by the 'boys' because it was located near one of the communal wells. A communal *kraal* for some of the A1 land beneficiaries' cattle was also located near the gardens. The rest of the Basims' land was used to grow tobacco.

Both Steven Robins (1994), who worked in the Gwanyaremba communal area (Matabeleland), and Moore (2005) record that those living in government-planned 'villages' in ORAs blamed an array of social conflicts on living in such close proximity (Robins 1994: 100; Moore 2005: 50). On Dam Lake Farm, a similar discourse prevailed amongst A1 land beneficiaries. People commented that there was considerably more social conflict in new resettlement areas than in communal areas, and most put this down to the diversity of unrelated people living close together. Nonetheless, a few close friendships, alliances and cooperative schemes, such as sharing the labour cost of cattle grazing, had been established. By 2012/13, after living alongside one another for six years or more, neighbours in *maline*, spoke over fences in the evenings, and visited one another's houses. Baba Basim's immediate neighbour, Baba Chitsika, who hailed from a communal area further north, was his closest friend on the farm.

In order to better understand the particularity of A1 land beneficiaries' relationships to 'villages' in Mazowe, it is helpful to contrast these with more normative relationships that those living in communal areas of rural Zimbabwe have to their 'homes'. In *chiShona* speaking areas of Zimbabwe, a distinction is made between *imba* (a house) and *musha*, (a paternal village considered to be your home). The majority of A1 land beneficiaries in Mazowe distinguished between their *musha* in the communal areas where they originated from and the houses they built in the 'village' (*maline*) in Mazowe. There were, of course, exceptions, which I explore, but this distinction was a helpful indicator of the kind of attachment A1 land beneficiaries felt towards the land

they were allocated and their future lives in new resettlement areas. The distinction between *musha* and *imba* resonates somewhat with the British distinction between ‘house’ and ‘home’ to the extent that there is more of an emotional attachment to one’s ‘home’, or in this case *musha*, than to a ‘house’ that one might temporarily occupy. However in the case of a *musha* there are important material and spiritual attachments that mark a difference as well. ChiShona speakers are patrilineal and patrilocal. Before the centralisation policies of the Rhodesian government, a *musha* was headed by a head man, (*samusha*), and his patrilineal descendants. At marriage a woman’s *musha* is expected to change from her father’s to her husband’s paternal home, although sometimes men married to daughters lived with their wife’s family.¹⁷ One’s *musha* is where one’s paternal relatives are buried and where, if the appropriate rituals are adhered to, these relatives are transformed into benevolent ancestors and guardians of their living kin (Lan 1985: 31-5). ‘Home for the living is essentially home for the dead’ (ibid.: 1985). A *musha*, then, denotes a place of ‘symbolic and material bodily connection’ to the land (Mazarire 2013: 10; Fontein 2011: 713-714). Amongst the chiKaranga speaking people of south-west Zimbabwe, Gerald Mazarire (2013) has discussed how it is not only at death but at birth that a bodily connection to one’s *musha* is created through the burial of the *rukuvhute* (umbilical cord) in the soil or kraal of the homestead(p.10). In chiKaranga the word *dongo* denotes a ‘home’ and Mazarire describes how ‘Wherever one goes, their home is where their *rhukuvute* is and it is ideally also where they should be buried after their death, to complete the cycle of life where it began. The *dongo* has a centrifugal force, drawing one back to the source’ (ibid.).

The plot Baba Basim was allocated on Dam Lake gave him an opportunity to move into tobacco farming for the first time with the hope of making a good profit. He aspired to be able to leave his allocated plot of land to his children and grandchildren and establish a tobacco farm business which he could leave running, under the supervision of trusted workers, while he and his wife retired to their primary house in a nearby township. Baba Basim did not have a *musha*, his parents having come to Zimbabwe from Zambia, but his wife hailed from the Chiweshe communal lands. For

¹⁷ When marriage breaks down or is disputed this can become a point of hot contestation, particularly with regards the burial of the woman’s corpse at death.

many migrants from townships, new resettlement areas were pieces of land that would become their only rural home. Baba Basim had previously worked as an ambulance driver and was the proud owner of a seven-roomed house in town where he and his immediate family had lived for ten years. Having held a high position within local party structures, he was encouraged to apply for a plot of land by seniors within the party in the early 2000s. After pegging (marking out) the plot with local AREX officers on Dam Lake, he began building huts. In 2004 he and his wife moved to Dam Lake full-time. Their daughter, Petronella, remained living in the town house with her husband and children, and the family rented out the few remaining rooms as a source of extra income. The town house was the Basims' pride and joy. This was where they kept their full lounge suite, a huge glass dresser full of crockery, the large TV they bought after the profitable 2012 tobacco harvest and a bedroom suite. This was the house where the money made from their plot on Dam Lake was re-invested. While Baba Basim claimed that Mazowe was now his *musha* and he would be buried on Dam Lake if he died (to which Amai Basim responded, 'Then you will be buried here alone!') Amai Basim wanted to be buried next to their deceased eldest daughter at a grave site near their town house.

For Baba Chimodo, who lived a few houses down from the Basims, his allocated land gave him the opportunity to set up his own *musha* even as he maintained ties with his paternal *musha*. The youngest brother of three, there was little land available for him and his family to set up their own home in the communal lands from which he came. Baba Chitsika, Basim's neighbour, was an older man with two wives and a large brood of children, all of whom had moved to Dam Lake. Hailing from a drought-ridden area in the north, his allocated plot gave him the chance to make money from tobacco farming as well as to provide an adequate home for his large family. Chitsika had fought in the 1970s liberation war and felt entitled to the land he was allocated. However, whether his A1 house constituted an *imba* or a *musha* was still somewhat in question for him, and he remained unsure where he would be buried at death.

For A1 land beneficiaries in Mazowe, 'fast track' gave them an opportunity to make new lives in new places. Over the year I stayed with the Basims, various adjustments to their homestead on Dam Lake were made. Six months into my stay, after various

arguments amongst the Basims' extended family about who would pay for what, Ambuya's small rammed earth hut was replaced by a larger round brick hut. At the same time the Basims knocked down their 'conjugal hut' and began building a three roomed brick house modelled on the houses in the farmworkers' compound. In the meantime, the couple moved into 'guest hut', I moved into the 'boys' hut and the 'boys' were forced to sleep in the cooking hut. After living there for nine years, the Basims had begun investing the profits from their tobacco harvest into their Dam Lake homestead. However, when Nhafu, the A2 land beneficiary who moved into the Dam Lake farmhouse, began making moves to take over their plot of land, the Basims stopped building, fearful of the loss of their plot and a wasted investment (Chapter Five). The Basims' aspirations for the future were materialised in the construction of a more permanent brick house, but, in an unstable social and political context, they also remained cautious.



Fig. 7: The Basim's half constructed house on Dam Lake Farm. Source: Author, July 2012.

A1 land beneficiaries on Dam Lake were cautiously optimistic about their futures and the possibility of making money in Mazowe. They came from different backgrounds and had different aspirations. On Dam Lake, those male heads of household who had migrated from overcrowded communal areas where, as younger brothers, they had little opportunity to set up households of their own, hoped that new resettlement areas would become their *musha*. For these young men, land reform presented an opportunity to establish themselves and their immediate families and escape the confines of primogenital inheritance. For those who retained primary ownership of land in areas badly affected by drought, new resettlement areas provided an economic opportunity, although their investment was split between the two places. The question of permanency in new resettlement areas hung over A1 land beneficiaries in Mazowe, and influenced decisions about how much to invest in terms of their symbolic and material bodily connections to the ancestors through the land.

Matondi (2012) has noted that of those A1 land beneficiaries who came from communal lands in Mazowe, many retained these original homes as a form of insurance against the possibility of eviction (p.245). Marlene Dekker and Bill Kinsey (2011), however, propose that the maintenance of two ‘homes’ cannot be attributed to tenure insecurity alone. Comparing land beneficiaries in new resettlement areas to those who moved into ORAs in the 1980s, Dekker and Kinsey state that although the insecurities surrounding the (re)allocation of land under ‘fast track’ were not a feature of the first phase of resettlement, those who moved on to ORAS still maintained links with their former home areas for economic and social reasons. They conclude that, ‘resettlement is a process [...] that clearly takes considerable time’ regardless of tenure status (2011: 1000).

It is not clear whether by ‘insecurity of tenure’ Dekker and Kinsey are referring to the actual legal terms of ‘offer letters’ or a sense of tenure insecurity felt by A1 land beneficiaries. Assuming they mean the former, my own data is positioned between Matondi, and Dekker and Kinsey. Resettlement is a gradual social and economic process. However, A1 land beneficiaries’ uncertainty about how much to invest in their new ‘homes’ also derived from the uncertain political context. This was not only because of the fear of an opposition victory that might lead to the ‘reversal of land

reform'. Matondi (2012), for example, describes how new land beneficiaries in Mazowe were uncomfortable discussing their oscillation between two homesteads with him because they feared his research was part of a government audit that might result in their 'offer letters' being withdrawn (p.113). A1 land beneficiaries' 'newness' on the farms lay in contrast to the well-established lives of farmworkers in the compound. However, despite the state officially sanctioning A1 land beneficiaries' residence in new resettlement areas, both groups occupied uncertain and vulnerable positions in relation to the government, ZANU PF and the caprices of wealthier and better connected A2 land beneficiaries.

What is a Farmhouse?

Chief Chiweshe, or Joseph Chigariro, moved into the farmhouse in 2006. This was relatively late compared to others who had been allocated land in the area. According to the Chief, the farmhouse was built on an area very close to the *matongo* (homes) and *mapa* (graves) of his ancestors, hidden in the hills surrounding the area. Chief Chigariro was not allocated a piece of land during 'fast track', testament to the ongoing negotiation between chiefs, government and the ZANU PF party over the role of chiefs in the land reform process and their authority in new resettlement areas. The boundaries of his claimed territory in Mazowe were contested by two other chiefs, Chief Makope and Chief Negomo, who also hailed from the Chiweshe communal lands. Chief Chigariro's attempts to acquire a large-scale farm constituted a continuous struggle through the duration of my fieldwork and remained unresolved at his death in 2013. Yet, despite these challenges, his claim over the farmhouse and that particular area were not contested. I suggest that this was because Chief Makope and Chief Negomo, as well as the ZANU PF regime, did not want to be seen to contest the legitimacy of a claim based on the presence of these *matongo* and *mapa*, although they continually undermined his authority in roundabout ways, which I explore further in Chapters Six and Seven. While land reform was not framed in terms of land restitution, autochthonous claims over particular areas, particularly when made by chiefs, had powerful resonance locally and were often unofficially recognised (Fontein 2009;

2015; Chaumba 2003b). In this section, I focus specifically on Chief Chigariro's re-making of the previously white-owned farmhouse that he occupied, as a way of examining his relationship to the history of white farmers in the area. His relationship to the farmhouse signified his understanding of land reform. His occupation of the farmhouse can be understood as one part of a broader assertion by him of the meaning of land reform as land restitution, as well as part of a process to actively establish himself as an authority in Mazowe. This, in turn, linked to a broader project by chiefs across the country to use land reform as an opportunity to re-work and improve their positions as state actors within the state as it was being re-made by 'fast track'.

Chief Chigariro's farmhouse lay in a valley between two small inclines; a tall fence separated its garden from the rest of the farm. Past a large gate, two white-washed car garages had been converted into an outdoor kitchen and a chicken coop. Smoke from the embers of an open fire, over which a pot of *sadza* was often being stirred by one or other women of the household, stained the inside of one of the garage roofs to a chalky black. A wooden dish-drying rack had been built alongside the garages next to a tap, and usually one of the Chief's female relatives or servants stood there washing plates and cutlery. Apart from a small patch of maize planted next to the gate, no other plants were attended to, and empty flower beds edged the walls of the house. Two benches had been set out under a tree where the Chief met visitors. A number of scrawny dogs roamed the yard. At the back of the house, hidden from public view, the Chief had built a small rammed earth thatched hut for communing with his ancestors. It was, he explained, important for the ancestors to have a house that they recognised. Watches, phones, shoes, earrings and others signs of 'modernity' were forbidden from being worn in the hut.

Chief Chigariro lived in the farmhouse with his wife, son, older brother, nephew, nephew's wife and their child, as well as an array of relatives who stayed for varying lengths of time. The house was a large, modern double-storey, painted cream with a green roof. A small porch arched over the front door and a long extension stretched off the main building to the left. Shoes had to be removed at the door. The inside of the house had also been transformed by the division of space and circumscription of movement along lines of gender and hierarchy typical of most *chiShona*-speaking

households. The farmhouse kitchen, for instance, was used by the women of the house to serve food although it was cooked in the garage outside. The Chief and male relatives, together with favoured guests (such as myself), ate at the dining room table or in the living room while the women and children ate in the kitchen. The kitchen was almost exclusively the province of women, children and servants. Similar divisions of space along lines of gender, hierarchy and relational proximity to the Chief's family were echoed across the house and the yard so that more distant visitors were not invited into the house, and only made it as far as the benches under the tree.

The Chief's refusal of the legitimacy of white farmer's claims in the area was further justified in terms of whites' perceived inhumanity and failure to recognise black Zimbabweans as equals, let alone prior inhabitants. The Chief's anger regarding this injustice was expressed to me over a meal a few months into my fieldwork: 'We are related halfway. Our relationship is now full because we have eaten together'. He continued, 'You know the white farmers never invited us to eat with them at their table. They would sit at the table eating and they would leave us to stand at the door. What is that?' As far as Chief Chigariro, was concerned, white farmers got what they deserved.

As previously mentioned, farmhouses materially asserted white farmers' authority over and attempts to domesticate the land and the 'Africans' who lived there in a particularly European image of domesticity (Rutherford 2001: 69). Chief Chigariro's relationship with the farmhouse and the surrounding land was not only an assertion of authority over the landscape and those who lived there, but a re-making of the landscape, or an attempt to return to an older past, a historical trajectory that was perceived to have been disrupted but not vanquished by white settlers (Fontein, 2015: 41). This older past was materialised in the *mapa* and *matongo* of Chief Chigariro's ancestors. Indeed, the choice of the particular farmhouse the Chief decided to move into was attributed to spiritual guidance. However, as his nephew told me:

The Chief did not know that these were sacred mountains, he was just looking for a house to live in but once we came here the mediums told us, 'Did you know that there are ancestors buried in the mountains close by?'

On moving in, the Chief changed the name of the farm to its original autochthonous name. However, as the Chief himself was a newcomer to Mazowe, he relied on spirit mediums as well as older advisors, such as a man named Sekuru Makomo, to inform him of the place's autochthonous history. Makomo, who was born in Mazowe and then re-located with his family as a young boy to the Chiweshe communal reserve in the 1940s, relayed the history of the area in terms of white settlers slowly pushing people into the Chiweshe reserve as they carved up the landscape and re-named features of the area: the process that Chief Chigariro sought to reverse. Fontein has written of that a large part of chiefs' legitimacy in Zimbabwe derives from their privileged access and knowledge of the land, 'its sacred places, taboos and ritual practices that ensure adequate rainfall, general prosperity and protection from disease and misfortune' (Fontein 2011:709). Chiefs are also conceived of as guardians of the land and, alongside spirit mediums, their ritual functions concern maintaining a balance between a healthy environment and the well-being of those who live in it (see Daneel 1996; Lan 1985: 19-22). Chief Chigariro had to learn this history, which included the original names of geographic features and boundaries, and the precise locations of ancestral settlements, shrines and graves.

Access to and knowledge of these, however, remained privileged, as the majority of land beneficiaries in Mazowe were not autochthons and did not know about these places or taboos. On the part of the Chief, re-making the land involved a process of learning in order to teach land beneficiaries about this landscape of the past. It also involved building a 'traditional' village of huts made of grass (rather than rammed earth) for his spirit mediums and ancestors. This 'village' was placed in a secret location and aimed to be a place where communication with the ancestors of the area could be resumed, an invitation to them to return to the land.

Hylton White (2010) has written of the way in which houses in rural Zululand, South Africa, can be understood 'not as physical dwellings but rather as assemblages of people, things, and animals that gathered under the names of mothers who made them with acts of reproduction, production, and care' (p.505). The location of physical dwellings within the homestead followed a ranking that derived from the order in which the men of the homestead, all brothers, were born in their mother's house. The

particular homestead White focuses on is that of a labour migrant called Nkukulelo. For labour migrants like Nkukulelo who lived and worked in the city, rural ‘homes’ were perceived as spaces of ‘culture’ to which they return at death to ‘dwell in culture’, eventually becoming ancestral spirits themselves (ibid.: 511). Nkukulelo’s rural home had moved several times but each time much effort was put into replicating the ‘sociotemporal’ character of the homestead. Thus, White suggests, houses in Zululand can be understood not only as icons of production but practices of memory that gave ‘a spatial structure to life that testified to the past and made it part of everyday practice’ (ibid.: 505). However, the men of the homestead in Nkukulelo’s case were mostly dead. Making these ancestral dead feel ‘at home’ in the home was crucial to the prosperity of the living.

Nkukulelo’s living family increasingly built concrete and brick flats to live in, representing new desires and ways of life linked to capitalist consumption practices. However, such practices were also associated with estranging the dead. Separate spaces for the dead were built by Nkukulelo’s family in between ‘traditional’ mud and thatch houses. Thus the dead were only ambiguously integrated into their homesteads. Rather than being integrated, the two parallel temporalities and modes were separated: that of the ‘ancestral past’, a time before ‘whiteness had entered and dominated the social world’, and that of the ‘modern’ present (2010: 509). In White’s analysis, this results in the ancestral spirits feeling displaced and alienated from their ‘homes’ and relations between the living and their ancestors becoming fraught and a matter of grave concern.

In Mazowe, Chief Chigariro’s thatch hut round the back of the farmhouse, and the secret village, were similarly spaces for the ancestors: spaces of ‘culture’ conceived as being a time before ‘whiteness’. As with Nkukulelo’s rural home in South Africa, Chief Chigariro’s new home in Mazowe encompassed two temporalities that operated in parallel but were kept separate. Unlike White’s (2010) example, this was not problematic for the Chief. Instead, he saw what I call his ‘project of return’ as one of re-connecting with spirits that had been alienated and ignored in the area because of the presence of white settlers. His was a project to return ‘culture’ to Mazowe, and to the country as a whole, by re-connecting it with the ancestral past.

This 'project of return' was understood as a chance to 'settle' the land/country (*kugadzika nyika*). Various maladies were attributed to its unsettledness, from the loss of the fertility to the political disturbances of the past decade. The Chief's houses materialised two temporalities, that of the present, and that of the ancestral past: the house for the ancestors, built around the back of the 'modern' farmhouse. The Chief's two modes, 'traditionalist' and 'modern', were reflected in the different kinds of house, (huts and a farmhouse), the décor of the farmhouse, and the spatial divisions through the house and the yard. These were not experienced as fraught but co-existed within the same present, with Chief Chigariro moving between the two and/or bringing them together at different moments. Land reform therefore gave Chief Chigariro the opportunity to address outstanding spiritual imperatives regarding ancestors buried in the Mazowe new resettlement area, and return to the 'lost lands' of his ancestors. It also enabled him to extend his jurisdiction beyond the communal lands of Chiweshe, obtain a farmhouse and claim a piece of farm land for himself.

His assertions of 'return' both overlapped with and challenged the ZANU PF regime. On the one hand, his sentiments echoed ZANU PF rhetoric against white settlers and the injustice of their take-over of lands from indigenous Zimbabweans. On the other, the regime was ambivalent about the extent of chiefs' powers in new resettlement areas. These struggles were exemplified in Chief Chigariro's erection of a sign on the main road that read, *Mambo Chiweshe* (Chief Chiweshe) with an arrow pointing up the farm road towards the house (see Figure 7). The sign was removed six months into my fieldwork and the Chief's personal secretary explained that 'enemies' of the Chief had removed it. It was unclear whether these were people sent by one of the other competing chieftaincies, members of the ZANU PF party or the government.



Fig. 8: Sign to Chief Chigariro's residence before removal, Mazowe. Source: Author, February 2012.

Conclusion

People's relationships to their houses in this new resettlement area in Mazowe indicated the contradictory and uncertain positions they occupied in relation to the place where they lived, and to the state. Tensions around questions of 'belonging' and how these connected to claims over houses and land were layered into people's relationships with their houses. People's relationships with their houses were also informed by and/or constrained by the ZANU PF state, which exacerbated the sense of uncertainty about futures in the area. Counterintuitively, this meant people relied on and turned towards the state in order to gain a sense of stability. In other words, if you remained well connected within the party, and on the 'right' side of the state politically, you were more likely to be able to remain living in a new resettlement area. At the

same time, the history of different settlements on the land challenged state delimitations of who 'belonged' and who did not. By re-working their houses, by making houses their 'homes', those living in Mazowe literally built against the uncertainties of their future lives in the area.

Farmworkers oriented themselves on farms in relation to the history of white farmer settlement on these lands. They experienced 'fast track' as a severe disruption. It rendered them jobless, neither were they given land. They existed on farms like an awkward remnant of white farmer settlement and felt that their futures, not only on farms, were in question. In this context their houses took on a heightened importance as a source of stability, as the only thing they had left. In an inversion of Miller's (1988) work, farmworkers houses were securely their 'homes', yet post 'fast track', in its attempt to deny the legitimacy of white settler claims over land and, by extension their farmworkers, the state tried to render these 'homes' 'houses'. It was in their claims over houses that farmworkers attempted to assert, albeit unofficially, their right to remain living in new resettlement areas even if they were not allocated land. However, their 'belonging' was conditional (Rutherford 2008a) and depended on their performance of support for ZANU PF and relationships of dependence with land beneficiaries.

The majority of A1 land beneficiaries with little historical connection to Mazowe saw land reform in terms of an opportunity to make new lives for themselves. However, in an unstable political context and a contract with the state in which the state could revoke their land allocations with no compensation, A1 land beneficiaries were cautious about the extent to which they invested in imagined futures in new resettlement areas. This was reflected in the extent to which they invested in their homesteads. Many were ambivalent about their attachments to their houses. By 2012, some had begun to assert their permanence in these areas as against this instability by forthrightly building more permanent houses. Yet even these were not yet necessarily viewed as sites of 'culture' (White 2010), but as sites of economic opportunity. For some, 'fast track' changed the meaning of what a rural home was by changing the terms by which one owned land. Land beneficiaries' rights over land did not necessarily align with a sense of 'belonging' (which many lacked). Their situation was

the exact inverse of farmworkers'. Yet, through friendships, alliances and working relationships with farmworkers as well as other land beneficiaries, a sense of 'belonging' to a farm community developed.

For Chief Chigariro 'fast track' presented an opportunity not only to return to the lost lands of his ancestors, but to return 'culture' to the area and re-work his position vis-a-vis the ZANU PF state. He oriented himself in relation to an older, and in his eyes, more legitimate 'ancestral' past and dismissed white farmers' settlement as an aberration of history. His claims over land, the farmhouse and to authority were simultaneously unofficially recognised and contested. This ambiguous positioning, both officially (in legal terms) and unofficially, was reflected in the fact that his claim over the farmhouse went unchallenged and yet he was not allocated land. While Stoler (2008) and Navaro-Yashin (2009) write of 'ruins' and the way in which these inform and animate politics in the present, and Moore (2005) writes of a 'striated landscape' in which multiple histories are entwined, all of these three scholars' work implies that 'ruins' or multiple pasts are equally visible, even if their meanings and legitimacy are contested. For Chief Chigariro, the challenge was to render the *matongo* and *mapa* more visible to the population of land beneficiaries in Mazowe in order to embed and secure his claim of authority over the area and the people living in it.

In this chapter I have used people's relationships to their houses to examine what 'fast track' meant to different groups living alongside one another, how they justified their claims over houses and/or land, and how they oriented themselves in relation to their future lives in the area. I have shown that this was in part grounded in how they related to the history of past settlements on the land. At the same time, these histories disturbed and impinged on people's sense of belonging even as they sought to ignore or deny this. In the next chapter I turn to the household of one A1 farming family to explore the complexities of relationships of dependency between A1 land beneficiaries and farmworkers, on which A1 land beneficiaries' sense of identity and belonging, and farmworkers' continued presence on farms, significantly relied.

Chapter Four: Kin and Labour

In the cold early morning the boys rise. They shake off their blankets and the warmth of sleep and enter the cool air of the yard from their small sleeping hut. It is dawn but the sun has not yet risen. They walk up the dust road to the communal cattle kraal to fetch Election and Lion, two huge black bulls bought with the profits of past tobacco harvests. Kenny, the older of the two, alternates between barks and soft whistles while they harness the bulls to the scotch cart. Today they are going to chop wood from forests on the top of the hills that form the backdrop of the farm to cure the Basims' tobacco crop. After some fussing, the cart pulls away and quiet settles over the yard once more. They will be gone until mid-morning when we will eat bread and tea together. This will be their only meal until night fall when we gather once more to eat sadza and relish before going to bed. [Fieldnotes, 16.03.12]

Kenny was twenty years old, Dougie was sixteen. Kenny had lived with the Basims since 2004. At the age of eight, both parents having died, he was taken into their household from the Dam Lake compound when the Basims first moved on to their allocated plot of land. Baba Basim paid for Kenny's last two years of primary school and set him to work full time on their newly acquired six hectares. Dougie had been more recently recruited, at the start of 2012, via a family connection in the town where the Basims' 'town' house' was located. Tobacco is a labour intensive crop requiring not only physical strength but expert knowledge and skill (Rubert 1998: 21). To render his six hectares profitable, Baba Basim relied on the labour of his 'boys'. During the busy harvest period, he also employed short-term 'piece workers' (*maricho*) from the Dam Lake compound, paid a daily rate of USD1.50. In contrast to *maricho*, Kenny and Dougie were paid at the end of the season, once Baba Basim returned with the profits from the auction. Much of this was given in material goods rather than cash and was not perceived as pay, but in terms of reward and a share of the family profit. In addition, gifts such as new clothes, mobile phones and a small amount of cash was given to each of them. Baba Basim described himself as Kenny's 'father' (*baba*) and Kenny as his 'child' (*mwana*). I was therefore shocked when, after a month away, I returned to the Basims' household to find that Kenny and Dougie had been dismissed. Kenny stood accused stealing half a bucket of fertiliser to buy marijuana'; Dougie, of stealing money. How they could 'fire' Kenny, their 'son'?

In this chapter, I use my confusion over Kenny's dismissal as a starting point through which to examine the ambiguous moral bonds between farmworkers and land beneficiaries in Mazowe. In 2012, these two groups were in the process of working out the nature of the relationship between them, in a political context that positioned farmworkers as having to work for land beneficiaries in order to remain living on farms. While farmworkers and land beneficiaries shared many different kinds of relationship, it was in labour conflicts between these two groups that underlying tensions – who belonged, who did not, who had what rights and why – were most obviously revealed. In this situation in which these groups' claims to belong on farms were constructed as being in direct competition, I argue that the lack of clarity around these issues, and the (ir)resolution of conflicts between farmworkers and land beneficiaries, allowed a contingent social stability to be generated on farms, even though it was fragile and easily disrupted.

I examine three contrasting types of labour relationship between land beneficiaries and farmworkers in Mazowe, and the micro-politics of these as they played out in everyday contexts. Each of these relationships involved negotiations around dependence and independence, or different degrees of 'incorporation' and 'freedom'. In all three cases, the tensions that emerged were evaluated in moral, rather than political terms. What was explicitly in dispute in each case was what it meant to be a good person, a good farmer, a good patron and a good worker. Underlying these moral evaluations, what was being negotiated were the terms by which the 'winners' and the 'losers' of land reform would live with and alongside each other in this new resettlement area. The de-politicization of these conflicts, in which the moral was separated from the political, was crucial to enabling tenuous forms of belonging and a sense of farm communities to emerge.

From White Farmers to Land Beneficiaries

During *jambanja*, state-run media in Zimbabwe constructed farmworkers as non-citizens, 'foreigners' who lacked political consciousness; children at best, enemies of

the revolution still loyal to their imperialist white employers at worst (Rutherford 2008a: 93-94; Marongwe 2004; Willems 2004). The alternative portrayal of farmworkers, propounded by human rights and civil society organisations, was of the farmworker as victim, deprived of basic human rights (e.g. GAPWUZ 2010). Against these portrayals, which robbed farmworkers of their agency, Rutherford (2008a) has suggested approaching relations between land beneficiaries and farmworkers in terms of the new 'modes of belonging' to which farmworkers had to submit in order to remain living in new resettlement areas (pp.79-80). 'Modes of belonging' are localized social processes involving the recognition of claims over resources and authority. They involve the development of relationships of dependency and power dynamics through which particular cultural styles of interaction are privileged as proper and moral. In other words, they entail subscribing to particular moral economies. Drawing on an incident from his fieldwork in the early 2000s, Rutherford suggests that 'fast track' marked a shift from farmworkers' previous 'mode of belonging', and dependency under a white farmer, to a new 'mode of belonging' under war veterans. In the incident to which he refers, farmworkers were first beaten and chased from their homes on a farm by war veterans during *jambanja* in the early 2000s. On the farmworkers' return, the war veterans provided them with food (stolen from the farm stores), and declared the farmworkers' to have been 'baptised by ZANU PF' (p.75). Through this act of care, the war veterans (albeit temporarily) became responsible patrons, and the farmworkers 'loyal' dependents.

In 2007 the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare declared that 'ex-farmworkers still living in farm compounds, who are unwilling to work for new owners, would be required to leave' (Financial Gazette 2007 quoted in Rutherford 2008a: 91). In other words, officially, provision of labour was one of the conditions of farmworkers' continued residence in new resettlement areas. This undermined the basis of any alternative claim farmworkers might have had to remain living on farms and positioned farmworkers as dependent on land beneficiaries not only to make a living, but to remain living on farms. The most recent literature on the fate of farmworkers who continue to live in resettlement areas casts the relationship between land beneficiaries and farmworkers as new 'agrarian labour relations' and has approached these simply in terms of the political economy of these relationships

(Chambati & Moyo 2003; Chambati 2013; Chambati & Moyo 2013). These scholars have failed to recognize the complex moral bonds, negotiations and historical continuities embedded within these.

Relationships between farmworkers and land beneficiaries in Mazowe were structured by hierarchies of authority put in place by the government and reinforced by the local party and by Chief Chigariro. Farm committees of seven were always composed of land beneficiaries, and headmen were always land beneficiaries even if farmworkers did occupy local party positions. State portrayals of farmworkers as immoral and 'other' as well as these structural factors influenced land beneficiaries' views of farmworkers. A constant narrative about farmworkers' lack of morality and 'otherness' predominated on Dam Lake faem. However, despite this, in the lived reality of these relationships, idioms of community and kin also figured strongly. From the farmworkers' perspective, struggles over the negotiation of their relationships with land beneficiaries post 'fast track' concerned the security offered by paternalistic relations of dependency with land beneficiaries, and the associated risk that land beneficiaries would exploit and fail to pay them. This choice was set against an alternative of greater independence but loss of security.

The tension between dependence and independence in labour relations is exactly what James Ferguson (2013) has examined in the context of the withdrawal of the South African welfare state. Ferguson begins with the general observation that apparently emancipated black South Africans continue to try and enmesh themselves in labour relations that involve hierarchical subordination. He controversially suggests that, while seemingly antithetical to liberal ideals of freedom and independence, such 'pursuits of subordination' create opportunities for free choice and are constitutive of relational concepts of person-hood and different forms of social membership (2013: 224; see also Englund 2008). In this context, he argues, such 'declarations of dependence' must be understood as purposive 'modes of action' (Bayart 2000: 218 as cited in Ferguson 2013: 226) whereby individuals seek to incorporate themselves into hierarchical social relations of dependence in the face of pervasive economic, political and social insecurity and hardship.

Bolt (2013b) has suggested that examining such ‘declarations of dependence’ requires a more nuanced approach than that taken by Ferguson. In order to fully understand such ‘declarations of dependency’, Bolt states that we must examine the extent to which people are incorporated, how far they want to be incorporated, and what the negotiations of obligation and right involved in such processes are (2013b: 243-244). Following these authors, I ask what kinds of relationships did farmworkers and land beneficiaries want? What obligations and rights did these entail? How did these obligations and rights relate to notions of what it meant to be a ‘moral’ person? And how did the image of ‘the beneficiary’ and ‘the farmworker’ emerge from these relationships?

***Comboni* as a Site of Immorality**

On farms in Mazowe, land beneficiaries (*varimi* lit. ‘farmers’) and farmworkers (*mafamawekasi*) loosely comprised single farm communities. Yet, at the same time, *maline*, the ‘villages’ where A1 land beneficiaries live, and *comboni*, the farmworkers’ compound, also existed as distinct areas on farms and were also seen as distinct communities. On Dam Lake, *maline* were markedly more sedate than *comboni*. In Bolt’s (2013a) work on farmworkers on commercial farms on the South African/Zimbabwean border, the permanent workforce viewed the residences of temporary seasonal workers as a ‘site of immorality’, but nonetheless visited it for recreational purposes (p.208). A1 land beneficiaries on Dam Lake viewed *comboni* in similar terms, so that *maline* were viewed as a site of propriety in contrast to *comboni*. Compared with the sedate A1 settlement, *comboni* was livelier and more socially integrated. Proximity of neighbours and lack of privacy, along with the long-established personal histories of residents meant farmworkers were more entangled in each other’s daily lives. Despite the kilometre distance between *maline* and the farmworkers’ compound, most A1 land beneficiaries visited *comboni* daily, buying goods from the farm store, charging their phones, stopping for a beer or just catching up on gossip. In contrast, farmworkers almost always visited *maline* or farmhouses on official or farming matters such as labour arrangements or reporting a dispute, to gather

party political news or government information on the distribution of seed and fertilizer. However, while many A1 land beneficiaries visited *comboni* as a site of entertainment, they simultaneously cast it as a site of immorality. ‘You can see how they live, those people just shout, they like to fight, they drink,’ I was told by an A1 land beneficiary. Another A1 land beneficiary stated that farmworkers lacked ‘culture’ (*tsika*) and therefore, morality.

A recurring set of negative motifs was prevalent in A1 land beneficiaries’ narratives about farmworkers. Most prominent was the narrative of distrust and suspicion that revolved around not knowing them. A1 land beneficiaries referred to farmworkers as *mafamawekasi* – deriving from the English farmworkers – but also *maBlantyre* (those from Blantyre). This derogatory label not only emphasised the workers’ foreign heritage, it also associated them with witchcraft, and the particularly powerful witchcraft ascribed to Malawi and Mozambique.¹⁸ This was reinforced by and perhaps derived from the governments’ portrayal of farmworkers as ‘foreigners’. As one A1 land beneficiary put it, ‘We don’t know what is in the heads of those people in *comboni*. We don’t know what they are thinking because they come from other places’. Farmworkers were cast as being over sexualised and riddled with HIV, a discourse that interestingly echoed white farmers’ opinions of their workers as not taking responsibility for their futures (Rutherford 2001: 87). Yet in spite of these discourses and forces of differentiation in daily farm life, farmworkers and land beneficiaries developed close friendships and working relationships. They participated in each other’s funerals and played important roles in each other’s life events. In several instances I came across land beneficiaries who referred to farmworkers as their *sahwira* – a special friend who has to be non-kin and serves a very important role in particular ritual functions such as washing the corpse at the funeral (Bourdillon 1987: 80). What was striking then was that land beneficiaries also spoke of their bonds of relatedness with farmworkers, and these overrode the idea of farmworkers as morally ‘other’. Nevertheless, in moments of conflict, land beneficiaries reverted to distancing farmworkers as immoral.

¹⁸ In Zimbabwe, witchcraft from ‘outside’, and particularly from Malawi, is always considered to be stronger than witchcraft from within the country.

Case 1: The Idiom of Kin

Baba Basim was one of the more successful small-scale land beneficiaries in the Mazowe area. His tobacco was of a high grade and he made a good profit each year. In the busy harvest season Kenny and Dougie, worked day and night. After the evening meal, Kenny, being well trusted by Baba Basim and having much experience, was often sent to the barns to stoke the fires in order to cure the tobacco before it was graded. In less busy periods, for example during the winter from June to August, the ‘boys’ had more free time. Once their household chores were complete – washing dishes, gathering vegetables from the garden, collecting water and grazing the cattle – they could do as they liked. They often went to hang out in *comboni* where they listened to music, gossiped with friends, smoked weed (*mbanje*) and in Kenny’s case, caught up with his grandparents and siblings. Kenny in particular was something of a wide-boy, who often described his activities in *comboni* as doing deals (*madeals*), a loose descriptor used to describe a range of activities from selling *mbanje* to borrowing and lending items such as phones, sunglasses and headphones.

In addition to their ‘reward’ at the end of the tobacco season, the ‘boys’ were given bedding and ate with me and the Basims twice a day. Kenny and Dougie were not simply workers; they were part of the Basims’ household. Being part of the household necessitated certain behaviours within the homestead aimed at maintaining propriety and the ‘family’ hierarchy. It also meant fulfilling particular obligations and accessing rights (or privileges) that went beyond the demands of physical labour and the ‘reward’ the ‘boys’ received at the end of a season. Finally, it concerned how one behaved as a representative of the household outside the confines of the homestead. Indeed, people’s complaints about Kenny or Dougie’s behaviour, usually when a ‘deal’ went awry, were directed to Baba Basim as Kenny’s ‘father’. Such incidents would result in Baba Basim quietly reprimanding Kenny, while Amai Basim and Ambuya, her mother, would loudly chastise him for days after as he went about his daily chores, a form of indirect punishment aimed at shaming him for having shamed the household.

The Basims referred to Kenny and Dougie as ‘boys’ (*vakomana*), a term that maintained them as inferior and child-like despite the fact that both were young men in their early twenties. The ‘boys’ referred to Baba Basim as ‘father’ (*baba*) and Amai Basim as ‘mother’ (*amai*). In Zimbabwe, parental kin terms are generally used when addressing one’s elders as a sign of respect. However, in discussion after Kenny’s ‘dismissal’, Baba Basim distinguished between his relationship with Kenny and his relationship with Dougie. Baba Basim explained that Kenny was ‘like a child’ (*se mwana*). He had raised Kenny, provided his school fees, given him three chickens (notably Kenny kept these in his grandfather Sekuru Kenny’s fowl coop in the compound), and gone to considerable effort to obtain a national identification document for him. Kenny’s parents had passed away and, in Baba Basim’s words, the Basims had become his parents (*vabereki*). Harri Englund (2008), drawing on Max Gluckman’s work, suggests that in Malawi there is a material dimension to morality in which forms of material support could ‘make kinship out of virtually any transaction’ (Englund 2008: 43). According to Englund, personhood in Southern Africa is established by being connected within webs of obligation, and the fulfilment of these obligations establishes one as a moral person, which is existentially indispensable to the constitution of the subject (*ibid.*: 43-45). Baba Basim emphasised his sense of responsibility for Kenny as surpassing that felt by an employer towards their employee by speaking of the materials he had provided for him. Kenny was thus regarded as kin, while Dougie was regarded as a worker. Although Baba Basim added that if Dougie had stayed with the Basims for long enough and proved himself to be faithful, reliable and hardworking, he too would have been rewarded with the same kind of provision that Kenny had received. This difference in each of their relationships with the Basims had been apparent in the boys’ competitive and antagonistic relationship with each other. Kenny, senior and more experienced, often reprimanded Dougie for various acts of insubordination towards Baba and Amai Basim, as well as work related mistakes. In doing so, Kenny emphasised his obligations to the Basims over his obligations to Dougie as a ‘co-worker’ or ‘friend’. Dougie, in turn, resented the favouritism that the Basims extended to Kenny which, in addition to Kenny’s larger ‘rewards’, he judged by the frequency of reprimands he

received from Amai Basim, and the larger portions of food Kenny received at mealtimes.

The link between patriarchy, modes of production and structures of social reproduction amongst agricultural communities where labour is invested in the land has been well established within the African context (Meillassoux 1972; Berry 1985; Reynolds 1991). Most famously, Claude Meillassoux (1972) has argued that in places where labour is invested in the land and people have to rely on one another to render the land productive, on past generations for seed and knowledge, and on future generations to enjoy the products of their labour, social hierarchies are created (p.100). Younger generations rely upon older generations to survive, while older generations are only indebted to their ancestors (1972: 99). As a result of a reliance on domesticated labour, concern for reproduction of the productive unit is paramount. However, 'kinship [...] cannot rely on 'blood alone' because communities cannot guarantee the balance between sexes and ages, producers and non-producers at any single point in time (1972: 101). As such, Meillassoux concludes that kinship becomes an ideology aimed at maintaining group cohesiveness and allowing for strangers to be incorporated into the domestic unit as kin (often through marriage) in exchange for their fulfilment of the duties of a dependent. Here, 'fatherhood comes to be confused with feeding and giving dowries' (ibid.).

A similar model to that described by Meillassoux does exist within the kinship system of chiShona speakers. Son-in-laws unable to pay bridewealth to their fathers-in-law, for example, may instead labour in their father-in-law's fields for a period of time. However, neither Kenny nor Dougie had married into the Basim family and the 'boys' relationship with the Basims took place in a commercial farming context in which farmworkers had, until 'fast track', been paid a regular wage and provided for in various ways (housing, schooling, food rations) by their white employers. Yet the arrangement between the Basims and the 'boys' was not straightforwardly the same as the labour arrangements that prevailed between farmworkers and white farmers before fast track (Rutherford 2001). Neither did it fit neatly into any of the other domesticated, wage labour or communal shared work party models prevalent in rural Zimbabwe

(Bessant 1987; Bessant & Muringai 1993; Bourdillon 1987; Reynolds 1991; Worby 1995). How then are we to understand Kenny's status in the Basim household?

Although Baba Basim described Kenny as 'like a child', he was not considered to fully be their child. Baba and Amai Basim had adult children of their own who lived in urban centres elsewhere and it was highly unlikely that Kenny would receive any part of the Basims' inheritance. In trying to understand Kenny's ambiguous status, I have found William Sewell Junior's (1980) work on the incorporation of workers into family households in artisanal corporations in France during the 1800s useful. Sewell Jnr. describes how apprentices lived in the house of the master, ate with him and obeyed him as 'father of the house' (p.30). In this dynamic of paternal authority and filial subordination, apprentices also expected aid in times of trouble, although such assistance depended on the goodwill of their 'master' (ibid.: 30-31). Becoming an apprentice, 'was not simply to acquire the skills necessary to practice an adult occupation. It was to enter a wide-ranging and deep reaching moral community' (ibid.: 35). Baba Basim did not conceive of himself as Kenny and Dougie's 'master' or as having incorporated them into a moral community through teaching them the skills required to become farmers, for example. However, Kenny, and to Dougie to a lesser extent, were positioned within the Basims' household as somewhere between workers and kin.

Geert De Neve (2005) usefully provides the term 'kin-cum-labour' relations to describe the ambiguous status of employer/employee relations in the Indian textile dying industry (p.227). In De Neve's work, factory owners used kin terms in relation to their employees in order to invoke kinship morality. The moral content of kin morality emphasised was 'loyalty, reliability and above all trust' (p.222). Drawing on Maurice Bloch's (1971) work on the distinction between moral and tactical use of kinship terms (Bloch 1971: 80 as cited in De Neve 2005: 221), De Neve suggests that kin terms were used to 'to suggest and even to create relationships of trust' and instill 'a sense of obligation and duty' in the workers to try and counteract their tendency to move from one factory to another (2005: 224). Some workers were biological kin, others were not. However all were referred to as 'kin'. The workers, for their part, felt ambivalent about these kin-aspect of these relations, aware both of the restrictions of

kin obligations that might prevent their mobility, and the advantages, in terms of the obligations the patron has to the workers.

Applying De Neve (2005) and Meillassoux's (1982) approaches to Baba Basim's description of Kenny as kin would imply that the kinship relation evoked by Baba Basim was simply a kind of ideology employed with the aim of recruiting Kenny's labour without the cost of formal wages. However, I suggest that Baba Basim did not refer to Kenny as being 'like a child' only tactically. Instead this was a genuine expression of relatedness between himself and Kenny which derived from years of living together, building a trusted relationship and having invested in him like his own child over many years. However, De Neve's 'kin-cum-labourer' label is useful for describing the ambiguous nature of the moral bond between Kenny and the Basims.

The fact that both Kenny and the Basims cast their relationship in kin terms suggests that both conceived of their relationship in terms of long-term reciprocal relations of exchange. If the profits were bad, it was expected that Kenny would not demand to be paid in the same way that a 'pieceworker' might, for example. However, incorporating Kenny into the household was also understood by Baba Basim as enabling Kenny, and potentially Dougie, to become moral persons and adults. From Baba Basim's perspective, his material investment and efforts on Kenny's behalf set Kenny up to one day be able to fulfil his material obligations to others, for example to provide for his grandparents. In addition to feeding, clothing and housing Kenny, the ID document obtained by Baba Basim for him, and the social status Baba Basim felt that Kenny gained from having a 'father' (given that his own father had passed away), were understood as assisting Kenny to move beyond his personal family misfortunes by giving him future prospects despite his farmworker background, and enabling him to become an adult.

The idea that being incorporated into a land beneficiary household was the only way young farmworker men might be able to attain full personhood was shared by a number of young farmworker men I met on Dam Lake. After Kenny and Dougie, two more young men from the Dam Lake compound were incorporated into the Basim household: Petros and Wilson. When I asked them why they had agreed to live and work for the Basims given that they would not be paid, Petros told me that his parents

had worked for Williams (the white farmer of Dam Lake) until his mother passed away and his father re-married. He had finished primary school and then moved on to a farm in another district milking cattle. Desperate for money, he had returned to Dam Lake and taken up gold-panning for which he was arrested and put in remand prison for two years. Determined never to return to prison, Petros explained that being incorporated into the Basims' household was his only chance of a future beyond the Dam Lake compound. He hoped that Baba Basim might one day assist him by providing a cow and/or money towards bridewealth payment (*lobola*), allowing him to marry 'properly'. Significantly, Petros, himself from a farmworker family, was determined not to marry any of the women from the compound. 'Those women of *comboni* are all full of HIV, I wouldn't marry any of them,' he declared, echoing the narrative of farmworkers' sexual licentiousness widely held by land beneficiaries, and white farmers before them. Through Baba Basim's connections and recommendations, Petros dreamed of one day gaining a small piece of land. Wilson expressed a similar set of desires.

So, being incorporated into a land beneficiary household was viewed as one way of allowing young farmworker men to move beyond a future in the compound. However, it also involved submitting to the paternal authority of the head of the household. Kenny had to show respect (*kuremekedza*) to Baba and Amai Basim through a series of actions that maintained him in the position of 'child' within the household. I suggest that after ten years of fulfilling his obligations as a child, Kenny's coming of age as a young adult man began to disrupt the household hierarchy and it was for this reason that he was dismissed.

Van Onselen (1992) has examined how paternalistic regimes contain within them an essential contradiction. Van Onselen's work takes place in the context of Highveld farms in South Africa where white farmers relied on black tenant farmers to provide male labour drawn from their own households to work on the farms at appropriate moments in the agricultural cycle. This meant that 'the moment when the patriarch [of the tenant family] had the greatest structural potential to produce ([...] when he had the most mature physical labour at his disposal), was also the moment when he was most likely to be subjected to a challenge from below' (1992: 135). In fact, the tenant's

greatest potential to produce lay at the point when there were most adolescents in the tenant's household – 'when he had command over the most bodies with the near-physical potential of adults but who lacked the full social and psychological power to question his authority as a patriarch' (ibid.). Submitting to the patriarchal authority of Baba Basim within the household was crucial to the smooth functioning of the relationship between the Basims, Kenny and Dougie. When Kenny began to come of age and challenge his position as 'child' within the household, the delicate balance between himself as kin-cum-labourer, and Baba Basim as father-cum-employer was disrupted and Kenny could no longer remain living with the Basims because his presence threatened their authority. Looking back, I realized that a tension had been growing between the 'boys' and the Basims, and between Kenny and Baba Basim in particular, for some time before the 'dismissal'. This had played out most obviously during the shared evening meal.

Eating food together, prepared by Amai Basim, created bonds of relatedness (Carsten, 1995: 225) between the Basims, the 'boys' and me. It created us as being of the same household. In Zimbabwe, sharing of food in particular, but also material goods in general, within a household, has strong moral overtones and is fundamental to ideas of moral personhood (Mhondoro 1970: 78). The household itself was spatially divided into different gendered domains of authority. The kitchen was the exclusive provenance of Amai Basim (see Weinrich 1982: 53). As mother of the household, Amai Basim was responsible for organising and preparing food (Gelfand 1981: 20). Eating outside of the household would have been viewed as a rejection of relationship between all of us living in the same house (see also Carsten 2004: 40). Kenny, Dougie and I were all expressly forbidden from eating elsewhere and a narrative of pride accompanied this, 'If you are at someone else's house at meal time then you are begging', explained Amai Basim. Fears of witch-craft and poisoning underlay this household 'rule'.

In chiShona speaking households, one's spatial positioning relative to others during mealtimes, as well as the quantity and quality of food received, reflects one's position in the family. In addition to establishing bonds of relatedness between us, food was used as a means of control and the spatiality of eating together reflected and

reproduced hierarchies within the house that were internalized in bodily practice (Bourdieu 1990: 69). Amai Basim cooked and served the food. The 'boys' took it to respective members of the household who sat in different parts of the yard. Ambuya was served first because she ate separately from the rest of us. Kenny always received the food (with both hands, a sign of respect) and laid it before Ambuya to eat privately in her own hut, in observance of the taboo that prohibited close physical proximity between her and her son-in-law, Baba Basim. Baba Basim was served next. He sat on a bench inside the main hut, the plates of food laid out at his feet by Kenny. I followed, as the guest, then Amai Basim, and finally the 'boys'. Amai Basim and I sat together on a mat on the floor opposite Baba Basim. The 'boys' were expected to sit and eat together outside, as befitted their position as 'workers'. However, on occasion they were permitted to sit on the other end of the same long bench on which Baba Basim sat. In these instances, Amai Basim kept a watchful eye on them, reprimanding them for eating too quickly, too loudly or for talking too much.

The provision of food established Amai Basim as mother of the household and capable of meeting the obligations of food provision this entailed (see also Carsten 1997; Englund 2008). Yet the 'boys' often privately complained to me of being hungry and took maize from the Basims' fields during the day, for which they were reprimanded. The concern, Baba Basim explained, was that they did not seek permission first. Their actions simultaneously undermined his authority as 'owner of the maize' and Amai Basim's authority as provider of food. Such incidents always ended in Amai Basim scolding the 'boys' for days after: 'You don't just take food'. Kenny would deny such accusations, only to be further reprimanded for talking back. There were, in addition, other micro-practices that Kenny failed to perform which substantiated the Basims' sense that he no longer respected them: shouting in reply to Baba Basim instead of walking over to him, failing to remove his cap inside the hut, answering back to Ambuya on numerous occasions. By flouting these practices of respect, Kenny was understood to be challenging Baba and Amai Basim's authority and his position within the family hierarchy. These small everyday tensions over status and 'respect' between Kenny and the Basims had been building for a long time before his dismissal. Kenny was not dismissed for being a bad 'labourer' but for being a bad 'son-cum-labourer' who challenged his 'father-cum-employer' authority within the household. Kenny's

departure from the household then, can be read as a coming-of-age story in which he, as a young adult man, refused to continue to submit to the Basims' parental authority.

Over the course of days after I had come back to the Basims' house to discover that Kenny and Dougie had been 'fired', various explanations and justifications for Kenny's dismissal were given to me. In addition to his theft of fertilizer was the allegation that Kenny had used *mushonga* (medicine in this case associated with witchcraft) against the Basims. In these stories, Kenny was linked back to his Malawian farmworker origins. He was transformed from a loyal 'son' to an untrustworthy adult male farmworker, with all the associations of witchcraft that came with this.

The maintenance of Kenny as kin and non-kin, son and farmworker, was further reflected in the strange dynamic that developed between Baba Basim and Kenny in the months after Kenny's dismissal. Kenny left the Basim household and returned to live with his grandfather in the compound where he began doing casual piecework (*maricho*) jobs for different land beneficiaries in the area. The conflict between the Basims and Kenny was never fully resolved. It was not possible fully resolve it because to do so would have required open discussion which carried considerable risk of exposure for both sides. For Baba Basim, the risk concerned Kenny accusing them of exploiting him and exposing his knowledge of the intimacies of their household. Kenny also held a position within the ZANU PF youth and Baba Basim feared that he might instigate an attack on the Basims during the next election as a form of retribution. For Kenny, the risk was that Baba Basim might publicly accuse him of theft, which would cause considerable public humiliation. Kenny could also potentially be chased away from the farm. Taking me aside one afternoon as I walked back to *maline* from *comboni*, Kenny asked: 'What did they tell you [about me leaving]?' I relayed the stolen fertiliser story. Feeling self-conscious and not having understood the dynamic of the relationship at this stage, I opined that the young men were not paid enough in any case. Kenny smiled broadly, denied having stolen anything and said: 'Yes, you understand'. From her vantage point in the yard, Amai Basim observed our chat. Later she asked if Kenny had expressed any regret, which

he had not. Amai Basim shook her head, sucked her teeth, and declared: ‘That Kenny has no *unhu*’.

Unhu can be roughly translated as ‘moral personhood’ and derives from the noun *munhu* meaning person. In Zimbabwe, *unhu* is treated almost as an object, an essential moral fibre that one either possesses or does not. ‘It is when someone has no respect, they don’t greet elders properly, they shout, they steal, they don’t behave themselves well,’ Baba Basim explained to me. Having *unhu* was to show respect in one’s interactions with other people by observing one’s own position in relation to others within the social hierarchy. In this conception of morality, being moral is therefore judged according to one’s actions in relation to others. Michael Gelfand (1981) has written that ‘the ideal is the “*munhu chaiye*” or good man, a person who is kind, humble and ready to share with the rest of his kin, one who conforms to the social code of behaviour, respects others and is not greedy’ (p.7). *Unhu* in chiShona (*ubuntu* in IsiNdebele/IsiZulu) has been defined by Zimbabwean scholars as the basis of Zimbabwean sense of communitas: I exist because you do and in recognising your humanity I establish humane relations with you (Ramosé 1999: 52; Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Shizha 2013). To state that Kenny lacked *unhu* was to proclaim that he was profoundly anti-social, and this was put down by Baba and Amai Basim to his farmworker background.

In order for Baba Basim to allow Kenny back, Kenny had to ask for forgiveness. The politics of place and space involved in a formal apology were significant. Kenny was expected to come to Baba Basim’s household and kneel before him there. Conversely, Kenny wanted Baba Basim to apologise to him for sullyng his name with accusations of theft. Kenny occasionally passed through the Basims’ yard on his way somewhere else. He would walk up to me, Amai Basim and Ambuya to greet us. If Baba Basim was present Kenny would greet him from afar and Baba Basim would mildly acknowledge the greeting, but Kenny never approached Baba Basim directly. The Basims continued to ask me if Kenny showed any signs of regret over the incident. When I answered that he did not, Baba Basim said, ‘He has *unhu* that is rotten/bad. He won’t come and apologise’. However, Baba Basim was unhappy about the situation: he had not wanted to dismiss Kenny but had simply wanted to put him in his place and

re-establish the hierarchy of the household. By refusing to ask for forgiveness, Kenny cut the kin bond between him and Baba Basim that would have seen him re-incorporated into the Basim household as a 'child'. He established himself as independent of the Basims and the Basims, in response, effectively 'un-kinning' him by linking him back to his farmworker origins. Knowing the intimacies of the Basims' household well, but no longer being part of it, Kenny was now perceived as something of a threat.

In this first case I have examined the incorporation of young farmworker men into an A1 farming household on Dam Lake Farm. For the Basims, incorporating these 'boys' into their household as a form of domesticated labour provided them with a reliable and stable workforce. As part of the household, the 'boys' were maintained ambiguously as both kin and non-kin, or workers. For the young men, being incorporated in the household entailed submitting to the paternal authority of Baba Basim and relinquishing a high degree of independence. However, it also provided them with work, security and the potential for a future beyond the Dam Lake compound. Submitting to the position of 'child', it was hoped, would ultimately enable these young men to become adults. When the young men refused to remain in the position of 'child', they were dismissed. Languages of morality were central to the process of 'dismissal'. Kenny's decision not to recognize the authority of the Basims, and refusal to apologise to Baba Basim in a manner that would re-instate Baba Basim's paternal authority over him, were put down to his lack of *unhu*, attributed to his farmworker origins. Rather than ending in open antagonistic conflict, which might have led to potential repercussions for the Basims during elections ('the time of Politics'), the case was left to slowly peter out and after a few awkward weeks an appearance of civility between the Basims and Kenny re-emerged, even as this covered over the tension of their dispute.

Case Two: Piecework (*maricho*)

I first met Amai Joyce and Amai Luckwell one afternoon while interviewing at an A2 farmer's home. A sharp knock on the door interrupted us. Two women waited outside, resting in the shade of the eaves. They had been weeding the crop of maize since morning and had come to inform the land beneficiary employing them that they had completed the work. Both women were *maricho*, pieceworkers paid on a day-to-day basis according to the quantity of work accomplished. *Maricho* is a shortened form of *marikicho* which is defined as work for which money is paid: *mari* meaning 'money' and *icho* a demonstrative for things that are far away, for example 'that thing' [over there] (Worby 1995: 20). Unlike domesticated labour or communal work parties, *maricho* labour arrangements involve short-term contractual arrangements.

This form of labour was most prevalent between farmworkers and A2 land beneficiaries although farmworkers also worked as *maricho* for A1 land beneficiaries at particularly busy points in the growing season, depending on the crop. Later, when I interviewed Amai and Baba Luckwell at their home in the Utopia Farm compound, I asked what the A2 land beneficiary paid. Amai Luckwell laughed:

He has no money. He pays you in mangoes, a bucket for one line [of maize]. Sometimes he might pay you in cooking oil or soap and that is ok because those are the things we want from the store in any case.

Locking up her house, Amai Luckwell explained that Amai Nzombe, the A2 land beneficiary who lived in one of the Utopia farmhouses, provided the compound with electricity at a rate of USD3 per household per month. 'But if you refuse to work for her then she threatens to cut your power supply'. As we left the house, we were met by Amai Joyce who shouted to two young men standing at the top of the compound: 'Hey, you have been avoiding me. What day of the month is it?' The men shouted back and said their *murungu* (term used to refer to a white person but used in this instance jokingly used to refer to Amai Nzombe) was away. 'I want my money,' Amai Joyce retorted, sucking her teeth loudly before we turned to leave the compound. The *murungu* (Amai Nzombe) owed her two months pay. At the edge of the compound we took a path that led between two small squares of field, about thirty by thirty meters,

each fenced with thorny bushes. Small wilted maize plants struggled up from the grey earth, a far cry from the healthy green crops on the Basims' plot. A man weeding in the field stood up to greet us. 'Look at my small maize. If I had fertiliser...' he trailed off. The women explained that the small pieces of land the farmworkers of Utopia had been given by their former white employer to harvest their own crops, had been claimed along with the rest of the farm land during 'fast track'. 'We had to make new fields from the bush,' Amai Joyce explained, 'But it is not enough.'

News of who paid what for which type of work was circulated around the Dam Lake and Utopia farm compounds like hot gossip. Land beneficiaries in the area gained reputations for rates of pay, type of work and reliability in making payments. Farmworkers were, to some extent, able to play land beneficiaries against each other or simply refuse to work for those with bad reputations. Some land beneficiaries offered cash in hand while others offered food or buckets of maize and attracted workers depending on the amount offered. Farmworkers relied on each other to alert them to piecework jobs that came up on different farms in the area. In January 2013, for example, the Dam Lake compound was noticeably empty until around 3pm every day because most were planting a first winter crop of potatoes for Nhafu, the A2 land beneficiary who took over half of Dam Lake. Nhafu sent a truck to pick up workers at sunrise. They planted until 2.30pm when they were paid and walked back home. Women and men of all ages eagerly offered themselves because Nhafu paid a daily rate of USD3 per day which was considered exceptionally high given that the going rate was USD1.50 per day.

Farmworkers' options for earning a living differed in degrees of precarity and risk. Although in the years after the first re-settlements some farmworkers retained positions working for new A2 land beneficiaries who took over farmhouses, eventually many resigned citing poor working conditions and lack of pay. Some farmworkers provided seasonal labour or worked as full time labourers, paid at the end of a month or season. In this context, daily piecework, often considered to be the epitome of insecure wage-labour arrangements, was understood as the most secure arrangement in terms of guaranteeing pay. Others were able to obtain jobs in town, or began

artisanal gold-mining but the former were hard to come by, and the latter entailed considerable risk.

Longer term month-long contracts were offered and considered preferable in terms of guaranteed work, but more often than not workers were not paid or were paid months later. For this reason, Amai Luckwell and Amai Joyce along with many others refused long-term contracts on A2 farms. The refrain ‘A2s don’t pay’ was common. A2 land beneficiaries in the area gained reputations based on reliability of pay. Thus, while the balance of power appeared skewed in favour of land owners, farmworkers could also refuse to work for particular land beneficiaries. At the same time, refusing to work for an A2 land beneficiary whose holding abutted your compound was risky. With farm compounds situated between multiple land beneficiaries’ holdings the question of who owned the houses in the compound and who had access to the potential labour pool living in the compound was fraught. Refusal to work for a particular farmer could result in threats being made to electricity and fresh water supplies or even the threat of eviction.

Competition over farmworkers’ labour power arose between A1 and A2 land beneficiaries. During the potato planting phase, for example, Amai Basim quizzed the ‘boys’ about the rates of pay Nhafu was offering and was annoyed to find that it was USD3 per day while the going rate being offered by A1 land beneficiaries at the time was USD1 per day. She was particularly piqued to discover that Kenny was working for Nhafu as the Basims had hoped that, in the absence of paid work, Kenny would return to their household begging forgiveness.

Amai Joyce described the present work conditions of farmworkers under beneficiaries as ‘bad’:

It hurts your back. You are so tired. Some they pay well, USD3 a day, so some they pay but the problem is there is no work. Things have changed because of money.

Working as *maricho* for land beneficiaries was contrasted to narratives of care (*kuchengetwa*: to be looked after) and freedom (*kusununguka*: to be free) during the time of white farmers. According to Amai Joyce:

The whites looked after us better than the vets [war veterans]. They were able to hold their workers well. They gave us food. If you had a problem, the whites would help you.

Baba Joyce, shaking his head, added:

Now if someone is sick, whether you have money or not is your own problem. With white farmers, in the past if someone was sick they would take care of them until they were right. Now with the little we are paid we are expected to pay school fees, hospital, food... These farmers (land beneficiaries) don't care. I can say that they are careless. They just say, "this money is the money the government has said we should pay so I don't have anything to help you with". They want you to work but they don't care. Also the story of politics...if you complain too much about salaries then maybe they will accuse you of being in the opposition party and they might chase you from the farm.

Steven Rubert (1998) explains the harsh working conditions under white farmers in the first half of the 20th century in terms of white employers not valuing the lives of African workers (pp.104-122). Wages, rations and medical care were provided as incentives for workers although the prevailing logic at the time was to provide food and medical care rather than higher wages. As in mines, farmers defensive argument for not raising wages was the 'board-and-lodging' 'myth', the argument being that wages were not an issue because food was provided (ibid.: 104). Rutherford (2001) records that farm store credit was a crucial aspect of the paternalistic 'domestic government' on white-owned commercial farms in Zimbabwe in the 1990s (pp.104-112). 'Domestic government' describes the mode of authority whereby the setting of the entire farm was treated by white farmers and farmworkers as belonging under the authority of the white farmer, more or less independent from central government (2001: 104). Here, the idiom of the farm as 'family' was prevalent, and wages, credit and overtime, were interpreted by farm owners and their workers as personal dispensations rather than the contractual rights of workers. As Andries Du Toit (1993) has written of farm labour on South African wine and fruit farms, 'to be coloured, in terms of paternalist discourse, is to be child-like, unable to take responsibility for yourself, dependent on white masters for protection' (pp.322). In both Du Toit and Rutherford's accounts, 'the farm' acted as a collective identity, like a 'family' to which one 'belonged'. Rather than falsely contrasting white-owned commercial farms as

‘modern’ capitalist enterprises, compared to the domesticated labour arrangements in communal lands, Rutherford suggests that ‘both commercial farm operators and peasant farmers rely heavily on a ‘domestic’ authority to secure their labour supply’ (2001: 112).

While the working conditions under white farmers were hardly glory days of rest and plenty, in 2012 farmworkers who had made up the permanent work force on white-owned farms in Mazowe nonetheless nostalgically yearned for what they described as the ‘care’ and ‘freedom’ they experienced under white farmers. Here the past, their lives under white farmers, was cast as a time of plenty and a time of security, the present a time to be endured, and the future uncertain. As an old man living in the Dam Lake compound summed up:

What can we think, we have no fields. You are used to a good life and then to get used to another life. Ah, if only we were given one hectare!

Narratives of ‘care’ and ‘freedom’ promoted by farmworkers constituted the basis of an attempt to hold land beneficiaries to account in relation to a particular moral economy based on the paternalistic regime of white farmers. However, this was not shared by land beneficiaries. As such, the ‘moral economy’ between these two groups was emergent and contested. What being a good ‘worker’ or a good ‘patron’ consisted of in this context at this point in time was disputed and what constituted being ‘moral’ depended on who defined it.

Farmworkers’ complaints about working for land beneficiaries were rarely directed towards land beneficiaries. This constituted a form of ‘everyday resistance’ since they could not risk open conflict (Scott 1986). However, occasionally farmworkers also used their party positions tactically, to put pressure on land beneficiaries for better working conditions. Baba Josephine from Utopia compound was employed as a full-time manager for the ‘Colonel’, who lived in the second farmhouse on Utopia. Along with others on the ‘Colonel’s’ farm committee, which included some land beneficiaries, the workers went on strike for better wages. Initially paid USD30 per month the workers demanded a raise to USD120. The ‘Colonel’ offered USD35.

However, after a series of meetings the ‘Colonel’ capitulated and raised the salary to USD60. Baba Josephine explained:

On the committee we were all politicians and we were well educated so we knew our rights. We made sure we had the strike close to the elections, you have to know the time to complain so actually he feared us.

Yet, while farmworkers were able, to some extent, to manipulate rates of pay by refusing to work for land beneficiaries, the general lack of work meant the majority accepted whatever jobs or rates of pay were going. Land beneficiaries, on the other hand, complained that farmworkers overcharged and were too demanding. All land beneficiaries, in particular, discussed bringing in relatives from rural areas whom they would not have to pay at all, to work under similar conditions to Kenny and Dougie as part of the domesticated labour of the household.

While land beneficiaries claimed that farmworkers had been ‘freed’ from their white employers, which meant they could work for whoever they wanted whenever they wanted, farmworkers yearned for the ‘care’ (*kuchengetwa*) and ‘freedom’ (*kusununguka*) they experienced under the paternalistic regime of white farmers. What was being argued over was what ‘freedom’ meant. Farmworkers privately judged land beneficiaries against a moral economy they shared with their white employers. For the farmworkers being a ‘good farmer’ entailed caring for one’s workers through material provision as well as making the land productive.

Case Three: Farmworkers Don’t Work Well with Others

Chief Chigariro was outraged, ‘Farmworkers cannot own farms’. The court (*dare*) audience seated on wooden benches in front of him, waiting for their own cases to be heard, clapped and muttered in agreement. The Chief rose, bristling, and brandished his walking stick at three men standing towards the back of the court. ‘Farmworkers do not come from here. They have no offer letters and without an offer letter you do not own land’. More clapping. The Chief ended his speech, which was directed at the three men, thus:

If you are not prepared to work you must leave this place. If you have not left within seven days I will send twenty youth from each headman (*sabhuku*) to chase you away. You must pack your things and go.

The headmen present (*vanasabhuku*) murmured in agreement, eyes shifting between the standing men and the chief. The case was over. The secretary of court called forth the next case and the court proceeded. Humiliated and angry, the men sat down. [Fieldnotes 09.11.12]

The case that led to the Chief's angry outburst concerned one of Chief Chigariro's headmen, Headman Mota, a group of three men – farmworkers who lived in a compound on the same farm as Mota – and an A2 land beneficiary on Sunset Farm called Nyashanu. In 2002, Sunset Farm was divided into one A2 and twenty A1 small holdings. The three men, Jona, Isaac and Mupoto, lived in the Sunset farmworkers' compound. Mota was an A1 land beneficiary on Sunset who had been appointed headman by Chief Chigariro in 2006. The farmworkers had either not applied, or had been unsuccessful in their applications, for land. However, under the former white farmer of Sunset, the men had been allocated small fields for their own personal use and these fields had not officially been recorded by the land administration. As a result, the farmworkers fields had not been allocated for resettlement and Jona and the other men continued to cultivate them for their personal use, even after the rest of the farm had been divided up.

Initially Jona and other farmworkers had agreed to work for the A1 land beneficiaries in addition to working on their own fields. However, after a few years of no or severely delayed pay, Jona and a small group of men from the compound decided they were better off concentrating on their own fields instead of working for the land beneficiaries. In 2012, Nyashanu, an A2 land beneficiary, discovered that the fields that ran alongside his own 250 hectare plot had not been allocated and were being cultivated by the farmworkers. Wanting to expand his hectarage, he reported the matter to the District Administrator (DA). The DA issued a notice via Headman Mota to Jona and the other men forbidding them to cultivate the fields and declaring that these would be allocated to Nyashanu, the A2 land beneficiary. In a fit of rage, the men insulted Mota, threatened to beat him up, proclaimed that they did not recognise him and refused to leave the fields. Specifically they called the Chief *nduruza*, which was

variously translated as ‘fool’, ‘someone who knows nothing’ or ‘a member of the MDC’. Fearing for his safety and angered by their insults, Mota issued the men with a summons to Chief Chigariro’s court for having publicly insulted him and the Chief.

The case was not presented to the Chief as a land dispute for two reasons. Firstly, the Chief did not have jurisdiction to rule over land disputes. The eviction of the farmworkers from the land was being dealt with by the DA. Secondly, Mota was not concerned about the men refusing to leave the fields. Rather, he wanted to re-establish his authority over them by means of a formal public apology, and re-gain his lost labour force. When the Chief asked Jona why he had insulted Mota, Jona claimed Mota had given the men permission to continue using the fields in lieu of wages he owed them. The Chief judged that the lack of pay did not justify the public insult and the question of the men’s wages was dismissed as a separate case. Chief Chigariro then ordered the men to cease cultivating the fields immediately, and issued them a considerable fine of USD20. Until this point, the court proceedings had been fairly calm. However, when Chigariro issued the fine, one of Jona’s companions rose to his feet and protested: ‘But he [Mota] was trying to take our land!’ It was the farmworkers’ claim over land that had so outraged Chief Chigariro and led him to threaten them with eviction.

At stake here was the recognition of authority and the farmworkers’ refusal to submit to the new ‘mode of belonging’ on farms as defined by the state. By insulting the Chief and refusing to leave the fields, the farmworkers challenged the Chief and the state as ‘new’ authorities on farms. Furthermore, they claimed land with reference to the authority of white farmers rather than the ZANU PF state. In claiming that ‘farmworkers do not come from here’, Chief Chigariro reinforced the state’s portrayal of farmworkers as ‘foreigners’ while simultaneously naturalising his own and land beneficiaries’ claims to ‘belong’ to the place and therefore to have a prior and more legitimate claim over land than white farmers or farmworkers, even though the majority of land beneficiaries were not autochthons. At the same time, by stating that one needed an ‘offer letter’ to own land in Mazowe, the Chief also reinforced the state as the only legitimate authority to grant land rights. In the context of the court, ‘offer letters’ were used to distinguish legitimate from illegitimate land claims, to distinguish

those who belonged from those who did not. Narratives of farmworkers' lack of morality and 'otherness' were reinforced through the Chief's court. In instances where court etiquette was breached, Chief Chigariro regularly asked the offender if they were a farmworker. If they were, he would often state, 'I am not your foreman. I am a Chief. We need to teach you how to do things here.' This in turn, reinforced the idea of farmworkers and land beneficiaries as two separate communities.

Sitting in his yard on Sunset Farm after the court confrontation, Mota described how he first came to know Jona and the other farmworkers involved in the case:

Mota: 2002 is the year we came here and we [the farmworkers and the land beneficiaries] received each other very well and we agreed (*takawirirana*), we will give you a piece of land to cultivate but we don't have money to pay you. However if you help us in our fields then we will pay you for that. Then three men, Jona, Isaac and Mupoto, declared that they were used to working for a white man and they couldn't work for black people. They left for Dande. After a year, you know someone who is rotten (*unhu wake wakaora*) is always bad, they were chased from Dande and they returned here.

Leila: Did you welcome them back?

Mota: Yes, we accepted them, it is the mercy of being a parent. They came saying, 'please forgive us elders'. Then we accepted these children and said our rule remains that we work for each other and you can use the fields just as we used to do.

Mota switched between framing his relationship with Jona and the others in terms of kinship, and then denigrating their lack of *unhu*, not because they were farmworkers but because they were bad people who were unable to work well with others (*kuwirirana*). He regretted that the case had come to an eviction threat because he had simply wanted the men to apologise and continue working for him. The case, as far as he was concerned, had got out of hand. 'We worked well together for eleven years' he told me, shaking his head. In this instance *unhu* was explained in the following terms:

When it comes to the chief we all stand up, we sit when he tells us to. Here we will have shown respect to him, we have exercised *unhu*.

As with Kenny (in Case One), *unhu* was defined in terms of respect (*kuremekedza*) for social hierarchies. ‘People without *unhu* are unable to work well with others,’ Mota explained. Yet, when I asked Mota why he hadn’t reported the case to the police he replied:

You are not getting it. Your custom says when your child has been mischievous you take them to the police, to be punished. In our custom, we are very hesitant to take our children to the police because we fear they will be harshly punished. With us we prefer that they apologise and give us a chicken to show they are sorry.

By positioning farmworkers as ‘children’, Mota placed them structurally below himself and other land beneficiaries. This naturalised both the hierarchy between them and the fact that Mota did not pay them. By framing the relationship in these terms, Mota also evoked a set of obligations and long-term, trusting bonds of reciprocity between himself and the farmworkers, such that the farmworkers’ refusal to work without pay was cast as rejection of ‘family’ and an inability to ‘work well with others’. As when the Basims ‘dismissed’ Kenny, the mode of apology that Mota sought was framed in terms of kinship. Mota implied that the dispute could have been settled at ‘home’ between ‘kin’ without it having become a public matter if the farmworkers had only fulfilled their obligations to their ‘father’ and apologised. Instead they had forced him to take the issue before the Chief’s court and were therefore responsible for the outcome. These men’s inability to ‘get along’ with people was put down to their lack of *unhu* but this was attributed to them as individuals, not because they were farmworkers. Indeed, Mota saw himself as closer to the farmworkers than most A1 land beneficiaries because he himself had once worked on a farm. His regret about the way in which the land dispute had ended was both pragmatic and emotional. On the one hand he was concerned about the farmworkers’ provision of labour. On the other, he had worked closely with these particular men for eleven years and they did in some way form a community of neighbours despite the marked power differential between them. Mota was genuinely sympathetic to the fact that Jonan and his companions had been threatened with eviction and appealed to me to persuade the men to take a goat to the Chief as an apology in order to avoid being evicted.

Jona and the other men suspected that Mota had informed Nyashanu – the A2 land beneficiary – of the existence of their fields in as a means of forcing them to work again for him and other land beneficiaries once more. Mota, however, claimed he had nothing to do with the DA's decision to evict the men. In a separate interview in the farmworkers' compound, Jona spoke of the relationship farmworkers had with Mota in the following terms:

We help them with their tobacco, we transplant, we harvest, we grade, we cure the tobacco. After all of this is done he takes the tobacco to the market. And then he pays us very little. What we are paid does not match our contribution. Then we are called bad and lazy people. We work for the farmers (land beneficiaries) and yet they don't want to pay us, how are we supposed to live?

Jona rejected Mota's framing of their relationship in terms of kinship. Instead, he wanted to be paid and was determined that the land granted to the farmworkers by the white farmer of Sunset legitimately belonged to them. In so doing, he refused to participate in the moral economy evoked by Mota, in which himself and the other farmworkers were 'immoral' for having refused to continue working for 'free' and for having refused to recognise the authority of the Chief. Farmworkers rarely bothered taking land disputes to the *dare* because of an unfortunately accurate and widespread sense that it was pointless to do so. As one of the men told me after the case:

The Chief is also a new farmer. Police are new farmers (land beneficiaries) also. There is nowhere to complain. If you go to the police, they will support the farmer. If you have a case with your employer, your employer will win. The same applies to the chiefs. You can say that the new farmers are ruling this country.

In almost all the cases between farmworkers and land beneficiaries that I observed in the Chief Chigariro's court (*dare*), regardless of the issue at hand the chief's sympathies lay with the land beneficiary/s rather than farmworkers if the case involved people from both groups. The farmworkers' claim to land brought all the tensions of belonging in Mazowe to the fore. While the Chief and land beneficiaries strove to naturalise their claims over land, the very presence of farmworkers who had lived in the area much longer than most land beneficiaries or the Chief, implicitly revealed the socially and politically constructed nature of land beneficiaries' claims. Similarly, by

challenging the chief's authority, the farmworkers revealed them as less stable than Chief Chigariro would have liked.

Farmworkers continued to live on farms on the sufferance of local authorities, in this case a headman, but on a national level there was no sympathy directed towards them. The Chief reinforced state exclusions of farmworkers through his court. Recognising their claim would have challenged the fundamental premise on which he framed his own claims to land and authority as an autochthon and as an indigenous Zimbabwean loyal to ZANU PF. If the Chief accepted the farmworkers land claims it would unpack the basis of his own and the claims of other land beneficiaries. What was being contested here was what entitled one to claim land and what was being asserted was that farmworkers' labour on the land did not entitle them to make a land claim.

In the above case, Mota appealed to a different kind of paternalistic relationship and moral economy from that of white farmers and Jona and the other farmworkers rejected this. However, in the socio-political context of a new resettlement area, the farmworkers had no choice but to engage in relations of dependency with land beneficiaries. Land beneficiaries sympathised with farmworkers' lack of land but they could not recognise their claims without threatening their own. Instead, narratives of morality, the law as manifest in land beneficiaries' 'offer letters', and the dominant 'labour' relationship trope were used as distancing devices to establish and stabilise the categories of 'farmer' and 'farmworker' and to deny the complexity of the relationships between these groups.

At various points in each of the three cases discussed, parties referred to their relationship with one another in terms of farmworker/farmer, friend, father/child and/or employer/employee. Each of these relationship perceptions gave rise to varying expectations of obligation, responsibility, rights and duties, and of different degrees of incorporation and dependency that would enable or constrain. Such discourses naturalised relations of hierarchy and the exploitation of farmworkers by land beneficiaries. They also expressed a genuine sense of long-term bonds of reciprocity between these groups. Yet, when relationships soured, often due to lack of pay, land beneficiaries linked farmworkers back to their 'foreign' origins by invoking the

alternative discourse of moral alterity. The tension in all three cases has been between sympathy and recognition, versus hierarchy and formal land rights.

Conclusion

This chapter began with my confusion over Kenny's status within the Basims' household as 'worker' or 'son'. In the 'new' context of the Mazowe resettlement area, what farmworkers and land beneficiaries were trying to establish was the nature of the moral bond between them. While recent literature on farmworker/beneficiary relationships in new resettlement areas casts these simply as 'labour relations' and approaches them from a very utilitarian and political economic perspective, I have shown that these relationships are far more complex and involved emergent, negotiated and dynamic relations of dependency. Farmworkers existed in a vulnerable position vis-à-vis land beneficiaries. Relationships between these two groups were shaped by dominant state-led tropes about farmworkers that sought to de-legitimise any claim they might have had over land on farms and positioned them as 'immoral' 'non-citizens'. For farmworkers, expectations about their relationships with land beneficiaries were informed by the history of their paternalistic relationships with white farmers in the past. For land beneficiaries, expectations about their relationships with farmworkers drew from a variety of different kinds of 'labour relationship' involving different degrees of 'incorporation' and different expectations of obligations, rights and duties.

A central focus of this chapter has been the way in which languages of morality were drawn into these negotiations of dependence between farmworkers and land beneficiaries. In each case I examined, narratives relating to 'moral personhood' came into play in justifying or condemning particular forms of action. As such, the relationships between farmworkers and land beneficiaries can be understood as one of various sites through which I examine the negotiation and emergence of moral economies amongst those living alongside each other in the Mazowe new resettlement area. I suggest that it was through these relationships fraught as they sometimes were,

that both groups began to embed themselves (or in the case of farmworkers embed themselves anew) in a new social and political landscape. In doing so, I argue the case for approaching belonging as a social process in which practices and discourses of morality figure strongly.

In this chapter I have examined the ‘dynamics of incorporation’ and dependence between farmworkers and land beneficiaries. In the following chapter, I explore the moral economy between land beneficiaries and the state. Land beneficiaries’ relationship with the land they were allocated was mediated by the state. What ‘modes of belonging’ did land beneficiaries have to submit to in order to be allocated land and for their claims to be safeguarded?

Chapter Five: From Care to Disregard: Land Beneficiaries and the State



Fig. 9 Photograph of a land beneficiary's fields being ploughed. Source Author, July, 2012.

Amai Basim walked angrily ahead of me down the path that led from their homestead to their fields on Dam Lake Farm. The path gave way to a road beyond which the Basims' six ha plot of land lay. Their fields were bare and dry. The Basims had not planted their tobacco crop because of an on-going land dispute they had with their neighbour, Nhafu, over their plot of land. They did not want to risk investing in a tobacco harvest, only to have their land seized half-way through the season. The dispute had also caused them to halt the construction of their new brick house on Dam Lake. Nhafu had been allocated 250 ha of Dam Lake Farm, the half with the farmhouse on it. He was attempting to take over their plot because, the Basims felt, it had a bore-hole on it. This provided clean drinking water for those in *maline* (the A1 village), but also meant that there was a good water source close to the fields, a highly desirable resource.

The Basims' fields had been pegged in 2004 but otherwise they had not obviously demarcated them from the rest of the farm since four roads formed a natural border around them. However, as we walked along, Amai Basim pointed out collapsed fencing that Nhafu had constructed along two edges of their fields in 2011, in an attempt to claim them as

his own. She also showed me where he had padlocked the door of the metal shed that encased the bore-hole pump. Nhafu's physical inscriptions on the land paralleled his attempts to take over their plot by more insidious means. Indeed, the walk to the fields had been provoked by Baba Basim's receipt of a peace order from the local magistrate's court for apparently harassing Nhafu over the piece of land. The Basims understood this as a maneuver aimed to discourage and intimidate them, as well as paint the Basims as trouble-makers in the eyes of local land administration and within the ZANU PF party, thus reducing their chances of being supported by these authorities against Nhafu's advances. Amai Basim strode out along one of the roads that bordered the fields, pointing out the four corners of their plot. 'Our land goes from there, to there. We were given an offer letter, we have been here since 2004, and now in 2012 Nhafu says that it is his?!' [Fieldnotes, 10.07.12]

In this chapter I use the Basims' land dispute with Nhafu to examine state-citizen relations, influence and power in the context of land reform. In particular, I am interested in examining shifts in the Basims' experience of the state from one of care to one of disregard as a site along which the state's legitimacy, and their trust in the state, was brought into question. When it came to land, land beneficiaries like the Basims did not exist as liberal rights bearing individuals. Instead, they were embedded in a thicker set of social and political relations that informed their approaches to those in local government and other figures of authority as they tried to secure their plot. I trace how the Basims called on the authority and the resources of the state to secure their land allocation, and the languages and techniques they used while doing so.

Land reform involved the creation of a new kind of land by the ZANU PF state, one that created new relationships between people and the land that were amenable to governance and politics in new ways. While in principle, land reform symbolized a broadening of citizenship through the redistribution of land from the hands of the white minority to the black majority, in practice land was allocated according an exclusive form of citizenship reliant on ZANU PF credentials and loyalty. In particular, land was not framed in terms of rights but in terms of benevolent gift from the ZANU PF state, positioned as benefactor, to loyal beneficiaries. Land beneficiaries' tenure security depended on their relationship with the state and relied on performances of a particular kind of 'good' citizenship in order to access and/or secure ones land rights.

Land disputes were common in new resettlement areas. As Lionel Cliffe et al. (2011) have pointed out, in spite of the regularisation of land distribution in new resettlement areas, politicians have used their weight to dispossess land beneficiaries, while they in turn have then been disposed by war veterans and others ‘and so the redistribution continues!’ (p.915). Amai and Baba Basim were land beneficiaries who received their ‘offer letter’ from the Zimbabwean government for a 6 ha plot of land on Dam Lake Farm in 2002. They had paid for their fields to be pegged by people working for the local district administration, and moved on to their plot in 2004. Baba Basim was a headman, and both of them held significant local party positions. However, like most A1 land beneficiaries, the Basims were not particularly well connected to powerful people higher up in government or in the ZANU PF party. Nhafu was both wealthier and better politically connected than the Basims.

Land allocations were constructed as administrative, rather than legal issues, and ZANU PF patronage networks overlaid local government land administration structures. Faced with corrupt district officials and a bureaucratic system in which their ‘offer letter’ was rendered insignificant, the challenge the Basims faced was to get their demands heard by party elites (*vakuru*) beyond the district level, who they believed would safeguard their land allocation if only they knew what was happening. However, in making such demands, the Basims also risked being accused of making *noise* (political or social disturbance caused by direct confrontation). In a period in which ZANU PF were trying to resuscitate their legitimacy nationally and internationally, the challenge that the Basims faced, was how to make their demands heard by *vakuru* without making *noise*.

Being a good ‘land beneficiary’ entailed performing a particular kind of citizenship that in turn maintained a particular image of the ZANU PF state as unified and as benevolent benefactor. In examining this process, I look at how the Basims coped with the failure of their ‘offer letter’ to safeguard their land allocation from Nhafu’s attempts to take it over, and examine their attempts to make a document – their ‘offer letter’ – that was not legally binding, morally binding, without making *noise*. As the Basims’ attempts to get the state to secure their plot remained unresolved, they began to question not only Nhafu’s legitimacy as a beneficiary, but also the state’s legitimacy

as a provider. This questioning of the state was mirrored by a shift in the tactics the Basims deployed to try and secure their plot. What was being negotiated here was what it meant to be a legitimate citizen and what it meant to be a legitimate state in the context of land reform.

What is Land in New Resettlement Areas?

Hernando de Soto Polar (2000) has famously argued that property rights are the foundation of citizenship, democracy and development. Formal legal title over land, he argues, enables people to realise the full economic potential of their properties and participate in the formal economy (pp.6-7). This, in turn, allows them to participate more fully as citizens, accessing rights and fulfilling their obligations, such as paying taxes, while simultaneously improving their own and their countries' financial situations. The assumption underlying de Soto's work is that property rights create particular kinds of social relations. Drawing on Hann (1998), Li (2014) and Tobias Kelly (2005), I argue that the inverse is true: particular kinds of social relations go towards producing land as a particular kind of property. 'Property' is not simply made through technocratic processes such as legal title. Creating property involves violence and the reformatting of social relations which prevent others from being able to claim the property in question as theirs, while also governing the particular uses to which that property can be put (Peluso and Vandergeest 2005; Peluso & Lund 2011). Furthermore, as Kelly (2005) has pointed out in the context of Palestine, the power and meaning of the law depends on the political and historical context in which it operates.

In order to understand how land beneficiaries 'held' land in new resettlement areas, and what the meaning of the 'offer letter' was for small-scale land beneficiaries like the Basims, I have found it useful to draw on Hann's (1998) work on property and Li's (2014) work on the way in which land is made up, or 'assembled'. Hann (1998), drawing on Edward Adamson Hoebel, has written that property relations are social relations. Property 'is not a thing, but a network of social relations that governs the

conduct of people with respect to the use and disposition of things' (Hoebel 1966: 424 as cited in Hann 1998: 4). Hann writes that understanding 'property' concerns paying attention to the 'symbolic as well as the material contexts' within which claims over things are recognised and 'personal as well as collective identities are made' (1998: 5). While 'property' is often understood in relation to the liberal paradigm of private property and exclusive ownership, Hann, drawing on Anthony Honore (1961), differentiates between these. Ownership is defined by Honore as the 'greatest possible interest in a thing which a mature system of law recognises' (Honore 1961: 108 as cited in Hann 1998: 6-7). However, Hann suggests anthropologists also examine the institutional and cultural contexts in which these operate (1998: 6-7). The key question then is what kind of social relations was land embedded within in new resettlement areas?

'Land beneficiaries' (a term invented by the state during the technocratic phase of land redistribution) were positioned as loyal clients to the ZANU PF state and Mugabe, their provider and benefactor. Their security of tenure depended on their relationship with the state. In new resettlement areas land, so seemingly permanent and tangible as a material entity, was rendered impermanent, unstable and shifting not because of the terms of land beneficiaries' tenure but because their relationship with the state was unstable and shifting. This instability of land was key to the power dynamic between land beneficiaries and the state. But how was land as a material entity that remained relatively unchanged after 'fast track', rendered unstable?

Li's (2014) work on the way land is 'assembled' is useful here. Li focuses on the international land-grab, the sharp increase in farmland that is sold or given to large corporate domestic and foreign investors by poorer governments (mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa) for large-scale agriculture. Drawing on the work of Bruno Latour, Li deconstructs the 'apparent naturalness' of land as a resource, suggesting instead that we approach land as a 'provisional assemblage of heterogeneous elements including material substance, technologies, discourses and practices' (2014: 598). In particular, Li focuses on 'inscription devices' that make investment in land from afar possible and even conceivable. 'Inscription devices' are the technologies, discourses and practices that assert exclusivity over land (maps, fences, title deeds, laws). In the case

of distant investment in land, different modes of inscription did not ‘change something concrete into an abstraction. Rather, they reformatted the social relations with which the new resource was entangled, and extended the network of actors and devices connected to it’ (Blomley 2013; 2014 as cited in Li 2014: 590). In new resettlement areas, ‘offer letters’, as well as pegs and maps, can therefore be understood as ‘inscription devices’ which reformatted the social relations in which land as a resource was entangled.

The aim of ‘inscription devices’ is to render land, as a resource that can be invested in, stable as well as translatable into graphic forms which make far-off investment in land thinkable (Li 2014: 594). Making land into a resource for global investment involves processes of inclusion and exclusion that distinguish between ‘legitimate uses and users’ and includes a persuasive element, ‘an attempt to defend exclusion in terms of its legitimacy’ (ibid.). Li writes that technical ‘inscription devices’ – ‘offer letters’, as well as the maps and ID cards that were used to see, count and classify land in new resettlement areas – also serve to ‘exceed the motives, interests and intentions of the actors that produce them’ and obscure these from view (ibid.). In land transactions, she writes, the law is ‘often envisaged as the key mechanism for producing stability’ (ibid.: 598). In global land investments, however, the law is highly ambiguous and this ambiguity is key to large-scale land deals where land titles would be a hindrance as investors would have to negotiate with individual farmers (ibid.). Importantly, Li highlights that shifts in resource assemblages might stabilise over time, but are not fixed or permanent: a change in one element of the assemblage might cause it to break up (ibid.: 589-590). Processes of formalization that legitimate people’s claims over land may help fix decisions and configurations of power but, as Peluso and Lund (2011) suggest, the ‘long term ‘stickiness’ of these depends on more than law since hegemony is ‘tentative, temporary and incomplete’ (Gramsci 1971 as cited in Peluso & Lund 2011: 674).

In the technocratic phase of ‘fast track’ land in new resettlement areas was rendered a particular kind of property over which the state claimed ownership but gave land beneficiaries usufruct rights, materialized in the ‘offer letter’ that land beneficiaries received. This technocratic phase of land reform was preceded by the more obviously

violent *jambanja* period that marked the early land occupations. The ‘offer letters’, as well as the pegging of land and building of houses into *maline*, acted as proof of government sanction over beneficiaries’ land allocations in commercial farming areas. They symbolized order and the legitimacy of land reform in contrast to the violence and lawlessness of *jambanja*. These ‘inscription devices’, ‘offer letters’ and pegs were used by land beneficiaries and the state as exclusionary devices against the possibility of other peoples’ claims – for example farmworkers, white farmers, or greedy neighbours like Nhafu. The legal and bureaucratic structures around land in new resettlement areas put in place during the technocratic phase of land reform were the product of a particular politics that aimed to maintain the ZANU PF state in power. They covered over the violence of *jambanja* and gave a legitimate face to the complex ZANU PF patronage networks in which land after ‘fast track’ became entangled. Thus, *contra de Soto*, drawing on Li, I suggest that an examination of only the formal legal structures around land and formal legal title, obscures an understanding of the complex politics underlying security of tenure in new resettlement areas.

In new resettlement areas, the meaning of land rights was not uniform but dependent on individual actors’ political and social positions. This was because ZANU PF patronage networks were not opposed to but ran through land administration structures (Hammar 2005). Anthropologists often juxtapose bureaucratic and legalistic modes with personal/patronage modes in their examinations of relationships between citizens and the state. In the context of the West Bank, Kelly has argued that ‘the effectiveness of legal claims depended on the ability of the litigants to mobilize political support, beyond the narrow confines of the courthouse’ (2005: 883). Drawing on Suad Joseph (1990), Kelly adopts the concept of ‘legal patrimonialism’ to highlight the ways in which legal rights are ‘always distributed according to wider social, political and cultural frameworks’ (Joseph 1990 as cited in Kelly 2005: 869). This, Kelly argues, moves us beyond the overdrawn distinction between law as a ‘neutral, technical process’ and patronage ‘as a system of resource allocation based on discriminatory personal relationships’ (ibid.). Rather than approaching legal codes as universal, or arguing that they might not be culturally compatible, Kelly suggests understanding the institutional culture and historical and political context in which legal codes operate is key to understanding the obstacles to effective and accountable political regimes.

Land beneficiaries believed in ‘offer letters’ and the power of the state’s written word as a guarantee of their claim over the pieces of land they were allocated, even though ‘offer letters’ did not provide much in terms of formal legal security. This was because they believed in the ZANU PF state and particularly in Mugabe, rather than the law as such. A sense of personal connection and respect for the country’s political leadership was widespread amongst land beneficiaries in Mazowe. Land beneficiaries spoke of the ZANU PF party, and particularly of political elites within it, namely President Mugabe, in terms of filial loyalty and care. Mugabe and other ZANU PF elites were referred to as *vakuru*. *Vakuru* (lit. big men/elders) is a term usually used to refer to the elders in one’s family or village although the Basims, along with many others, used it to refer to those ‘at the top’ of the political hierarchy. The Basims had faith in *vakuru* (big men/elders), the political elites of the ZANU PF party. *Vakuru* were on their side, that is the side of the common man/small-scale land beneficiary. Yet, at the same time, they held on to their ‘offer letters’ as proof of the validity of their land rights.

Susanna Verheul (2016) has shown how in spite of the widespread knowledge of the ‘ZANU PF-isation’ of local government as well as the judiciary and police over the course of the 2000s, human rights activists nonetheless continued to appeal to the rule of law and in so doing authorized a political ideal of, ‘and future-belonging to, a rule-bound state’ (p.94) even as this has arguably never existed in Zimbabwe (see Hammar 2005: 7). Land beneficiaries constituted a very different demographic from those interviewed by Verheul. Nonetheless, when political elites failed to respond to their calls for protection against Nhafu and the patronage networks in which the Basims were embedded did not work in their favour, the Basims began to invoke the law, particularly their ‘offer letter’ and administrative procedure as mechanisms of accountability against those they saw as corrupt at the district level. ‘Offer letters’ were experienced first in terms of the state’s guarantee of land rights, and then in terms of the arbitrary violence of the state in relation to small-scale land beneficiaries.

Deborah Poole (2004) has written of a similar phenomenon working in the context of Peru. In her work on legal documents in Peru, Poole locates the ‘margins of the state’ in moments when the state is experienced both in terms of threat as arbiter of violence and in terms of guarantee of the rule of law (p.36). She suggests such moments are

‘sites’ of uncertainty, where the legitimacy of state power begins to unravel (ibid.). The Peruvian state, she contends, is experienced by peasants as both guarantor of the rule of law and perpetrator of the arbitrary violence that underwrites the rule of law. Individuals holding positions of state office, representing the law, act violently and ‘outside the law’ but are able to do this precisely because they occupy official positions. While Peruvian peasants are routinely assured that the law is ‘universal and impartial’, they regularly have to negotiate with individuals and spaces that are ‘outside the law’ but nonetheless hold positions of state office. In a context of corrupt and violent officials, legal documents (the letter of the law) are rendered ‘illegible, or opaque, through the very processes and procedures that produce the documents that are its material expression’ (ibid.: 62).

The Basims were loyal supporters of the ZANU PF regime. However, my interest is in examining shifts in the Basims’ experiences of the state from one of care to one of disregard as this occurred through the gradual realization that their ‘offer letter’ would not secure their land claim. This caused them to begin to question the legitimacy of the state and to begin to refuse to behave in the way they were expected to as ‘good beneficiaries’. By insisting on the validity of their ‘offer letter’, and following ‘proper’ bureaucratic and hierarchical ‘channels’ in order to secure their claim, the Basims were insisting on a particular vision of the state that was ordered, in which land administration served the interests of loyal beneficiaries, and in which those at the top of the political hierarchy ‘cared’ for their loyal rural electorate. In this way the Basims began to challenge the meaning of what being a good citizen and a good state meant in the context of land reform. As their attempts to be heard failed, the Basims began to risk making *noise* and to question the legitimacy of the state.

What is an Offer Letter?

Baba Basim and his wife had lived in a township near Mazowe where Baba Basim worked as an ambulance driver and then as the personal driver for a ZANU PF minister. He had held a local level ZANU PF party position and, after *jambanja*, in the

technocratic phase of land distribution, a superior within his local party structures recommended he apply for a piece of land in Mazowe. Baba Basim put this recommendation down to the fact that he was known as a loyal and reliable party member and because he worked for a ZANU PF minister. The 'offer letter' given to Baba and Amai Basim for their plot of land was awarded by the Mazowe Rural District Council. In Zimbabwe, Rural District Councils are headed by a District Administrator (DA). The DA sat on the Mazowe District Council alongside a Chief Executive Officer, elected ward councilors and traditional chiefs' representatives from the area, all of whom, in this case, were ZANU PF members. The DA was also a close relative of Nhafus. To secure their land allocation from Nhafu's advances, the Basims had to work through the DA as well as numerous other individuals who occupied key administrative as well as ZANU PF positions in the local district council.

Land administration in Mazowe was thoroughly entangled in ZANU PF patronage networks. Once the formal decision to go ahead with the FTLRP was made by government, and consolidated through the Land Acquisition Acts (1992, 2000) and Constitutional Amendments (2000, 2005), several institutions and processes were established for the acquisition of farm land. District Land Committees (DLCs) were created within Rural District Councils to adjudicate and allocate land in new resettlement areas. In Mazowe, key ministerial representatives, such as Agriculture and Rural Extension workers from the Ministry of Agriculture – AREX officers – were included on the Mazowe DLC, as were members of local ZANU PF party structures and local War Veterans Association groups. District Lands Committees were chaired by the ZANU PF District Co-ordinating Committee. Matondi describes DLCs as unconstitutional and extra-legal because while they performed policy and regulatory tasks of government, they had no legal standing (2013: 5). In Mazowe, neither the ZANU PF members nor the War Veterans Association members, who were included on the District Land Committees, occupied government positions. As Matondi and Dekker have written: 'the state literally weakened the government machinery to make it possible for people to be allocated land quickly' (2011: 996). Matondi suggests that the creation of DLCs as extra-legal structures meant the ZANU PF state could maintain control over small-scale A1 land beneficiaries because, irrespective of the 'offer letter', they could decide who got what land and how that land could be used.

Government also created land as an administrative rather than a legal entity and declared that no court of law (including chief's courts), could attend to land matters. In other words, there was no legal dispute resolution mechanism for land disputes. This prevented former white land owners from being able to legally challenge 'fast track' land allocations. Land beneficiaries could contest decisions made by the District Land Committee through a court of law but land disputes between two beneficiaries had to pass through the District Land Committee and, ultimately, through the DA. Land then, was not framed in terms of citizens' legal rights. This was further reflected in the terms of the 'offer letters' beneficiaries received as proof of government sanction for their occupation of particular plots.

A 2007 survey conducted in the Mazowe area suggests that initially about half of the A1 land beneficiaries accessed land through the DLC and about a quarter through land occupations (Matondi 2012: 23, findings based on Rusivo Trust Mazowe survey 2007). However, eventually all land beneficiaries passed through the DA's offices. A1 land beneficiaries, like the Basims, received an 'offer letter' signed by the DA that 'explicitly state[ed] that the offer can be withdrawn at any time with the government having no obligation to compensate for any improvements that the settler might have made' (Matondi 2013b:3). A2 land beneficiaries, like Nhafu, were allocated pieces of land with a 99-year lease and the option to purchase. While in both cases the state retained ownership of the land, the 'offer letter' given to A1 land beneficiaries only gave them usufruct rights and simply acted as proof of allocation by government administration. It provided no personal ownership status nor guarantee against interference with that ownership (ibid.) Matondi contends that 'offer letters' became a means of maintaining a grip of power over A1s through the threat of re-acquiring the land they had been allocated while simultaneously acting as the only official indication of 'ownership' they had (2013: 98-99).

The terms of A1 land beneficiaries' 'offer letters' has been the subject of much debate in Zimbabwe. The government of Zimbabwe maintains that all land should be state owned to prevent land from returning to the hands of an advantaged minority through land sales from the poor to the rich (MMLR 2009: 36 as cited in Matondi, 2012: 96). However, in line with de Soto, some feel private property rights should be given to

new A1 land beneficiaries in the form of permanent tenure, long-term leasehold or title deeds because the security this gave would encourage land beneficiaries to invest more heavily in their land and allow them to use their lease-holds as collateral for bank loans required for farming inputs, enabling them to be more productive (see for example Cross 2012; Freeth 2013). An alternative branch of scholarship in Zimbabwe has argued that security of tenure is essential for land beneficiaries, but does not have to be achieved through private property rights (see Scoones 2013). However, as Matondi and Dekker write: 'Security or insecurity of tenure is more than having a piece of paper with your name on it' (2011: 2-3). A1 land beneficiaries' sense of security in new resettlement areas concerned both the official documentation that accompanied their land allocations and the social and political context in which these operated.

In Mazowe in 2012, over and above cultivation, the construction of fences and the presence of pegs, A1 land beneficiaries believed in 'offer letters' and the power of the state's written word as a guarantee of their claim over the pieces of land they were allocated, even though they did not provide much in terms of formal legal security. 'Offer letters' were understood by land beneficiaries to stabilise and fix their land allocations because they had been issued by *vakuru*, ZANU PF political elites and particularly Mugabe. For example, Amai Nyati was an A2 land beneficiary allocated 250 ha in Mazowe. She came from the Chiweshe communal lands and had joined the liberation struggle in 1977. After the war she signed up to the national army and was trained in army administration and office practice. Nyati had formed a close friendship with the then Minister for Local Government who acted as something of a father figure to her. He assisted Nyati with funds to raise her sister's children when her sister passed away, with finding a house in Harare and with obtaining a Higher Education Scholarship to further her studies. Nyati put her land allocation down to the fact that she had fought in the war and had good connections in the army. She spoke of the President in affectionate terms:

He is a father of everyone. He is so generous and kind. That is how I rate him myself, as a lovely father of the nation.

Similar sentiments were echoed by the Basims. 'Offer letters' and the law were respected because they were issued from *vakuru*. 'He [the President] is the one who

gave us this land so who is Nhafu to argue with the President?’ Amai Basim would say. As far the Basims were concerned only *vakuru* had the power to take away or re-allocate their land and, in that case, official documentation would be provided. As such, in spite of the fact that land beneficiaries did not have tenure but only usufruct rights, they nonetheless held on to ‘offer letters’ as stabilizing guarantees of their land allocations because they had been sanctioned by the trusted *vakuru*. The Basims felt confident that their dispute with Nhafu would be resolved if only *vakuru* knew what was going on.

What is a Land Beneficiary?

Baba Basim’s heritage was Zambian although he was raised in Zimbabwe and had been granted *de jure* Zimbabwean citizenship. His wife, on the other hand, came from the Chiweshe communal lands that abutted Mazowe district to the north. Amai Basim had been a *mujiba*, (young sympathiser/informant for guerrilla fighters) during 1970s of liberation and was registered as such in the local war collaborators association; she was also known to be a loyal ZANU PF member. In the context of an extremely strong nationalist discourse promoted by ZANU PF around the issue of land redistribution that pitted black ‘indigenous’ Zimbabweans against ‘foreigners’, the Basims decided Amai Basim should be the signatory on the governments ‘offer letter’. This was because she had a *chiZezuru* (Shona dialect spoken by President Mugabe) maiden name and was registered as a *mujiba*. The Basims did not want to take any chances. They had feared that Baba Basim’s surname might have led people to challenge the legitimacy of their allocation even though he had a certificate proving his Zimbabwean citizenship. For these same reasons, Baba Basim sent Amai Basim for any face-to-face dealings with people in land administration offices over their land dispute. Nhafu’s sense of entitlement to their piece of land regardless of the law, was partly explained by the Basims in terms of his war veteran status. However, as Amai Basim proclaimed in one of her private outbursts against him, ‘Does he think he won that war by himself?’

Land reform involved a shift from the initial land occupations led by war veterans and peasant farmers in the late 1990s-early 2000s, referred to as *jambanja*, to the technocratic government led 'Fast Track Land Reform Program' (FTLRP) in which land was distributed by the state. This shift saw a change, albeit an incomplete one, from land being claimed by war veterans and peasants from white farmers, although ultimately these demands were directed at ZANU PF elites within government, to land being offered by the state to land beneficiaries. In other words, while *jambanja* involved war veterans and peasant farmers holding the ZANU PF elite to account, by 2012 the state had shifted this power balance in their favour. Land redistribution was officially framed in terms of a postcolonial re-balancing of the historical injustice of segregationist land policies under Rhodesian rule that excluded the majority of the population from the best agricultural land and resulted in 'land hunger', particularly in over-populated communal areas. The government stated aims of 'fast track' were poverty reduction, alleviation of over-crowding in communal areas, and the inclusion of black indigenous farmers into the commercial farming sector. Land dispossession had been one of the main focuses of the 1970s liberation struggle and it was war veterans' demands for land amongst other forms of compensation that kick-started 'fast track'. Land occupations positioned war veterans against what war veteran Sadomba calls the 'elite-settler alliance' (2011: 105).

While in the early years of 'fast track' war veterans held significant power in relation to the state as reflected in their inclusion on DLCs, as time passed their power vis-à-vis the ZANU PF political elite waned. Yet, at the same time, land beneficiaries in general were able to exercise a certain degree of leverage in relation to the state in part because they were aware of their importance to ZANU PF as an electorate, and, for those who were involved in the war, because of the critical role war veterans played spear-heading land redistribution. James (2007) has written of how in South Africa, land restoration was understood in terms of democratic rights, 'getting the land back was one of the things 'we voted for' (p.127). In Zimbabwe, land was understood as one of the things 'we fought for' as well as the material outcome of loyalty to ZANU PF, expressed through voting but also through more violent election strategies. This created a particular power dynamic between land beneficiaries and the state which Fontein (2015) has described as an 'ambivalent form of mutual dependency' in which

land beneficiaries and government were each 'dependent upon yet constrained by the other' (p.171).

In the *jambanja* period, war veterans actively challenged government and the ZANU PF party for having failed to provide for them in spite of their contribution to the war. Here too, land occupations were understood by occupiers in terms of rendering themselves visible to the state. Chaumba et al. (2003a) have described how war veterans moving on to farms in Chiredzi district (south-eastern Zimbabwe) in the early stages of land reform felt their occupations were risky because they had not yet received official and active support from government (p.542). Initial land occupations were, according to these war veterans, intended as 'symbolic demonstrations' to draw attention to the land issue and render demonstrators visible to government. As the war veterans described, pegs and other technocratic land-use planning devices were used in initial occupations to mark out land because: 'We were doing the occupations in order to make the government see us. The pegging of lands helped them see us.' (quote in Chaumba et al. 2003a: 543).

Land occupiers contrasted their initially chaotic occupations with technocratic methods that followed: 'Now we are doing it the Agritex way. The other time it was the political way' (Chaumba et al. 2003a: 545). It is relevant to note that 'the political way' was associated with the disorder and violence of *jambanja*, and contrasted to the order of technocratic land-use methods. Ironically, these technocratic devices, as Chaumba et al. have pointed out, derived from Rhodesian land-use planning methods:

At the same time as they were riding roughshod over the rule of law, war veterans and other land occupiers employed the tools and practices of colonial land-use planning to become visible and 'legitimate' (p.549).

What the war veterans in Chaumba et al.'s work were concerned with was the legitimacy of their occupations. *Jambanja* was then transformed into the technocratic process of Fast Track Land Reform by the ZANU PF led government and land reform was subsequently framed in terms of a relationship of debt to the state, with the ZANU PF party and particularly President Mugabe, portrayed as 'father' and 'provider'. However, assertions that the state actually owed those land beneficiaries who fought

for the war were never far from the surface and were often referred to when it appeared that the state was failing to fulfil its role as provider and protector.

The Basims employed a number of languages and techniques in trying to get the state to respond to their calls for it to secure their land allocation. Some of these were explicitly called on; others played more of a background role. While Amai Basim's *mujiba* status conferred a certain amount of social and political capital that played a background role to her status as land beneficiary vis-a-vis the state, it was the possession of an 'offer letter' that was explicitly called on and referred to by the Basims in their attempts to gain support against Nhafu. However, Amai Basim's involvement in the 1970s war of liberation contributed to the Basims' sense that the state, and particularly political elites at the top of the political hierarchy (*vakuru*), should and would assist them secure their piece of land from Nhafu's advances. For the Basims, Nhafu's war veteran status also partly explained his over-confident sense of entitlement to land and blatant disregard of their state sanctioned 'offer letter'.

On the one hand, having fought or been involved in the war meant land beneficiaries felt the state owed them and that it had a duty to protect their land allocation. On the other, they also simultaneously felt bound to the state for having provided them land. This complexity and the socio-political relevance of having been a *mujiba* or a combatant in the context of a new resettlement area, needs to be understood in relation to the role of ex-combatants in the land reform process. Given widespread associations between war veterans and the disorderly chaos of *jambanja*, the Basims' interpretation of Nhafu's disregard of their state sanctioned 'offer letter' (and of the state 'order' it implied) due to his war veteran status made sense. The strategic use of Amai Basim as signatory and face of the Basims in interactions with state bureaucracy because of her *chiZezuru* name and *mujiba* status held within it a slight and implicit threat that referred to the tumultuous relationship between war veterans and the state over the question of land. At the same time, however, 'offer letters' were held as the ultimate 'legitimising' device.

The Dispute

Following their land allocation, the Basims moved on to their plot in 2004, built three huts and began to farm their allocated land. Baba Basim provided the fuel for one of the AREX officers – Amai Hove who sat on the Mazowe DLC – to peg his plot. In 2006, the very same AREX officer who originally pegged Baba Basim’s plot two years before, informed Baba Basim that the boundaries had changed and that Nhafu had been allocated a large part of the 6 ha plot originally allocated to Baba Basim. However, neither offer letter nor maps were produced to prove this re-allocation and Basim strongly suspected that Nhafu had bribed Amai Hove, the AREX officer. Baba Basim attempted to clarify the boundary issue but was turned away from the DA’s office where the AREX offices were situated. In 2010 Nhafu himself arrived at Baba Basim’s homestead and informed Baba and Amai Basim that he was now the owner of the whole of the plot they had been allocated, but again, no paperwork was produced to prove this claim. Basim returned to the DA’s office and was advised to write letters various land administrators but received no response. Months later the Mazowe Lands Officer confirmed that Baba Basim’s plot had not been re-allocated to Nhafu. Nevertheless, a year later, in 2011, Nhafu fenced two sides of the Basim’s fields. Soon after a man with a tractor who worked for Nhafu, began to plough the fenced fields and a padlock was placed on the bore-hole located in one of them, preventing the Basims and others from accessing clean drinking water.

Amai and Baba Basim were passed back and forth from one office to another with little success. In spite of the numerous meetings Baba Basim attended and promises made to him by various officials working in the district level land administration offices, his requests for ‘official documentation’, an ‘offer letter’, maps or letters from government lands offices proving the veracity of Nhafu’s claim were ignored. The pegs Baba Basim had originally placed around the plot he was allocated had, it seemed, been secretly removed at some point and while the map drawers at the DAs office claimed the boundaries had been re-drawn they refused to actually show Baba Basim the maps. Although the Basims were well respected within the local community of Mazowe and held local party positions, they were not particularly well connected to

more powerful people higher up in government or in the ZANU PF party hierarchy. The fact that the Basims' offer letter was being ignored by the local district administration was put down to the fact that Nhafu was a relative of the DA's husband. As Baba Basim said:

He is able to do this because he is a relative of the DA. The DA convinces the land committee: "please support me, this is my husband's relative" and so on. Then if I go to the lands committee they will support the DA because she is the chairperson of the lands committee and also the DA.

However if the Basims had attempted to by-pass the DA, Baba Basim feared they would be further targeted either by the DA or her superiors. It was important, Baba Basim insisted, to follow the right 'channels' (*machannels*):

According to government you cannot remove someone unless there is another place to go and then it is my choice whether to move or not. My argument is that *havasikuita ma proper channels* (they are not following proper channels).

'Channels' was a metaphor that described the correct direction of flow, from information to resources, along established and ordered positions in a hierarchy, whether a bureaucratic pathway or the hierarchy of a political party. In following the proper 'channels', and desiring Nhafu do the same, Baba Basim was appealing to a bureaucratic, social and legal order in which land in new resettlement areas was embedded. However, in spite of their 'offer letter' and Baba Basim following the correct 'channels', the Basims' attempts to get the state to secure the piece of land they had been allocated were fruitless. The Basims' frustration grew as their case was passed from one person to the other. 'The story should be judged the same, with justice, not just because of rank' Baba Basim told me in exasperation.

For Munro the moral economy of the state concerns the tension between the exercise of sovereign power and legitimacy (1998). Amanda Hammar (2005) expresses this tension in terms of the states' need to balance 'sovereignty' with 'pastoral care'. This, she writes, was 'an intrinsic part of his [President Mugabe] rhetoric of restoring the lost lands through a "land revolution"' (p.16). The terms and the manner by which land was allocated to beneficiaries was framed in terms of a 'gift' bequeathed to loyal

electorate by the caring state. This moral economy depended on land beneficiaries performing a particular version of ‘good citizenship’ that maintained an image of the ZANU PF state as caring ‘patron’.

An important part of the moral economy between land beneficiaries and the state was the socio-political taboo against *noise*. *Noise* (the English word was used) was used pejoratively to refer to any form of social disturbance. Thus *noise* could refer to children fighting in the yard, literally making *noise* but also disturbing the peace – *nyaradzo* - which derives from the verb *kunyara* meaning ‘to be quiet’. However, in the context of the various political conflicts in Zimbabwe from the 2000s on, *noise* came to refer to any kind of social or political conflict that arose from direct confrontation. In the GNU phase in which ZANU PF were trying to resuscitate their legitimacy nationally and internationally, the phrase ‘we don’t want *noise*’ was often heard on the lips of ZANU PF politicians decrying political violence but also any kind of confrontation that might cause social/political disturbance. As ZANU PF factionalism deepened, *noise* became less about confrontation between the MDC and ZANU PF, and more about the possibility of exposing the fractures within ZANU PF. This meant the Basims had to navigate their conflict with Nhafu without direct confrontation, in order to maintain a public image of themselves as good land beneficiaries (as opposed to bad trouble-makers) and an image of the ZANU PF state as unified and responsive to the demands of its loyal citizens. The challenge the Basims faced, to extend the aural metaphor, was how to be heard by *vakuru* who existed beyond the dense landscape of distinct land administration with its corrupt officials and who they believed would safeguard their land allocation, without being accused of making *noise*.

The Basims suspected that those that had drawn the maps for Dam Lake, and the AREX officers, all of whom worked through the DA’s office, had been bribed or threatened by Nhafu or the DA and this was why they refused to show the Basims any documentation for Nhafu’s claims. At the district level they felt that the case was becoming personal and feared they would raise their profile too high and end up accused of creating *noise*. They wanted to avoid developing a direct personal vendetta with DA. As the ‘offer letter’ proved ineffective against the self-interest of key

individuals in the district lands offices, the Basims tried to move their case beyond the local level power relations. They felt that beyond the district level the dispute might be judged according to official documentation and the power of the 'offer letter' would triumph over the personal interest of those working in the DA's offices. If *vakuru* saw the 'offer letter' the Basims felt confident that their land allocation would be secured. The question was how to move the 'offer letter' beyond the district level.

On yet another visit to the Governors offices, Amai Basim befriended an A2 land beneficiary facing a similar problem, who knew the Minister of Lands and Lands Resettlement. Amai Basim's new friend promised to use her connection to the resolve both her and Amai Basim's land disputes and the two of them made various plans to visit the Minister's offices in Harare. By cultivating personal connections to others who were better connected than themselves, the Basims publicly continued to follow 'channels' but simultaneously, and secretly, they tried to by-pass the bureaucratic and political hierarchy in order to access those at the top. Following Nhafu's fencing of their plot, Amai Basim even travelled to Harare to see the President himself in a move that strongly echoed the march on state house by war veterans in 1997:

I walked to the President's house and refused to leave until the problem was fixed. I saw all those little things [cameras] following me at the gate but I did not leave until the guard told me to go to the President's office.

Amai Basim did as she was advised and logged their case with the office but they had heard nothing since. Nonetheless they did not lose faith in the state, nor in the ZANU PF party, but continued to blame corrupt individuals at the district level. However, to the Basims, the peace order issued by the magistrate's court proved that Nhafu's influence stretched beyond the DA's office and that it was not only personal connections but spiritual forces that were at play.

Two weeks before the court case concerning the peace order organized by Nhafu, the Basims decided to seek the assistance of a traditional healer of Malawian descent. Healers from Malawi were reputed to hold considerably more power than those from Zimbabwe. In a small dark consulting hut in the middle of an empty field, the healer told Baba and Amai Basim that since they had an 'offer letter' and had arrived on

DamLake Farm prior to Nhafu, all he needed to be do was clear the way for these truths to be revealed to the magistrate, who would then dismiss the peace order. The healer informed the Basims that Nhafu was using a spirit that prevented the magistrate from seeing the truth of the legitimacy of their claim and the solution was that for the healer to send his spirit to fight Nhafu's spirit in advance of the court hearing. This would ensure that the truth would come clear (*ibude pachena*) and the magistrate would see things 'as they are' during the court session. The healer joked to me, 'I am just like their lawyer'. For the Basims, Nhafu's use of witchcraft added to the fact of his personal connections and bribery of people working in the district lands offices in explanation of his successes against them in spite of their 'offer letter' and the longevity of their stay on Dam Lake Farm.

The Basims began to experience land administration as opaque and animated by hidden forces. This echoes Todd Sanders and Harry West's (2003) suggestion that 'modernity', with its discursive claims to transparency, 'produce[s] the very opacities of power that it claims to obviate' (p.16). Beginning from the empirical observation that international discourses of transparency have been paralleled by a rise in discourses of conspiracy, Sanders and West argue, *contra* Weber, that bureaucracy, with its claim to render power and its workings more transparent, does not result in disenchantment but increased distrust in the workings of power. Here these authors pool conspiracy theories and theories of witchcraft, referring to these as 'occult cosmologies' that reflect expressions of profound suspicion of power (p.6).

The Basims, in spite of their 'offer letter' and attempts to steer their case through the 'proper channels', nonetheless experienced the land administration as rendering them invisible to those they believed would assist them with their case (*vakuru*). This was blamed on Nhafu's personal connections (his relationship with the DA) and his use of witchcraft. The Basims' suspicion that Nhafu's success relied on his hidden personal connections as well as the use of witchcraft led them to engage with the same techniques in attempting to counter his rendering them invisible. As Sanders and West describe it, the Basims could be said to 'mime the powers they suspect' (2003: 17). However, in a twist on Sanders and West's work, witchcraft in this case was used to create transparency in a corrupt bureaucratic system, to clear the way so that the

Basims, their 'offer letter' and the 'truth' of their case could be seen by those at the top. At the same time, the Basims engaged in performing their 'good' citizenship by following the 'proper channels' in order to maintain an image of themselves within local government and the ZANU PF party as respectful and deserving land beneficiaries as opposed to trouble-makers.

The Basims were successful in court and the peace order brought against them by Nhafu was dismissed although the dispute remained a thorn in their side. They did not obtain a guarantee that their land would not be seized by Nhafu and subsequent visits to the DA's office proved fruitless. They were passed from one office to another and back again. They decided to stop consulting the Malawian healer because he charged too much and had not significantly altered the state of affairs. Instead they sought the services of another traditional healer, a Zambian man, Sekuru Bupe. This time Amai Basim was more direct. She wanted something that would prevent Nhafu from ever coming to harass them again. As far as her and Baba Basim were concerned, this was a personal rather than a systemic issue. All that was required was for Nhafu to be got rid of and their land claim would be secured. Thus, Amai Basim requested, in a somewhat roundabout way, something that would prevent Nhafu 'from ever coming to our piece of land again'. After a number of long consultations the second healer acquiesced and gave Amai Basim a small package of 'medicine' (*mushonga*) to bury in the fields in question. If Nhafu's car came into the fields they would never hear from him again. Amai Basim was also given a piece of animal fat to rub on their foreheads whenever they were going to the offices of anyone involved in land administration, to open the way for them to be well received. However these were things were only discussed in private. Journeys to the healers' homes took circuitous routes in order to avoid questions about where we were bound and the placement of the package of *mushonga* in the field was conducted at night.

In their visit to the second, Zambian, healer, the Basims sought a more tangible solution in the face of the intangible shifting paperwork of the land administration and the hidden forces of Nhafu's personal connections. Not only were the Basims given a physical thing, but their burial of it in the ground can be understood as a counter to Nhafu's creation of 'new facts on the ground' (Li 2014: 598) through ploughing and

fencing. Their claim over their plot had been rendered insecure by Nhafu's superior personal, political and spiritual connections. The Basims re-asserted their claim over their allocated plot by placing *mushonga* in the ground. Indeed, the *mushonga* could also be understood as an 'inscription device', albeit a hidden/secret one, that sought to stabilise the piece of land in a legal/bureaucratic and political system that rendered it unstable. Similarly, Amai Basim's walk along the boundary of the fields and her loud declamations that these fields belonged to her, contrasted with the opaque and confusing bureaucratic procedures the Basims were engaged in, as they tried to secure the piece of land they had been allocated from Nhafu's greedy advance.

From Care to Disregard: a Shift in Tactics

Amai Basim animatedly informed neighbours and anyone who passed through the household of the case and its progress on an almost daily basis. Her rants were inflected with a sense of moral high-ground based on the fact that the Basims had arrived in the area first, and had a legitimate 'offer letter'. This was not merely a plug for sympathy or a way of venting her anger but a means of gaining subtle support for their case against Nhafu from within local party structures. 'If it happens to us, it will be you next' was the subtext. However, Baba Basim also explicitly asked me not to mention his position within local ZANU PF party structures in the letter I helped him write to the Governor, explaining:

You must not mix party things with issues of land because with land they treat all people the same so if you say anything about ZANU PF they will say, "ah, he wants us to be biased to ZANU PF. But I think when the Provincial Chairman of the party hears about this case, he will say, "Why are we risking losing 60 votes [ref. to A1 land beneficiaries] just for one [ref. to Nhafu].

Here Baba Basim was invoking the ideal of land governance as neutral and not based in party politics, an ideal promoted by the ZANU PF state in its desire to appear legitimate to the outside world, even as he hoped that his ZANU PF credentials would positively influence the case. He was performing an ideal of the neutral citizen to

maintain an image of a neutral land administration system. Amai Basim more explicitly stated that she would not vote for ZANU PF in the upcoming elections if their case was not resolved, although this was not stated in public. Baba Basim's insistence on appealing to the technocratic rather than the political basis of their land allocation is significant. In part, this performance can be understood in relation to the shift from the perceived disorder and violence of *jambanja* to the order of 'Fast Track'. But it also related to Baba Basim's desire to appear to be a law-abiding, respectful beneficiary in the eyes of the political hierarchy, as opposed to a 'noisy' trouble-maker.

Amai Basim's anger over the case manifested in her refusal to socialise with anyone connected to the DA's office, from the AREX extension workers to anyone related to the DA as well as those who worked for Nhafu. When the Forestry Commission held a field day at a nearby farm to encourage land beneficiaries to plant trees along one of the farm roads they asked Amai Basim, as wife to the village headman and chairman of the village Committee of Seven, to lead other women from the area in cooking for the attendees and in particular for the 'VIPs' or the district officials. Normally such invitation would be regarded as an honour and Amai Basim acknowledged this saying: 'Yes, they want me to cook because they know I am a good cook', but she refused claiming she was busy working that day. In private she stoutly proclaimed, 'They want me to cook for them when they are trying to take my land?!' Similarly Amai Basim refused to attend the funeral celebrations of a woman in the Dam Lake farmworkers compound because these were being hosted by the son of the deceased who worked as Nhafu's farm manager. However these more subtle forms of resistance were not discussed publicly but in the privacy of the homestead and in conversations between close friends. When she spoke to her neighbours, Amai Basim referred to the Basim's offer letter, their primary occupation of the plot of land, the 'channels' that they were planning to move through and the various connections to people in high places that they had drawn on and were planning to draw on in order to win their battle. But in the privacy of their home the Basims plotted to rid themselves of Nhafu completely, and spoke angrily of the corruption of the DA and all those who worked in the DA's office. Even as the Basims attempted to follow the proper 'channels' and 'rule of law', they and their 'offer letter' were seemingly rendered invisible by the corrupt and opaque bureaucracy of land administration. Like the Peruvian peasants in Poole's work

(2004), the Basims came to understand that their case would not be settled without personal connections and money. Their attempts to secure their plot through intangible bureaucratic means did little in the face of Nhafu's coercive 'creation of new facts on the ground' (Li, 2014: 598) in the form of fencing, ploughing and putting padlocks on the bore-holes and their 'offer letter' seemed to fail in the face of Nhafu's personal and political connections.

For the Basims, the tension that ran through their navigation of this complex space was between public and the private behaviour. Their struggle consisted of two phases with an important shift in between. At first, the Basims were determined to follow appropriate bureaucratic 'channels' to resolve the dispute. This would conform to publicly respecting people's positions of office. However, Nhafu's personal connections meant that in spite of the Basims' 'offer letter' and their following appropriate 'channels', they were moved endlessly between offices, and *vakuru* did not step in to protect their land allocation from Nhafu's advances. In this first phase the Basims fought as an individual household against Nhafu, who they blamed for their problems. Behind closed doors, the Basims tried to counter Nhafu by cultivating their own personal networks as well as using occult forces both to render their 'offer letter' visible to those at the top, and to prevent Nhafu from continuing his assault on their piece of land. In public they continued to follow bureaucratic 'channels' in order to avoid making *noise*. In this way they continued to behave like 'good beneficiaries'. However, as time wore on, and their attempts to secure their piece of land yielded little result, the Basims began to experience their relationship with the state, their 'provider', in terms of disregard or invisibility. It seemed that *vakuru* did not care. Their increasing frustration and isolation led to a shift in tactics. Amai Basim began to lose patience and pressed for more publicly confrontational direct forms of action. She threatened to make *noise* by appealing to the A1 farming community as an electorate and holding the state accountable for not protecting their land allocation. In so doing she worked against the isolation of their situation and the impermanence of the piece of land they had been allocated, in a system that seemed to produce both of these.

Clearly then, there were limits to the extent to which A1 land beneficiaries were able to negotiate with the state and A2 farmers. Drawing on Pauline Peter's (2004) critique

of the idea that negotiation around land use and land rights are relatively limitless (Berry 2001), I suggest that in Mazowe class differences between A1 and A2 farmers, as well as the fear of the repercussions the Basims might have faced if accused of making *noise*, acted as limits on the extent to which they were able to negotiate with these more powerful actors to secure their land rights. As Peters points out, in spite of the prevalence of ambiguous outcomes around land cases in Africa, there are often still those who benefit and those who lose out from instances of ‘negotiability’ in access to land (p.270). While the Basims could negotiate with those working in land administration and in the party to secure their plot by appealing to their power as an important electoral mainstay for the ZANU PF party at a time leading up to a national election, they were limited by the fact that they were not as politically well-connected or wealthy as Nhafu, nor did they want to be accused of making *noise*. No matter how hard they tried, Nhafu’s connections (whether social or through bribery) appeared to trump their attempts to resolve the dispute. They were thus left in a state of extreme uncertainty which in turn, discouraged them from further investing in their home and their land on Dam Lake Farm.

Conclusion

In this chapter I followed the process of A1 land beneficiaries, Baba and Amai Basim, trying to secure their plot of land from the attempts of a wealthier and better politically connected neighbouring A2 land beneficiary, Nhafu, to seize it. Land distribution was portrayed as the symbolic and material restoration of the sovereignty of the country from the hands of white settlers by ZANU PF and President Mugabe. However, in Zimbabwe, land was not redistributed in terms of *de jure* citizen’s rights, as I have discussed, but in terms of an exclusive form of differentiated citizenship based on ZANU PF loyalty. The terms by which land was offered maintained those allocated land, and particularly A1 land beneficiaries, in an uncertain position vis-a-vis the pieces of land they were allocated, and positioned the state as benefactor and A1 and A2 land beneficiaries as grateful/loyal clients. Land beneficiaries were expected to be loyal to the government, which meant voting for ZANU PF, but also conforming to a particular form of political behaviour in which they avoided any form of direct

confrontation, *noise*, that would expose the corruption of the system or suggest that competition and factionalism existed within ZANU PF structures. The lack of a dispute resolution mechanism for land disputes which were treated as administrative rather than legal problems forced the Basims to move through the land administration system. However, Nhafu was wealthier and better socially and politically connected than the Basims. The challenge the Basims faced was making themselves heard by *vakuru* who existed beyond the district level, without making *noise*. To secure their land allocation the Basims engaged in a variety of different practices, following appropriate bureaucratic channels, cultivating personal connections with individuals within party and land administrative structures, and deploying occult forces, all at the same time. Thus, the Basims ended up performing a public image of being good beneficiaries and following appropriate bureaucratic channels and party hierarchies, whilst secretly using hidden forces and political connections in order to try and render their claim visible.

If land reform can be understood in terms of a re-making of the state then in this chapter I have examined citizens' expectations of the state and vice versa in a new resettlement area. Land reform created new relationships between people and land that were amenable to governance and politics in new ways. These forms of governance related to ZANU PF's desire to remain in power. Land beneficiaries were an important electoral mainstay of the ZANU PF party and the way people related to pieces of land they were allocated was shaped by government and party politics in the country. This is revealed by examining the means and manner in which the Basims had to engage with those working in local government in order to secure their piece of land from their greedy neighbour, Nhafu.

Land claims were rendered insecure not by the terms of tenure but by the political context in which these existed. The manner in which people were resettled, the variety of places from which they came and the patronage based routes by which they received land in the first place, created households as isolated entities. As such, in trying to secure their piece of land, the Basims can be understood as working against both their social isolation and the impermanence of the land they have been allocated. In this context, the margins of the state, that is the point at which uncertainty about the

legitimacy of the state's power began to be questioned by the Basims, was when they felt disregarded by the political elite who had positioned themselves as carers and providers. In the next chapter I examine the question of traditional authority in Mazowe. In the complex ZANU PF patronage based system that ran through Mazowe, how did Chief Chigariro position himself in relation to the ZANU PF state, local party structures, local land administration and land beneficiaries?

Chapter Six: Traditional Authority in Mazowe

A man's voice rang out across Dam Lake Farm just before dawn, 'Today, there is a meeting at Blue Skies. Everyone must be there. If you are not there, you will see what happens.' The meeting was a Forestry Commission tree planting day held at a farm down the road from Dam Lake, although the message was delivered in the same format as those instructing land beneficiaries to attend local ZANU PF meetings. Nyaradzo, my research assistant, and I decided to attend. At Blue Skies a crowd had gathered under an open-air shed. A row of officials sat in front of them. Nyaradzo and I were welcomed by Amai Hove, the local AREX officer who asked us to join her at the front. We arrived at the end of a welcome address to which the crowd responded, fists raised, 'Forward with life, forward with life, forward with trees' echoing the ZANU PF party slogan 'Forward with ZANU PF, forward with ZANU PF, down with...[whatever was constructed as the opposition at that particular moment]'.¹⁹

With the welcome over, we were taken to plant trees in a nearby field. Holes had been dug along a farm road in advance and songs were sung at each planting until all twenty saplings were safely nestled in the ground. The crowd returned to the shed. In the middle of the closing vote of thanks, the ZANU PF district Political Commissar (PC) interrupted the proceedings. The role of PC derives from ZANU PF's Soviet-style party structure and he is concerned with the political education of the civilian population. Standing up, the PC addressed himself to the officials on behalf of the land beneficiaries living on Blue Skies. He spoke of an unnamed person who owned a large herd of cattle that was being grazed in their fields and destroying their crops in the process. He wanted the officials, and in particular the AREX officers, to tell the owner of the cattle to remove the beasts because it was causing them hunger. Raising his fist in the air he ended, 'Forward with ZANU PF, forward with ZANU PF, down with the destroyers'. [Fieldnotes, 08.12.12]

The 'destroyers' had a double meaning. It referred specifically to those held responsible for the destruction of the fields, but it also resonated with the broader ZANU PF narrative against 'destroyers' of the community or, at a national scale, of the country. Before 2008 this would have clearly referred to the opposition MDC party. However, in this instance, who 'the destroyers' were was unclear. As the crowd

¹⁹ During the war of liberation this was 'Forward with ZANU PF, down with the Boers', during the 2008 elections this was 'Forward with ZANU PF, down with fat cheeks'. 'Fat cheeks' was the ZANU PF nickname for Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the opposition MDC-T party.

dispersed after the obligatory platefuls of food had been distributed, the PC explained to me that the owner of the cattle was a relative of Chief Chigariro's, who used his connection with the Chief to justify grazing his cattle wherever he wanted. 'But here we are not under the Chief', he explained. 'His headmen have just been stopped because of corruption. They were giving out land which was not theirs to give'. The 'destroyers', then, referred to the Chief and his relatives. Chief Chigariro and his headmen were noticeably absent from the meeting. The farmhouse that Chief Chigariro occupied was only a few kilometers down the road from Blue Skies and field days were often taken as opportunities by public authorities to address large crowds and garner local support for a range of issues. However, the Chief's absence was unsurprising given that the field day occurred in the midst of a drawn out dispute between himself and the DA. Just prior to the meeting at Blue Skies, the DA had sent letters to all Chigariro's headmen telling them that since chiefs had not yet been 'gazetted' in new resettlement areas, his headmen did not have the authority to issue summons for the Chief's court to those living in Mazowe.²⁰

In this chapter I explore the negotiations between Chief Chigariro, local government and the ZANU PF party over the question of his authority in the Mazowe new resettlement area. These negotiations can be understood as local manifestations of a broader set of struggles between chiefs and the ZANU PF state over chiefs' position within the state as the process of land reform evolved, as well as between different state actors over the meaning of land reform, and their individual positions within new resettlement areas. It contributes to a broad literature that has examined chief-state relations in pre- and post-Independence Zimbabwe (Ranger 1982; Lan 1985; Maxwell 1999), and shows how in 2012/13 chiefs' careful positioning in relation to 'Politics' as party politics, was central to the chiefs' navigation of these relations.

In ZANU PF's attempt to regain legitimacy through a form of revived 'cultural nationalism' in the years leading up to 'fast track', the state turned to chiefs. Chiefs' powers were increased and they were given significant material incentives to support the party. However, ZANU PF also wanted to keep them under its control. This was reflected in the ambiguous positioning of chiefs by the ZANU PF state in new

²⁰ 'Gazetted' refers to the process of official government publication of a post.

resettlement areas. Many were allowed to occupy land and houses in new resettlement areas but their powers of influence over local populations were curbed. In particular, they were not given land allocation or adjudication powers. Chiefs, for their part, took advantage of this turn towards them to pursue their own interests, personal and ancestral, at local and national scales.

Installed as Chief in the Chiweshe 'communal lands' in 2005, in n 2006 Chief Chigariro was allowed by local government to take over a farmhouse in Mazowe but was not allocated an A2 farm as he requested.²¹ Land reform presented an opportunity for Chief Chigario to return to the 'lost lands', ruined homesteads (*matongo*) and the graves (*mapa*) of his ancestors who he claimed originated from the Mazowe area. He also wished to obtain a piece of farm land for himself and increase his jurisdiction in those new resettlement areas which he saw as historically having been under the Chiweshe chieftainship (Chapter Three). More broadly, he saw land reform and his personal 'return' to Mazowe, as a spiritually guided opportunity to lead a larger nationwide cultural project of 'return' the country to the ways of the ancestral past. This articulated with, but was also independent of, ZANU PF's project of revived cultural nationalism.

In Zimbabwe, chiefs have always drawn on the sovereignty of the state and the sovereignty of the ancestors for their legitimacy. Chiefs are civil servants, appointed and paid by the Zimbabwean government. They can be considered to be state actors. They are also considered to be living representatives of the ancestors, appointed by ancestors via spirit mediums. As the Zimbabwean government has increasingly been taken over by the ZANU PF regime, chiefs have come under increasing pressure to align themselves with the ZANU PF party. Examining Chief Chigariro's interactions with the regime via the land and those living in Mazowe relates to the broader question of the place of the 'customary' in the state's establishment of its legitimacy (Obarrio 2010; Obarrio 2014). As Fontein (2015) has shown, the state drew on the authority of chiefs, and by association on the sovereignty of the ancestors, to legitimize the land

²¹ Chief Chiweshe's name was Joseph Chigariro although the chieftaincy was the Chiweshe Chieftaincy. In the north of Zimbabwe, a different Chief Chiweshe exists. For the remainder of the thesis, I refer to Joseph Chigariro as 'Chief Chigariro' in order to prevent confusion between these two.

reform process (p.48). This was the latest instance of a longer historical dance between chiefs and the state where at certain points chiefs were drawn close in order to bolster the legitimacy and extend the control of the state over local populations, while at other moments, chiefs were distanced for the same reasons (Lan 1985; Maxwell 1999; Alexander 2006; Fontein 2015).

My interest is in Chief Chigariro's dynamic self-positioning vis-à-vis the ZANU PF state and local government in the context of a new resettlement area in 2012. The authority of the state and the authority of chiefs were of different kinds, yet they were also constitutive of each other even as they existed in tension. While at certain moments and to certain audiences, Chief Chigariro emphasized his appointment by the state, at others he articulated his authority through claims to the land and as ultimately derived from the sovereignty of the ancestors. When he cast these two sources of sovereignty as separate, he constructed the realm of the ancestors (and by extension his authority) as moral, and above and beyond the messy and immoral 'politics' of the state. Yet he was an active ZANU PF member rumored to be part of the central ZANU PF politburo. His occupation of the farmhouse was 'allowed' because of his ZANU PF credentials as well as the broader nationwide turn towards chiefs by ZANU PF in the early 2000s. He was heavily involved in local and national level party politics and yet as a public figure he insisted that he was 'non-political'.

Obarrio (2010; 2014) examines the role and meaning of the 'customary' and the place of 'customary authority' in post-colonial Mozambique: in particular, the way the Mozambiquan state attempts to use traditional authority, its 'imaginaries' and 'normativities' in the service of legitimating the state in relation to a disenfranchised rural electorate in the north of the country (p.267). Chief Chigariro can be considered a state actor, but at certain points he constructed himself as being beyond the reaches of the state by emphasizing his legitimacy in reference to ancestral sovereignty. In these moments, he cast his authority as deriving from a sphere in which there was no 'Politics'. For the present discussion I differentiate between 'politics' as an analytical term I use to express power struggles, and 'Politics' (with a capital P) as an ethnographic term used by Chief Chigariro and those living in Mazowe to refer to power struggles specifically within and between political parties.

Spencer (1997) and Mattei Candea (2011) have argued that anthropologists need to take informants' understandings and demarcations of the 'political' and the 'non-political' seriously. They suggest that instead of questioning such demarcations, we should pay attention to the efforts involved in performing and maintaining these boundaries, and the implications of crossing them for those involved. Following these scholars, I approach Chief Chigariro's separation of 'Political' realm of the state from the 'non-Political' realm of the ancestors in terms of the productive capacities of such a separation at this time in Mazowe. I suggest positioning himself as 'non-Political', allowed Chief Chigariro to both criticize the ZANU PF state and negotiate a better position for himself within it at a local level.

Chiefs, Legitimacy and State-making

In the years immediately preceding 'fast track', ZANU PF embarked on a nationwide cultural nationalist project in which they sought to regain legitimacy after the failure of 'developmental nationalism' during the 1980s. 'Developmental nationalism' describes the attempt by ZANU PF to legitimise itself in terms of 'developing' the country in the immediate post-Independence period, whereby the state 'primarily defined its role in economic terms' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Willems 2009: 951). Zimbabwe's continued reliance on global capital and an increasingly corrupt system meant that the party and government rapidly lost legitimacy over the course of the 1990s as their failure to deliver on the material promises they had made became apparent. This failure was compounded by the harsh structural adjustment policies adopted by government in the late 1990s which increased widespread unemployment and led to increasingly public criticism of the ZANU PF state. At this juncture, the nationalist struggle was turned to in order to re-justify ZANU PF's continued rule, particularly against the British and US backed opposition party. Here, 'culture emerged as an ideological resource that could easily be mobilised for political survival' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems 2009: 952). Land reform was re-packaged as not simply an economic issue 'but also a fundamental part of Zimbabwe's cultural heritage' (ibid.). This revived cultural nationalism saw a proliferation of performances

of ‘culture’ on national media in which state, nation, ruling party and the person of Robert Mugabe were conflated into ‘one symbol of national sovereignty that needed to be jealously guarded’ (ibid.: 953). It also saw ZANU PF turn to chiefs as a source of legitimacy and a means of mobilizing and maintaining control over the rural electorate. Having been stripped of significant powers by the ZANU PF government in the 1980s in favour of socialist style village and ward development committees (VIDCOs and WADCOs) in the late 1990s’, the government revitalized its commitment to a ‘re-imagined traditionalist rule in which chiefs had a central role’ (Fontein, 2015: 85).

The 1998 amendment to the 1982 Traditional Leaders Act, which originally stipulated that chiefs only had authority in ‘communal’ lands, was indicative of the state’s turn towards chiefs. The amendment stated that the Minister of Lands could, ‘by notice in the Gazette, declare any area of resettlement land’ under the authority of ‘such a chief as he may specify in the notice’.²² However, rather than being written into the constitution, chiefs’ jurisdiction in new resettlement areas remained reliant on their relationship with the particular government in power at any point in time. In the lead up to the 2000 elections, chiefs were given cars and significant salary increases by the government. ZANU PF increasingly used chiefs to maintain power at a local level. As in the ‘ultra-traditionalist’ period that followed the unpopular Native Land Husbandry Act under the Rhodesian government in the 1950s, chiefs were once more positioned between the demands of political parties, local populations, ancestral spirits and local government (Bourdillon 1987: 144). Increased attention from the state did not necessarily make chiefs’ lives easier. However, chiefs took advantage of this turn and tried to use it to gain more powers and material resources for themselves as part of a nationwide ‘traditionalist agenda’ in which chiefs had a central role in the ZANU PF state (Fontein 2015: 95). At the same time, many chiefs saw land reform as an opportunity to ‘return’ to the lands of their ancestors and attend to ancestral demands that they and others felt had been ignored by the state since Independence. Many of the post-Independence troubles of the nation were attributed to this. Chiefs’ ambiguous position in new resettlement areas, and the degree of their involvement in ‘fast track’,

²² Traditional Leaders Act, 1998, Chapter 29: 17, 29, 1, (a).

were indicative of ZANU PF's attempt to use chiefs to legitimise the state, whilst simultaneously confining their power to keep them as loyal to and beneath the authority of the regime.

Even as land reform was framed in terms of land redistribution and the question of land restitution was never officially addressed, locally and unofficially, restitution discourses had salience (Fontein 2009; Fontein 2015; Mujere 2010). Many traditional leaders viewed land reform in terms of the restitution of the 'lost' ancestral lands of their people (Mujere 2010: 7). 'Lost lands' refers to land in which the bodies of ancestors have been buried and on which sacred features of the landscape and places of veneration are located. In this rendering, land is a medium through which the dead are transformed into benevolent ancestors, through which they communicate with the living, and through which kin ties are created and maintained. Land has a moral quality to it and is understood to encompass the entire landscape including the weather and features such as rivers, mountains and trees. However, the question of chiefs' authority in new resettlement was also about their status, prestige and significant social, economic and political gain (Maxwell 1999: 191).

Fontein (2015) has suggested that the extreme droughts experienced across the country in the early 2000s were understood by politicians, traditional authorities and local populations as indicative of the displeasure of the ancestors. The droughts had a political significance because they called into question the legitimacy of the land reform project and the liberation war movement (Third Chimurenga) created around it (pp.78-105). In 2005, the government organized national *bira* ceremonies to supplicate the ancestors and inform them of the land reform program. Hosted locally by spirit mediums and chiefs across the country, Fontein (2015) suggests these were understood as the government finally respecting the need to involve traditional authorities (and through them the ancestors) in the land reform process (p.79).

Yet, in spite of such moves, which suggested state recognition of the need for the chiefs' involvement in land reform, in 2013 chiefs in new resettlement areas had still not been gazetted. The power to allocate and adjudicate land in new resettlement areas was vested in the DA and all land matters passed through the District Lands Committee (DLC). Chiefs were included on local DLCs but did not have authority over land

matters, land allocation or land dispute resolution. The extent of the chiefs' involvement in the initial phases of land reform differed from place to place. While in theory they could have authority over new resettlement areas, in practice this remained unclear. At the same time, for the reasons outlined above, the ZANU PF state, local government and party structures did not prevent chiefs like Chief Chigariro from (literally) setting up court in new resettlement areas. But they did try to confine the chiefs' authority to the arena of 'traditional' issues. Chief Chigariro similarly defined his authority and concerning only 'traditional' issues. However, what was in debate was what the bounds of 'tradition' were, and whether 'tradition' even applied in these areas.

Chiefs and Land Reform in Mazowe

In 2012, Chief Chigariro (Chiweshe) was one of three chiefs claiming jurisdiction over the Mazowe district on the basis of historic land claims. He was involved in boundary disputes with Chief Makope, Chief Negomo and Headman Nyachuru within the Mazowe new resettlement area, but these disputes had long histories. White farmers began to settle in Mazowe at the turn of the 20th century. At this point, the Mazowe valley was populated with people of the Chiweshe, Hwata, Nyachuru, Negomo and Makope chiefdoms. Drawing on a combination of oral history and archival records, Bessant (1987) writes that white settlers initially attempted to draw the native population into labour tenancy 'agreements' but gradually these peoples were pushed into the neighbouring Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land or Chiweshe 'reserve' (p. 62). The unsystematic nature of their movement meant that people sometimes settled under the 'country' of another chief and the boundaries of these chiefdoms in the reserve became vague (ibid.: 61-63). Chief Makope's people are reported as having been the first inhabitants of an area that included the reserve, Mazowe and parts of Harare. Chiweshe's people were relative latecomers who hailed from Buhera before settling in Harare and then Mazowe. As the delineation officer in 1965 wrote, 'It is an irony, appreciated not a little by Chiweshe himself, that the Reserve took his name although

he is one of the most recent immigrants'.²³ By this small dint of history, Chief Chigariro claimed, in 2012, that he was the 'Paramount Chief' of a territory that included the 'reserve', the Mazowe district and large parts of Harare and that Chief Makope and Chief Negomo therefore fell under his authority.

In the early years of 'fast track', only the late Chief Negomo was present on the Mazowe DLC. Chief Negomo reported having been 'overshadowed' and having had little voice in decision making processes regarding land, amidst the numerous government officials, technocrats and war veterans present (G.Matondi 2010: 10). According to Gospell Matondi (2010), Chiefs Negomo, Makope and Chiweshe all complained that most land was allocated to people 'from afar' (*vabvakure*) i.e. not from the Chiweshe communal areas, who did not respect their authority (p.11). Chiefs Negomo and Chiweshe were 'allowed' to occupy farmhouses in Mazowe, and Chief Negomo was allocated land although Chief Chigariro was not. In early 2012, Chief Chigariro and a group of his aides occupied Heyshott Farm in Mazowe, one of the few farms still run by a white farmer in Mazowe. The Governor of Mashonaland Central reportedly distanced himself from the 'invaders' – Chief Chigariro and his supporters – who were eventually evicted by the police. Chief Chigariro described the occupation as a protest against the government's delay in allocating him a suitable farm.²⁴

Soon after his occupation of the farmhouse in 2006, Chief Chigariro established a customary court (*dare*) held bi-weekly in different parts of the new resettlement area and appointed headmen across the district who were all A1 land beneficiaries and were to refer cases to the Chief's court. Most headmen originated from the Chiweshe 'communal lands' and many of them also held positions in the committees of seven. Chief Chigariro was particularly vocal about the need to teach those newly living in Mazowe about the ways and values of the area. He described the court that he established as a service to 'his people' – those in the Chiweshe communal area and

²³ Delineation Report written by C.K.Latham 1965, National Archives: S2929/2/4 (Harare, Zimbabwe).

²⁴ NewsDay, February 9th 2012, <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2012/02/09/2012-02-09-fresh-farm-invasions-rock-provinces/> [Accessed 25.02.2012]; The Zimbabwean, May 5th 2012, <http://www.thezimbabwean.co/2012/05/chief-defies-charumbira-over-farm/> [Accessed: 07.05.12]

those living in the Mazowe new resettlement area since he insisted that there was no distinction between these.

However, the DA disagreed. In mid-2012, Chief Chigariro's headmen received letters signed by the DA that informed them that, until chiefs had been officially gazetted in new resettlement areas, they were to cease working. As far as the DA was concerned:

Chiefs must have mandate in running the issues in the A1 and even A2 traditionally not administratively, but traditionally. But we are still waiting for directives from above, so until we receive them, chiefs are not officially working in these areas.

The DA explained the situation in the following terms:

A1 are villages, and A2 are commercials. But then according to our tradition, there is no land that has no jurisdiction of the chief in Zimbabwe and in most of the African countries, the whole continent, which means that the A2s as well will have to fall under the Chief. There is no way we can say there is an island there, no Chief, around here A1s the Chief reigns, it's difficult. But then the A2s are commercial, and we have to make sure that they feed the nation.

Tensions between Chief Chigariro, the DA and the land beneficiary population ran particularly high over the question of the Chief's 'sabbath' or *chisi* day. *Chisi* is an ancestral rest day in the week, the observance of which secures the goodwill of the ancestors which in turn ensures fertile soils, rain and good harvests (Daneel 1996: 348). Failure to observe the *chisi* is a fineable offence in a chief's court. Before we arrived at the Forestry Commission meeting, those gathered had been informed by the PC that they did not have to pay attention to the *chisi*. 'How can we have a day off in the week when these are supposed to be commercial farms?' the PC asked me.

Disputes over the grazing of cattle, the Chief's headmen, and the *chisi* day spoke to larger questions around meaning of land reform to those who moved into these areas. In appealing to the ZANU PF party to defend them against the Chief's relatives' destructive cattle grazing, land beneficiaries called on the authority of the party to put the Chief in place. They had, after all, received land through party structures or connections. Multiple narratives about the meaning and purpose of land reform abounded amongst A1 and A2 land beneficiaries in Mazowe. By 2012 the most

dominant of these concerned productivity, resources and the establishment of viable livelihoods off the land, rather than the return of ‘lost’ lands or concerns about the safety of the land as a sacred entity. Land beneficiaries in Mazowe were somewhat dismissive of Chief Chigariro outside of court sessions, although this may have been exceptional compared to other areas of the country where more people claimed autochthony in new resettlement areas (see Chaumba et al. 2003b; Fontein 2015). But, at the same time as being dismissive of the Chief, A1 and A2 land beneficiaries, the DA and local ZANU PF party structures in Mazowe, were also wary of the Chief and the ancestral/sacred realm. Even though these were not ‘their’ ancestors, and even if they asserted that ‘tradition’ did not apply in new resettlement areas, they were not prepared to risk angering the Chief’s ancestral spirits. In addition, Chief Chigariro’s courts were popular with A1 land beneficiaries as I explore in the following chapter.

What is Traditional Authority?

Chiefs in Zimbabwe are believed to be living representatives of royal ancestral lineages (*mhondoro*) and guardians of the land (Bourdillon 1987; Lan 1985; Daneel 1996; Maxwell 1999; Fontein, 2006; 2009; 2015). They are considered to be ‘owners’ of the land because they ensure the fertility of the land through performance of certain rituals (rain making, purification ceremonies) and adherence to ancestral taboos (Bourdillon 1987: 131; Lan 1985). It is believed that the wellbeing of the land and the people depends on close collaboration between spirit mediums and the chief. However, unlike spirit mediums, chiefs are also civil servants, appointed and paid by the state. They can therefore be considered to be state actors. In 1999, working in eastern Zimbabwe, David Maxwell wrote that ‘there has been a re-imagination of ‘tradition’ in a number of different ways by the government, local bureaucracy and traditional leaders themselves. All these interest groups seek political legitimacy by making appeals to ‘authenticity’ (p.149). He suggests that at this point in time, just as the ZANU PF state were turning ‘back’ to chiefs in order to gain legitimacy over rural populations, lineage politics in Katerere took on an increased intensity because of the collapse of ZANU PF legitimacy locally, which meant that chiefs and mediums

emerged as ‘popular leaders’ who were courted by local and national party leaders to pursue their interests at a local level (1999: 186). Traditional leaders used ‘tradition’ as a set of strategies which enabled them to enhance their own social, economic and political influence’ (Maxwell 1999: 174; see also Ranger 1982). They were not interested in building an ‘encapsulated political structure’ but in being involved in wider local and national political processes (Maxwell 1999: 176).

The tension chiefs embody between the sovereignty of the ancestors and that of the state is well illustrated in chiefly succession disputes. These are often long drawn out affairs, in part because of competing branches of the ‘royal’ family, and in part because of the involvement of local district authorities (Bourdillon 1987: 126-130; Lan 1985: 182-194; Maxwell 1999: 149-186). Chief Chigariro’s succession dispute contained many similar features of the chiefly succession disputes described by these different authors. In particular, Chief Chigariro’s aides emphasized multiple sources of legitimacy for the Chief, including his spiritual powers and his liberation war credentials. In addition, appeals were made to the sovereignty of the ancestors, via spirit mediums, to challenge the state’s choice of chief. Finally, Chief Chigariro’s succession dispute bears out Maxwell’s (1999) observations that ‘chieftaincy is at the centre of its own dynamic system of political ideology and action’. At the same time, ‘lineage politics’ are also important in the domain of national political interests (p.150).

Chiefly succession amongst chiShona speaking peoples is organised in terms of collateral inheritance; the position of chief circulates amongst males of one generation before being passed on to the next. Members of the chiefly family belong to different ‘houses’ and the chieftainship alternates between these (Bourdillon 1987: 125). Each ‘house’ has its own spirit mediums and government administration, in theory, will not approve a candidate unless he has the backing of the mediums. Michael Bourdillon (1987) writes that collateral aspect of chiefly succession is institutionalized in the circulation of the chieftainship between the ‘houses’ of ‘each of the founder chief’s sons before any of his grandsons became chief’ (p.125) Following the death of Chief Jack Mutumbi in 1992 it was decided that the Chiweshe chieftainship should fall to either of two ‘houses’: Ngandu or Chigariro. Family members established that the

chieftainship should go to the eldest son of the Chigariro family, Sjambok. As Sjambok was deceased, his son Andrew was appointed acting chief by the local district administration. Andrew refused to take the position citing old age and appointed his son, Shakespeare, who was presented to the local DA in Musarara (Chiweshe communal lands) to take up the position. However, Andrew's brothers argued that Shakespeare was a junior who could not be appointed while they were still alive. After consulting with the family, local community and mediums, Joseph Chigariro (Shakespeare's uncle) was selected as the rightful heir to the chieftaincy and presented by the family to the DA as such. Despite promises made to the mediums and members of the local community by the DA in Musarara that Shakespeare's appointment would be revoked, Shakespeare was nonetheless installed as Chief in 1999. A close family member of Joseph's explained in 2012 that Shakespeare was installed:

Because of Politics. There were some government ministers who wanted Shakespeare because they knew they could control him. And then the family members knew they would benefit from donations made to Shakespeare by the government.

Soon after, an alternative ceremony to install Joseph Chigariro as Chief was held by family members and the three spirit mediums of the Chiweshe chieftaincy. According to a national press report (2001), the mediums, in particular, complained that the installation of Shakespeare was conducted 'behind our backs'. Using the state newspaper to convey their complaint to government, the mediums asserted:

The Chiweshe chieftainship is not something that can be done without the involvement of the spirit mediums.²⁵

Local communities and family members living in Musarara complained to the DA that Shakespeare, who lived in Harare, was never there and was unaware of their needs as a community. But, in spite of the alternative installation ceremony, the Minister of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing refused to acknowledge Joseph as Chief. Instead he cited the section of the Traditional Leaders Act (2001) that

²⁵ Emilia Zindi for The Sunday Mail, November 25th 2001.

states that chiefly appointments were to be made by the President and any made out with the Act, were null and void.

A photograph of Joseph holding a sacred spear and surrounded by the family mediums was taken to the Minister by Chigariro's close family members. Chief Chigariro's nephew told me:

The government came and did investigations and found that Shakespeare had not even conducted any rain-making ceremonies so then they filed a report and it was sent to the President.

Eventually, after a number of court cases and increasing pressure from the local community on the DA's office, Shakespeare's appointment was revoked in 2005 and Joseph Chigariro was officially installed as Chief Chiweshe. Joseph himself explained that although Shakespeare had been installed as Chief by government, he did not function as Chief because he was not chosen by the spirits. 'Function' meant providing for the needs of his people, those living in the Musarara area of the Chiweshe communal lands. These included the establishment of a customary court, conducting *bira* ceremonies, and liaising with local government for the provision of resources for the area's development. 'It doesn't matter what the government does, the chiefs are chosen by the ancestors', Joseph declared emphatically.

In his succession dispute, Joseph (now Chief Chigariro) used the sovereignty of the spirits and the ancestral realm to challenge local government and ultimately the state. Here the role of spirit mediums as actors beyond the Politics of the state was crucial. Chief Chigariro was also at pains to emphasise the power of the spirits over politicians and local government officials. He had a profound sense of being on a spiritual mission, guided by the ancestors (rather than the state), and his 'project of return' must be understood in terms of this sense of spiritual imperative. At the same time, in the context of a new resettlement area, born out of hotly contested national Politics, Chief Chigariro was also a political player.

A 'Project of Return'

Harry West and Scott Kloeck-Jenson (1999) have noted that, 'in each historical epoch, "traditional authority's" past versions are subjected to erasure even as they are rewritten, and new forces are brought to bear on the fabrication of political legitimacy' (p.484). They suggest that the question is not whether 'traditional authority' is legitimate, but rather, 'who claims 'legitimacy', by what argument, who is persuaded and why?' (ibid.) The following extract from my fieldnotes during a customary court session reveals something of Chief Chigariro's dynamic self-positioning to an audience of land beneficiaries and farmworkers during one of his court sessions in Mazowe:

Petros, the Chief's 'clerk of court' and personal secretary stands up and makes the following statement, addressed to the court audience:

First, I want you to know that this whole area up until Zvimba is the area of Mambo Chiweshe. Don't get lied to by those doing politics of child's play. We need to move on from the culture of the reserves. There are no reserves. It was reserved for them [the whites]. There is no area in Zimbabwe that does not have headmen. Chiefs bring mice, okra, mupani worms, water. We can now say that MPs (Ministers of Parliament) are asleep. Those from other areas, are they able to do things here? The Chief is not chosen or voted in. The Chief is the soil (*mambo ivhu*); God comes from the soil (*Ishe inobva ivhu*) so that you can be full from those things that you reap. Who are the chairmen? There are chairmen from MDC, from ZANU, from ZANU Ndonga, but which chairman looks after the area (dunhu)?

Chief Chigariro, laughing loudly, stands up and continues:

Stand up those present who have been judged by a chairman, by a councillor or by an AREX officer? [Nobody stands]. If you are called by a chairman to be judged, then go. And tell him, 'You don't have the papers to judge'. I am approved to judge by the Attorney General of Zimbabwe, with papers. Tell those chairmen that they will be sent to jail if they judge without papers. I am the presiding officer. There is no one who presides over the presiding officer without papers. [Fieldnotes, 10.07.12]

The court session was held in a new resettlement area to the west of Harare that Chief Chigariro claimed formed part of his ancestor's territory. Both Petros and the Chief's speeches were provoked by Chief Chigariro's headmen having received the letters from the DA. Petros' assertion that there was no distinction between new resettlement areas (*maresettlement*) and the reserves (*maruseva*) spoke to the Chief's ongoing battle with the DA over this issue. Chief Chigariro and his close inner circle considered that the whole country belonged, ultimately, to the ancestors, and following this, that chiefs should have jurisdiction over the whole country, including urban areas. They spoke of a future in which chiefs' courts would be set up in Unity Square, Harare, right in the centre of town. The court was always opened with a prayer to the ancestors which located Chief Chigariro's authority within an ancestral chiefly lineage and emphasized the sovereignty of the ancestors to whom he was ultimately answerable. Chief Chigariro's authority was articulated in reference to the soil – 'the chief is the soil' – and contrasted to the authority of the government and the ZANU PF party, and those working in their capacity.

By articulating his authority through claims to the land, Chief Chigariro emphasized that he served a different set of ends and needs to that of the state. Mice, okra and *mupane* worms are 'wild', 'traditional' foods, which, like the rain, are understood as indicative of the wellbeing and fertility of the land, and having little to do with man's agricultural efforts. These are also foods that predated the arrival of white settler agricultural production. These statements positioned Chief Chigariro as being, like the land and the ancestors, permanent rather than temporally confined. A common refrain amongst his close aides was that, 'Politicians come and go but the chiefs will always be here'. Here, the timeless and natural authority of chiefs was contrasted to that of politicians. Yet, at the same time, during court sessions, Chief Chigariro referred to his appointment by the Attorney General. Similarly, the court had all the trappings of a state institution, which, of course, it was: the paperwork; the titles, 'clerk of court', 'presiding officer'; the bronze star-shaped chief's badge that Chief Chigariro proudly wore on his shirt in all court sessions.

Fontein (2015) has written of the way in which the temporality of ancestral land claims involved a profoundly different teleology – the understanding of movement through

time and space – from other aspirations and hopes people moving to new resettlement areas have (p.41). Chief Chigariro’s ‘project of return’ concerned not only a ‘return’ to the physical land of his ancestors but a return to ‘tradition’, to a past and to a temporal trajectory that had been interrupted but not vanquished by white settlers. I call this a ‘project’ because it was a collaborative exercise that was, to a large extent, planned to achieve a particular aim and was contiguous with the ‘traditionalist agenda’ being pursued by chiefs across the country.

Bessant (2007) reviewing Moore (2005) has written of how, for the people of the Tangwena chiefdom, who were forcibly removed from their lands by the Rhodesian government in the 1960s, the return to their ancestral lands in the 2000s was not only a return to the land but also a ‘return to their culture’ (Bessant 2007: 449). For the Tangwena people, relationships between those living on the land were ‘sedimented’ in the land and thus it was through return to their ancestral lands that people learnt how to live, farm, respect the ancestors and work together harmoniously (Moore 2005: 3). Chief Chigariro similarly located ‘culture’ and ‘tradition’ in the material landscape, with the landscape of the past defined as one that was fertile. The past’ as a time was also constructed as a time of morality. This was clearly expressed in an opening statement Petros made at a different court session:

The aim of this court is to restore people's moral character, to restore traditions, to our way of living as people of Zimbabwe. Many countries are being lost, people are marrying their relatives, corruption is being done, headmen are being quietened, trees are being cut, dams are being destroyed in search of catfish, you clog the fields with water during the harvest, are we not back to square one?

Petros’ lament doubled as a reprimand, addressed not only to those attending the court but, less directly, to those ruling the country. Morality here referred to the state of the land as well as the people living on it. Here, as with *unhu* in Chapter Three, morality can be understood in terms of ‘action-in-the-world’, something achieved through the performance of respect of sacred places, appropriate performance of rituals aimed at venerating the ancestors, and the observance of social taboos. Chief Chigariro’s conception of ‘return’ involved a return of the country to a non-specific past. ‘The past’ was a time when chiefs were recognized as paramount guardians of the land and

authorities over those who lived on it, when ancestors were acknowledged and respected, when the land was fertile, and when people lived respectfully alongside one another, with each of these relying on the other. Returning to ‘the past’ involved remaking the land of white farms by returning it to its former (true) state. According to Chief Chigariro, the displeasure of the ancestors with the current state of the land (and the country) was evidenced through, for example, the land’s lack of fertility, as described in a story oft quoted by Chief Chigariro and numerous of his followers in which, they said, long ago, when people placed a bowl under the sacred *Muhacha* tree and clapped to the ancestors, *sadza* would pour out of the tree into the bowl. In ‘the past’, the land was fertile and people and their ancestors had a good relationship, the living respectful of the ancestors and the ancestors, accordingly, providing through the land.

Chief Chigariro appealed to a sense of the timelessness of ‘traditions’ in his ‘project of return’. However, even as this was an idealized past constituted to deny its own historicity, it was nonetheless also located within the history of white settlement on the land which was frequently relayed to me. Whyte (2010) writes that people’s rural homes in South Africa were understood to materialize ‘the past in a sense familiar from culturalist discourses everywhere: the home imagined as the space of a powerful heritage passed down from a time before ‘whiteness’ had entered and dominated the social world’ (p.511). For Chief Chigariro, similarly, the issue was not only about returning to the lands of his forbears but of returning to ‘tradition’ and ‘culture’, and a historical trajectory that white settlers interfered with but did not destroy. This approach to history, as Fontein (2015) has written, reduced ‘the colonial past to a brief interlude in much longer continuing relationships between specific kin-based clans, their ancestors and particular territories’ (p.41). Yet Chief Chigariro’s project, even as it drew on ‘the past’, was oriented towards an imagined future.

The 'Politics' of the Present

Chief Chigariro's 'project of return' was located within but also explicitly oriented towards reform of the present. In the statement made by Petros, 'trees being cut', 'corruption being done' and 'people marrying their relatives' are placed alongside each other as part of a general lament over the moral decrepitude of the country. Chief Chigariro attributed not only environmental problems such as the clogging of dams or the lack of rain, and social problems (such as marrying one's cousins), but also the political turmoil of Zimbabwe's past decade, to the failure of the state and the population to observe and respect 'tradition'. Thus, it was not only a physical return to the physical land of the ancestors, but a spiritual and social reformation of the social and political landscape, that Chief Chigariro sought.

By claiming his authority through appeals to 'tradition' and the moral wellbeing of the land, Chief Chigariro distinguished his authority from that of the state, not only in terms of the kind of authority but also by claiming that his authority was above or beyond 'Politics'. Chiefs, as Petros asserted, 'Are not voted in'; they are 'Chosen by the spirits'. Similarly, Chief Chigariro often told court audiences:

There is no Politics here. Everyone here is a child of mine. It doesn't matter whether you are MDC or ZANU, you are all the Chief's children.

He thus publicly constructed himself as a neutral, father figure over those living in Mazowe. In appealing to 'tradition', 'the past', and the moral wellbeing of the land, Chief Chigariro positioned himself as politically neutral, and as being directed in his sense of accountability to the ancestors rather than the ZANU PF party or the government. The pejorative associations of 'Politics' in Mazowe, meant that in making such statements, Chief Chigariro drew a demarcation between the morally superior, permanent realm of 'culture' and 'tradition', a realm beyond 'Politics', and the messy, corrupt and unstable and time-bound 'Political' authority of the state.

Political anthropologists have been engaged in a debate concerning the demarcation of the 'political' from other arenas of life. On the one hand, in the post-Foucault and post-

feminist years of the 1990s ‘the politics of’ became a phrase that prefigured a whole host of studies: ‘the politics of food’, the ‘politics of dance’, etc...Here ‘politics’ was used in a Foucauldian sense to refer to power struggles which, of course, all of life is constituted of (Spencer 1997; Candea 2011). However, anthropologists were not examining actual state institutions. In 1997, Spencer encouraged anthropologists to broaden their ethnographic enquiries to include state institutions, on the one hand, and to loosen their critical gaze in order to be more attentive to how ‘politics’ and the arena of the ‘political’ were defined at a local level on the other. He encouraged anthropologists to explore local social idioms used to express and understand politics and the political (1997: 28). Furthermore, he observed that , ‘For every instance of the political, there is at least one, if not more, mode of the anti-political’ (2007: 33).

More recently, Candea (2011) has addressed the question of how anthropologists should deal with their informants’ division of ‘political’ from ‘non-political’ spaces. He suggests that instead of insisting that everything is ‘politics’, we should seek instead to examine the productive capacities of such divisions in their informants’ lives. In the context of bilingual education in Corsica, Candea’s main informant insists that ‘education’ and ‘politics’ are separate (p.310). While the temptation, Candea writes, is to label such a division a political maneuver designed to cover over the ‘real’ nationalist intentions of Corsican bilingual teachers, Candea suggests taking this division as a productive point of departure and trying to understand it on its own terms. Rather than approaching such divisions as part of a broader ‘anti-politics machine’ in the sense of something that explicitly aims to cover over the tracks of its political intentions (Ferguson 1990), he suggests that labelling and maintaining a division between ‘politics’ and ‘education’ is an active achievement on the part of bilingual teachers. It allows the education system, based on secularist French education policy, to ‘produce politically active citizens: voters, but not voters of a specific party’ (Candea 2011: 317). In other words, attention needs to be paid to what the separation of the ‘political’ from the ‘non-political’ means and allows in different contexts. Anthropologists need to recognize such separations as productive, rather than repressive (ibid.: 321).

How then do we understand Chief Chigariro's assertions that his court and his authority were non-political, given that they were so clearly entangled within local power struggles over authority? Drawing on Candea (2011), I suggest that this conscious de-politicization of his authority and his position in Mazowe be understood as an active performative project. What did this allow Chief Chigariro to do? Following Spencer's (1997) suggestion, I examine what 'politics' meant in Mazowe at this particular point in time. The phrase 'politics is a dirty game' was common in Zimbabwe in 2012. 'Politics' (capital P) in Mazowe referred to the arena of party politics. In this sense, 'Politics' in Mazowe was bounded in the same way that Spencer (1997) discusses; people conceived of it as being connected to political parties and the state. 'Politics' was also used as an idiom to express people's politicking in the arena of party politics; pulling strings and influencing situations in ways that were not visible. This could be power struggles either within or between political parties, or personal projects of self-promotion that related to one's position within a party. *Noise* was what resulted when 'Politics' burst through the surface.

In Mazowe in 2012, there was a 'Politics' one could openly talk about and a 'Politics' that could not be openly spoken of. Doing 'Politics' at this point in time was associated with corruption and self-interest. In Mazowe, one could 'enter into Politics', meaning one became an active member of ZANU PF, and had opened oneself up to these behind-the-scenes negotiations and string pulling as a means of accessing resources and safeguarding one's reputation. In the early 2000s and then after 2008, 'Politics' referred to ZANU PF and MDC power struggles. By 2012, the *noise* caused by 'Political' violence between ZANU PF and the MDC had begun to die down. In ZANU PF strongholds like Mazowe, it was not 'Politics' between the MDC and ZANU PF that affected daily life but the 'Politics' of ZANU PF corruption and in-fighting. Yet, in the context of the GNU, at a time when ZANU PF were trying to internally regroup and regain national and regional legitimacy, ZANU PF's internal 'Politics' was not something that could openly be talked about. When Chief Chigariro declared in court that, 'There is no Politics here', he explicitly defined this in terms of the 'Politics' between the MDC and ZANU PF. Open, explicit public references to power struggles between the MDC and ZANU PF at this particular point in time were widespread. This was because ZANU PF had effectively won the power struggle even if this had not yet

been formalized in an election. Thus, in this instance, Chief Chigariro was performing his political neutrality in relation to a 'Politics' that was largely irrelevant for those living in Mazowe at this point in time. Such statements covered over or at least distracted from the 'Politics' of internal ZANU PF power struggles and power struggles such as those between the Chief, the DA and local ZANU PF structures. The 'Politics' between the Chief, the DA and local ZANU PF structures were explicitly denied by the DA when I interviewed her. These local power struggles threatened to undermine the performance of order and stability that ZANU PF wished to project to outsiders at this point in time, concerning the land reform project, specifically, and state governance more generally. The Chief largely conformed to this unwritten demarcation of acceptable open political discourse but did on occasion also spontaneously, openly and loudly refer to his power struggles with the party and the DA in court sessions. Although Chief Chigariro was an active ZANU PF supporter, he was also a chief. He was therefore positioned within the state and the ZANU PF party but also maintained a level of independence from these. This independence was important because it enabled him to negotiate a stronger position vis-à-vis local government and the party, whilst simultaneously remaining within them.

Generally, in Zimbabwe, spirits and the ancestors are said to be 'above' or 'beyond' the messy, corrupt and unstable world of 'Politics'. Ancestral spirits are said not to support one political party over another. Human rights NGOs campaigning against 'Political' violence in 2011, for example, invoked the fear of avenging spirits of the dead (*ngozi*) in trying to dissuade youths from killing one another at the behest of politicians, stating that, 'Ngozi don't care which party you are from, a dead person is a dead person'.²⁶ A similar locally constructed distinction between the 'moral' and the 'Political' has been recorded by Alpa Shah (2007) in her work in Tapu (Jharkhand, India). In this, Mundas, often depicted as poor tribal people, contrasted the corrupt, self-interested, exploitative and divisive politics of the secular state (*sarkar*), 'to an 'idealised notion of an organic inter-village 'traditional institution', (*parha*)' (p.130).

²⁶ Crisis Coalition report, March 20th 2012, Councillor Murambwa Released, Chipangano Fingered, Harare (<http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/Crisis%20Report%2030-03-2012.pdf> [Accessed 18.04.14]).

The *parha* was conceived of as a sacral polity, led by ancestral spirits that encompassed ‘an idea of politics representing unity, inclusion, lack of self-interest and amicable resolution of disputes’ (Shah 2007: 130). Like chiefs in Zimbabwe, the heads of *parhas* were believed to be representatives of spirits. And like the realm of ‘tradition’ and Chief Chigariro’s ‘project of return’, the politics of the *parha* was understood by Mundas, and constructed by village elites, as a ‘moral politics’ ‘endorsed by the spirits’ (ibid.: 142). The *parha* was not a form of anti-politics Shah asserts, but an idealized notion of politics. For Shah, this points to the possibility of ‘multiple co-existing notions of politics’ in single localities at the same time (ibid.: 129). Shah suggests that rural elites participating in local elections emphasized the corruption of the *sarkar* in contrast to inclusive and unified *parha*, to dissuade Mundas from participating and engaging with the state. This enabled them to retain local control over state resources (ibid: 134).

The construction and emphasis by Mundas and village elites of a dichotomy between the moral, sacred realm, and the messy, corrupt world of politics, very much echoes with the situation I encountered in Mazowe. The difference is that in Mazowe, people only spoke of one ‘Politics’ which was associated with political parties and the state. Like the rural elites in Shah’s work, Chief Chigariro appealed to and emphasized the realm of ‘tradition’ and the ancestors as a moral realm, ‘above’ or ‘beyond’ the corrupt, immoral and dangerous world of ‘Politics’. The pejorative associations of ‘Politics’ in Mazowe meant statements such as those made by the Chief constructed a dichotomy between himself as a neutral moral figure concerned with the moral wellbeing of the country, and the corrupt, self-interested and time-bound immoral ‘Politics’ of politicians and the state. Chief Chigariro positioned himself as being directed in his sense of accountability to the ancestors, rather than the ZANU PF party or the government. I suggest that this demarcation served a number of ends. First, by de-politicizing his authority the Chief sought to naturalise it. In a context in which his claim to authority was so much in question, from local government and those living in Mazowe, the Chief sought to present his authority as the resumption of what should have been but was disrupted by white settlers. He was attempting to construct his authority as being ‘above’ and ‘beyond’ the current question of a chief’s authority in new resettlement areas. His was an authority that was not time-bound. Secondly,

'Politics' had pejorative associations of corruption and violence. In presenting himself as a legitimate authority to those living in Mazowe, he sought to construct himself as 'above' and 'beyond' these negative associations. In appealing to this idealized notion of 'traditional authority', he mirrored ZANU PF's attempt to use 'cultural nationalism' as a way of naturalizing and legitimizing not only the land reform project but their power in the country. Finally, the effect of his positioning himself as 'non-Political', not opposed to or with the state but simply beyond and qualitatively different from it, was that in this way he could criticize the state while remaining within it. In a context in which any criticism of the ZANU PF regime risked being cast as a traitor, an opposition party supporter or a trouble-maker, emphasizing his neutrality made space for the possibility of a critique of the ZANU PF state. Yet, chiefs are also answerable to the state. Spirit mediums, however, are not; or not in the same way (see Ranger 1982; Fontein 2015). Chief Chigariro's spirit mediums were crucial in his negotiations with the state, over his own position and the meaning of land reform more broadly.

In 2012, Chief Chigariro was approached by members of the National Army and asked to perform a *bira* ceremony on their behalf. The *bira* heralded the beginning of a story that went on to capture national attention for months after and threw the national limelight on Chief Chigariro and Sekuru Tsoko. It was the *bira* and the events that unfolded around it that led me to understand that Chief Chigariro's 'project of return' was local and national in scale. The *bira* was led by Chigariro, his close supporters, members of his family, and, in particular, Sekuru Tsoko.

Sekuru Tsoko was a spirit medium who, though born and raised in Zimbabwe, traced his ancestry back to Tanzania. For a number of years he had lived in Belgium, sponsored by the Belgium government to teach *mbira* (a traditional instrument described in English as a finger piano) in schools. He claimed to be one of the most powerful spirit mediums in the country.. *Masvikiro* were mediums that became possessed by a family spirit and were used to communicate with family ancestors. *Mhondoro* were royal spirits that looked after '*mitemo we nyika*' or made sure the 'customs' (here described as laws) of the country were obeyed by giving instructions to chiefs via mediums about how to rule their areas. Sekuru Tsoko claimed to occupy

a third tier in the hierarchy of spirit mediums as a ‘welcomer of words’ (*mugamuchiri wezwi*). According to one of his accolades:

He receives words from somewhere, we don’t know where. That means he receives words from God since we do not know where God is.

Sekuru Tsoko’s particular gift was that he was able to speak with animals. Neither Sekuru Tsoko nor those of his group bore any kin relation, nor did they share the same totem as the Chief. Sekuru Tsoko had only known Chief Chigariro for a few years but it was said that Chief Chigariro’s ancestral spirits had sent him to Chief Chigariro. Mazowe was an area of particular spiritual significance, home to Charwe Nyakasikana, spirit medium of Ambuya Nehanda. Nehanda is widely considered one of the inspirations and most important spiritual leaders of the Zezuru uprising against the British South Africa Company in 1896 (the First Chimurenga) and has since become a national symbol of the struggle against white settler rule.²⁷ Chief Chigariro built Sekuru Tsoko and his retinue a series of ‘traditional’ grass huts in a secret location in Mazowe where they claimed Charwe (Nehanda’s medium) originally resided. Chief Chigariro and Sekuru Tsoko hoped one day to construct a ‘cultural village’ where all tourists entering Zimbabwe would be made to go before travelling the country, in order that ‘they learn our ways of doing things here’. Throughout fieldwork, Chief Chigariro and Sekuru Tsoko embarked on several journeys to chieftaincies across the country, particularly Masvingo (home to Chief Fortune Charumbira, head of the National Council of Chiefs) in order to conduct *bira* ceremonies.

The *bira* held in Mazowe was rumoured to have been requested because members of the army wanted to be cleansed. Some in Mazowe suggested this was cleansing from acts of violence committed since Independence (for example, the 2008 electoral violence); others for acts of violence committed during the liberation struggle. The rumours revealed a deep sense of ambivalence about the legitimacy of these different

²⁷ Charwe was hung on charges of murder but lived on as one of the country’s greatest symbols of resistance to colonial rule and a reminder of the importance of spirit mediums and ancestors in Zimbabwe’s struggle for independence. Nehanda has been celebrated and denigrated by the ZANU PF regime at various points (Ranger 2010 in Fontein 2015: 102).

periods of violence, and the prevailing sense that members of the army were in some way polluted. Concerns with accountability and pollution in relation to the army and the ancestors rose to the surface of public discussion every few years in Zimbabwe but were rarely officially addressed. Moreover, attempts to address them were quashed by the government who did not want to publically acknowledge the need for cleansing as this would, by implication, pull into question the legitimacy of acts of violence committed by the army in the name of the state.

According to Sekuru Tsoko, the army and government had not informed the ancestors that the liberation war had been won, nor thanked them for their assistance. As a result the ancestors were angry and thought that the country was still at war which was why Zimbabwe had suffered since Independence. Chief Chigariro's approach by members of the national army was taken by the Chief as proof not only of his personal eminence but of the necessity of chiefs to mediate such matters and ensure the wellbeing of the country at large. While the purpose of the *bira* was kept secret, details of what transpired leaked out. Sekuru Tsoko was said to have conversed with a snake, a troupe of baboons and pack of lions. These events were discussed in awe by the Chief and those of his close inner circle as testimony to the *bira's* success. This is measured in terms of the strength of communication that was struck between those gathered and the ancestors. These communications with wild animals were understood by Chief Chigariro to be signs of the presence of powerful spiritual forces in the land, that were supportive of his and Sekuru Tsoko's work.

Some weeks after the *bira* a fish eagle (*hungwe*) landed at Sekuru Tsoko's 'village' (see Figure 9). The *hungwe* is the national bird of Zimbabwe. Described as the 'eyes of God' by Sekuru Tsoko, the Zimbabwe birds of the Great Zimbabwe monument (after which the county was named) are believed to have been modeled on the *hungwe*. Around the same time, a rare and similarly revered pangolin was found near Sekuru Tsoko's grass huts. The landing of the *hungwe* and the arrival of the pangolin, so soon after the *bira*, were interpreted by the Chief as extremely significant communications from the ancestors (see also Lan, 1985: 159). Chiefs, mediums and politicians from around the country gathered to see the bird which was kept tied down by Sekuru Tsoko and the Chief for a number of weeks before it was released. In a national press report,

Chief Chigariro and Sekuru Tsoko reported that the bird had landed to deliver a message to the country from the royal *mhondoro* ancestors. As is often the case with messages from the ancestors, there were a number of possible interpretations.



Fig. 10: Sekuru Tsoko (left in leopard skin) and Chief Chigariro (right in hat) display fish eagle (*hungwe*). Source: Sunday Mail, Zimbabwe, 2012.²⁸

Sekuru Tsoko placed the event of the birds landing within a lineage of similarly rare landings in the country's liberation war history. The first, he claimed, preceded the First Chimurenga (1896/7 uprising) and the second preceded the Second Chimurenga (the liberation war). Thus, Sekuru Tsoko emphasized the revolutionary meaning of the birds landing and framed it within the so-called 'Third Chimurenga' movement constituted around land reform as the bird was said to signify 'change'. Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) agents were sent to interview Sekuru Tsoko and the Chief once the idea had circulated that the message delivered by the *hungwe* was of 'imminent change', since 'change' was the slogan of the opposition MDC party.

²⁸ The Sunday Mail, October 8th 2012, <http://www.zimeye.com/zimbabwean-bird-landing-in-chiweshe-signifies-imminent-change/> [Accessed: 10.10.12].

Sekuru Tsoko and Chief Chiweshe used the landing of the bird to make a series of commentaries on the state of the country, the role of chiefs and the direction the country was headed in. The state-run national Sunday Mail paper quoted Sekuru Tsoko as having declared that the message from the bird concerned the moral decay of the nation as a result of the marginalisation of chiefs:

In this era the judgments of chiefs are reviewed by young magistrates educated by the colonial system which is a far cry from the chiefs of the older days, who were the custodians of the law and all liberties [...] The message these happenings are bringing is that people must get back to traditional ways of doing things to stop rampant starvation which is currently bedevilling the nation.²⁹

In addition, Sekuru Tsoko pronounced that the message he had received from the bird, and the message he would go on to deliver to the 'relevant authorities' in government, was:

If we are not careful we will lose this country. We fought the war and attained independence, but there is a danger that the enemy will reverse the gains we made, so it's for the good of every Zimbabwean to take heed of what the ancestors are saying.³⁰

The events surrounding the landing of the fish eagle in Mazowe served as an example of the kind of space Chief Chigariro and Sekuru Tsoko were trying to carve out in terms of their own personal ambitions, the role of chiefs in relation to the state in Zimbabwe, and the meaning and purpose of land reform. It is significant that Sekuru Tsoko made the pronouncements about change, rather than Chief Chigariro. Indeed, given that mediums enjoy a level of independence from the state that chiefs do not, they are answerable only to the ancestors while chiefs are also civil servants (Lan 1985; Fontein 2015). Chief Chigariro and Sekuru Tsoko used the landing of the *hungwe* to speak to the power of the state and the ZANU PF regime in the area, while remaining

²⁹ Sekuru Katombo Kanyai (Sekuru Tsoko) quoted in The Sunday Mail, October 8th, 2012, <http://www.zimeye.com/zimbabwean-bird-landing-in-chiweshe-signifies-imminent-change/> [Accessed: 10.10.12].

³⁰ Sekuru Tsoko quoted in The Sunday Mail, October 8th, 2012, <http://www.zimeye.com/zimbabwean-bird-landing-in-chiweshe-signifies-imminent-change/> [Accessed: 10.10.12].

safely within it. Sekuru Tsoko's reading of the message from the ancestors was an ambiguous mixture of threat to and support of ZANU PF and the ZANU PF-led government. The landing of the fish eagle was used to make an oblique critique against the current ZANU PF regime, even as it was unclear what the critique was. It also positioned Chief Chigariro and Sekuru Tsoko as uniquely able to assist the state with the problems they stated that it faced. The inclusive statement 'we will lose the country' located chiefs and Chief Chigariro in particular, as loyal supporters of the ZANU PF regime. Yet what exactly would lead to the 'enemy' gaining control of the country was not articulated.

Chief Chigariro used the landing of the *hungwe* bird as a way of speaking to power the power of the state at a local and national level. At the local level this concerned Chief Chigariro's authority in Mazowe and, at the national level, this concerned chief's powers vis-a-vis the state and local populations. ZANU PF's 're-imagined traditionalist rule' sought to use chiefs to legitimize the land reform program, while retaining control over those living in these areas. Chiefs 'traditionalist agenda' took land reform as an opportunity to 'return' to the land of the past, make personal land gains, and reform the country, returning it to an imagined future that derived from this idealized 'past'. Their alternative source of sovereignty was both a threat and a legitimizing force to the ZANU PF regime.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the complicated relationship between chiefs and the state in the context of land reform. I have contributed to a broad body of literature that has examined the complexity of the relationship between 'traditional authority' and the state in pre-Independence (Ranger 1982; Lan 1985) and post-Independence Zimbabwe (Maxwell 1999; Fontein 2006; Fontein 2015). Ranger (1982) described the complex positioning of chiefs who were caught between the use of their 'traditional authority' to pursue their own interests, those of the Rhodesian government, nationalist guerrillas and local populations between 1960 and 1980. Lan (1985) in a more

simplistic rendering, showed how chiefs were side-lined by guerrilla soliders and local populations in favour of spirit mediums who were seen to be independent of government control during the liberation war. In the mid-1990s, Maxwell revisited the question of chief-state relations. Like the Rhodesian state before it, ZANU PF also tried to use ‘traditional’ authority to shore up their legitimacy at a period in which this was increasingly being questioned by local populations. Maxwell highlighted chiefs’ use of the state and local party structures for their own ends, rather than the other way around. In a similar vein, my analysis examines how Chief Chigariro deftly positioned himself so as to gain materially and increase his authority in the process of land reform, despite the extremely ambiguous positioning of chiefs by the state in new resettlement areas, and in the country as a whole, at this point in time. Chief Chigariro’s demarcation, at particular points in time, of the ‘Political’ from the ‘non-political’ or ‘traditional’ realm, was crucial to this process.

To pursue his multiple interests, he had to tread a fine line between being a Political actor, in the sense of party politics, and being a neutral authority above the messy ‘Politics’ of the state. Constructing himself as ‘non-Political’ was part of a public performance of neutrality aimed at bolstering his legitimacy by emphasising his appointment by the ancestors rather than the ZANU PF state. This reveals not only the ambiguous associations of party ‘Politics’ in Zimbabwe at this point in time, but also gives an insight into the complexity of the relationship between ‘customary’ authorities and the state in Zimbabwe at this point in the country’s history. In the next chapter, I focus on Chief Chigariro’s relationship with land beneficiaries living in Mazowe.

Chapter Seven: Making Community through a Customary Court

Chief Chigariro's 'advisors' sit on benches beneath the roof of an open-air shed, once used to keep farm equipment from the rain. A wooden table has been placed in front of them. Petros, the chief's personal secretary and 'clerk of court', leans on this, paperwork piled high beside him. He is in charge of the court's administration. A small crowd of men and women sit on benches in front of the advisors: men to the right, women to the left. After some time, the Chief approaches the court from his farmhouse down the road. As he draws near, Mashiri (a spirit medium and relative of the Chief's) 'opens' the court. He kneels on one knee and claps while calling out the names of Chief Chigariro's ancestral lineage, on the male and female side. He is informing the ancestors that the court is open, and asking for their guidance. All the men and women stand, the men clapping in time to the song, the women ululating at particular moments. As they sing, Chief Chigariro takes his seat in front of the court. [Fieldnotes, 13.05.12]

In the previous chapter I explored what land reform meant to Chief Chigariro. I focused on the Chief's relationship with the ZANU PF state and his struggle for power and recognition from the state. As I have shown, these struggles were sometimes channeled through those who attended the Chief's court (*dare*). In this chapter I focus more closely on Chief Chigariro's relationship with the general population of Mazowe. A crucial aspect of Chief Chigariro's 'project of return' was to transform the way people related to one another and the land in Mazowe. In order to do this, he had to establish his presence and his legitimacy amongst those living in the area. The *dare* was the primary site of contact between him, land beneficiaries and farmworkers. It can be understood as one branch of his 'project of return' through which he sought to return the land to its past state by ensuring that the living lived in a way that did not offend the ancestors, and related to the land as a spiritual as well as an economic entity. In other words, it was through the court that he insisted on a different meaning of land reform than that of land redistribution for poverty alleviation. Through the *dare* the Chief sought to create himself as an arbiter of people's day-to-day relationships, and in doing so he aimed at cementing his claims to power and resources in Mazowe as 'guardian' of the land and those who lived on it.

In the context of South Africa, Barbara Oomen (2005) has written that ‘the most important form of control exerted by traditional leaders might well derive from their role in influencing how people define themselves and make sense of everyday events’ (p.160). Oomen suggests chiefs’ courts are approached in terms of ‘alternative imagined communities’ that provided other scripts of belonging than that of citizenship to the nation state (ibid.: 8). Obarrio (2014), in his work on Mozambican community courts that combine customary and general law, has suggested the concept of ‘customary citizenship’ (p. 109). ‘Customary citizenship’ is a ‘localised form of national belonging’ whereby ‘membership in a national polity is imagined and enacted through participation in structures of kinship and local relatedness, and acquiescence to official law is filtered through “traditional” norms and the subjection to the authority of customary chieftaincy’ (ibid.).

Drawing on the work of Sally Engle Merry (1994) and Barbara Yngvesson (1988), I approach the *dare* in Mazowe terms of the production of meaning of ideas of ‘community’ and belonging in Mazowe, as well as the primary space in which Chief Chigariro attempted to establish his influence in people’s daily lives. Merry and Yngvesson, in different ways, focus on the way in which meaning is not only created and imposed, but is negotiated between those running courts and those attending courts. Yngvesson’s (1988) work in district community courts in Massachusetts in particular shows how, by pulling the local court into the most mundane areas of daily life, the courthouse became ‘an arena for ‘thinking the community’, where hearings are ‘vehicles for talking about legal rights and local morality’ and ‘constructing different notions of self and other’ (p.420). Both Yngvesson and Merry’s work emphasize that it was in interactions between those running the court and those attending the court that the court as a space and the community were ‘mutually shaped’ (Yngvesson 1988: 410).

One major difference between Mazowe and the remote Mozambiquan context in which Obarrio (2010; 2014) worked, is that in Obarrio’s account the ‘traditional norms’ and authority of the chief seem relatively well established, so much so that they operate as a parallel, almost competing local state within the nation-state. In Mazowe, Chief Chigariro had to draw on the authority of the ZANU PF state within the *dare* to

legitimize himself amongst land beneficiaries. Bringing Oomen and Obarrio together with Merry and Yngvesson, I examine the *dare* as a site of community-in-the-making in which the Chief sought to establish himself as a particular kind of authority over particular kinds of subjects. Here I refer to the ‘subject’ in the Foucauldian sense of being subject to another’s influence and control, and being tied to an identity position (see for example Foucault 1982). Even though the Chief constructed the court as a space and time of ‘tradition’, he also drew on, and so reinforced, the authority of the state as both a source of threat and legitimacy within the court. Similarly, the subject positions of those attending the court were constituted as a blend of rights bearing citizens and ‘customary subjects’ (Mamdani 1999). In order to examine these processes, I focus on how *dare* sessions were structured, who was allowed to speak when, why, how and what the effect of this was. In addition, I show how Chief Chigariro’s authority and particular ‘customary citizen’ positions were re-inscribed and re-enacted through bodily enactment of *dare* etiquette.

Culture as Ideology

In Bourdillon’s (1987) brief account of the workings and aims of a Chief’s *dare* in Mt. Darwin district (Zimbabwe) between 1969 and 1970 he emphasized the social character of the *dare* in both its procedure and aims (pp.160-166). Bourdillon shows how background knowledge of the case and the characters involved (often well known in the community and by those present in the *dare*) were used by the chief in attempting to reach a resolution. He highlights the participation of the public in discussion of a case, the prominent role of public opinion in resolving a dispute, the ideal of the Chief as arbitrator of discussion rather than judge and the application of a situational ethic whereby problems are solved in relation to ‘general social values rather than predetermined laws’ (ibid.: 152; see also Holleman 1952). Bourdillon (1987) points out that supporters to some extent accepted group responsibility for the actions of a disputant, and both describe the aim of the *dare* as the achievement of ‘social harmony’ whereby disputing parties are reconciled (ibid.: 52).

Chief Chigariro's *dare* contained many of these generalized features. However, Bourdillon worked in a context where the population consisted of a 'small tight-knit community' well known to one another (1987: 152). Bourdillon's account is consciously depoliticised in the sense that he has constructed the *dare* as an institution existing outside of the particular political context in which it operated, and certainly the authority of the Chief does not appear to be in question. Differences between these works and my own observations reveal the uncertainties and negotiations around 'customs', 'social norms' and Chief Chigariro's authority in the Mazowe context. Land beneficiaries living in Mazowe came from a variety of places and backgrounds. They did not form a 'small tight-knit community' bound through kin relations and well known to one another. Farmworkers came from different backgrounds and were accustomed to different structures of authority. The Chief's authority in this context was entirely in question. In addition to Chief Chigariro's ambiguous positioning by the state, many land beneficiaries retained a home (*musha*) elsewhere and remained loyal to their chiefs 'back home' (*kumusha*).

In the context of a new resettlement area, the 'customs' invoked by Chief Chigariro, rather than existing as a hegemonic system of values and beliefs, were more akin to John and Jean Comaroff's (1991) notion of 'ideology' in the sense that it they were being re-instated by Chief Chigariro and his followers as a form of cultural dominance (p.25). The issue at stake, that which underlay questions around Chigariro's authority, concerned who controlled the means of production of the concept of morality, or what it meant to be a 'good person' and part of the 'community', in the area. Unlike the state, the Chief could not force those living in Mazowe to attend his *dare* or follow his rulings since he lacked coercive power. Instead, he had to persuade them. It was in carefully managed interactions between the Chief, those who worked in the court, and those who attended the *dare* that ideas of 'community', 'self' and 'other' emerged. It was impossible to ascertain the extent to which these subject positions and ideas of community were maintained outside of the *dare*. Neither would it have been possible for the Chief to police these outside of the *dare*. However, within the *dare* the Chief used his rhetoric skill and charisma to construct himself as the final authority.

The Structure of the Dare

Chief Chigariro held a *dare* in four different locations across the area over which he claimed jurisdiction: at Mhangura (in the Mazowe resettlement area), at Major Brown (in Concession next to Howard Hospital, part of the Mazowe resettlement area), at Beria (a new resettlement area West of Harare) and at Musarara (in the Chiweshe communal lands).³¹ The *dare* occurred bi-weekly on rotation: on alternate Saturday mornings at either Mhangura or Major Brown, and every other Sunday morning at Musarara. The *dare* in Beria was held less frequently, this area being some way away from Mhangura where the Chief resided. Despite the official status of chiefs' authority in new resettlement areas being so heavily in question, over the time of my fieldwork the *dare* in Mhangura was attended by approximately forty people each week. On average between fifteen and twenty cases were heard per session and each session lasted from 3 to 5 hours. Those who attended were fairly representative of the general demographic of those living in the area, a mix of old and young, male and female, land beneficiaries, farmworkers, and those living and working on mines and other companies in the area, such as the Mazowe Citrus Estate. The popularity of the *dare*, according to Chief Chigariro, substantiated his claim that through the *dare* he provided a service to 'his' people, one that he stated the previous claimant to the Chiweshe chieftaincy had failed to provide. Indeed, given the financial cost of taking a case to court and the extent to which Chief Chigariro's authority appeared to be in question, it was striking how well attended these sessions were.

In Mhangura, the *dare* was held in an outdoor shed once used to house tractors. At Major Brown it was held beneath a large tree, at Musarara in a class room, and in Beria under the cover of a large wooden shed built for this purpose. Both the layout and administration were the same at each location. 'Complainants' (*anechichemo* – the one with a complaint) took cases to their headman who would, depending on the severity of the case, either immediately attempt to resolve it, call his own 'village level' *dare* or issue a summons to the Chief's *dare*, a copy of which would be passed on to the

³¹ Most data was collected from the Mhangura *dare* although I did attend a *dare* in each of the other locations at least once.

accused. Alternatively, headmen, described by Chief Chigariro as ‘the eyes of the Chief’, might summon people to the *dare*. Chief Chigariro was particularly keen that people channel their disputes through his court and encouraged headmen to issue summons to those under their jurisdiction. Both the accused (*akamangara* – the one reported) and the complainant were supposed to attend the *dare*, often in the company of at least one or two relatives and/or witnesses. Cases were recorded and administered by Petros, the ‘clerk of court’ and the Chief’s personal ‘secretary’. The Chief’s advisers consisted of four of the Chief’s male relatives, any headmen in attendance, their number ranging from five to fifteen depending on who turned up, and the Chief’s ‘messengers of court’, who were also referred to as the Chiefs ‘policemen’.³² The job of the Chief’s policemen was to ensure *dare* order and etiquette were observed during a session, discipline those who failed to observe it (usually by public humiliation and threat of arrest), issue summons from the Chief and make property attachments as penalties out with the *dare*. However, after attending the court for over twelve months, I never saw anyone actually arrested. The Chief’s ‘policemen’ were relatives of the Chief’s who were police officers employed by government outside of the court. They did possess handcuffs but never used them. Nonetheless, the threat of arrest was frequently used as a disciplinary technique within court sessions. These threats also served to emphasize the court as a formal legal state institution. The accused paid a USD20 ‘court fee’ before a case was heard, and whoever lost the case covered this cost afterwards. If the accused was cleared, they were refunded the fee by the complainant. Thus, there was a political economy to the court. In addition to the Chief, headmen received a percentage of the ‘court fee’ as did the others who worked in the *dare*. Baba Basim explained that this was how Chief Chigariro paid his headmen and those who worked with him, given that they had not yet officially been gazetted by government and were therefore not on the government payroll as headmen in communal areas were.

Two different kinds of cases were brought to the Chief’s court, those involving two disputing parties and those where a headman had independently brought someone to

³² In theory all the Chief’s headmen in a particular locality were supposed to attend the *dare* of their area, but in practice the maximum number I ever observed was ten in Mhangura, far fewer than the actual number of headmen working in the area.

the court. In cases between two disputing parties a summons was issued from one person to another via a headman. The most common of this kind of case involved marriage disputes: divorces, failure to pay bride wealth (*lobola*) and failure to pay children's maintenance after divorce. After marriage disputes, witchcraft cases and cases involving informal employment were also common. Bourdillon (1987) has described the second kind of case, those where the headman had summonsed an individual to the court, as being closer to the European concept of 'crime' (p. 159). These, he writes, are acts that are understood as endangering the whole community (p. 159). In Chief Chigariro's court these usually concerned environmental offences; chopping young trees, chopping sacred trees or killing sacred animals (in Mazowe, baboons and snakes). The effects of these 'crimes' might be that spirits are angered, which might result in them withholding the rain, for example. Occasionally, in Chief Chigariro's *dare*, one kind of case overlapped with the other. If a case between two disputing parties involved one having desecrated the land, for example if one party had interfered with a human grave for the purposes of witchcraft, this became a 'criminal case'. 'Criminal cases' were seen by the Chief to be far more serious than marriage disputes, for example. They often required that the Chief perform rituals to cleanse the land and appease the ancestors and resulted in much heftier fines.

'Fines' were described in terms of livestock or other material goods, such as cloth, and then converted into cash. For example, Chief Chigariro would declare that the accused had to pay 'Two cattle, which is USD300 per cow, so that is USD600 in total' as bridewealth. While it was possible to observe payment of the USD20 'court fee' it was impossible for me to follow up on whether full payment of fines was actually made and in what medium. The only part of the 'fine' that was sometimes paid within the court was the first part of bridewealth, pieces of cloth and blankets. All other fines, if these were paid, were done so outside of the court setting. It was impossible to ascertain whether these were paid, as this would have occurred between families outside of the court. But I suspect that the court served to kick-start negotiations between the families involved, even if only some of the final payment was made. The Chief also often threatened 'property attachments' – the confiscation of property, usually livestock of the accused – if they did not follow through with his ruling. However, my sense was that property attachments and fines for 'criminal' offences

were rarely followed up on. Nonetheless, such threats were important in stressing the authority of the Chief and the severity of the transgressions committed.

Chief Chigariro did not have the personnel, the finances nor the formal legal authority to make property attachments in Mazowe. He could not enforce his fines outside of the court setting. In this light, drawing on the work of Malcolm Feeley (1979), I suggest that it was the 'court fee' paid by the 'guilty' during the court session that constituted the most significant part of the material aspect of the punishment meted out by the Chief. Feeley's (1979) work took place in a very different and context: lower criminal courts in the USA. However, I have found his main point useful in understanding the process of punishment within Chief Chigariro's court. Based on qualitative and quantitative fieldwork in a New Haven court, Feeley argues that the more lower criminal courts pursued an ideal of adjudicative justice, the more the transaction costs of offering justice rose (pp.3-34). The ideal of adjudicative justice was that by rigorously following due process in court cases, undeserved punishment would be avoided. However, this pushed up the transaction costs of cases in lower criminal cases. Because stakes for the defendants in the outcome of the cases examined by Feeley were generally low, this meant that the processing costs of the case hurt them as much, if not more, than the outcome. The adjudicative process then, became the punishment. The transaction costs in Chief Chigariro's court were borne by the accused. Unlike the American justice system, Chief Chigariro was not explicitly pursuing an ideal of adjudicative justice as a means of preventing undeserved punishment. However, like the defendants in Feeley's work, in its financial aspect, the outcome of the judgement in Chief Chigariro's court was not as significant as the cost of the court fee. This was because Chief Chigariro's 'policemen' did not have the power to arrest people outside of the court session, nor was the Chief able to deploy any kind of physical violence. He lacked the ability to enforce his extremely high court 'fines' outside of actual court sessions. It is highly unlikely that the property attachments and hefty fines threatened by the Chief, particularly for 'criminal' cases, were followed up on. As such, I suggest that like the cases examined by Feeley, it was the adjudicative procedure in Chief Chigariro's court that constituted the punishment for the accused. Public shaming within the *dare* also constituted another significant form of punishment, in addition to being used as a disciplinary technique which served

to shore up the authority of those doing the shaming (usually the Chief and his headmen but also often members of the *dare* audience).

As discussed in Chapter Five, the Government of Zimbabwe made land disputes an administrative rather than a legal issue by declaring that no court of law could attend to land matters, including chief's courts. As the DA explained, chiefs were to deal with 'traditional' rather than administrative issues in new resettlement areas. However, what exactly constituted 'tradition', and the Chief's jurisdiction, was unclear. At the start of this chapter I briefly sketched the opening of a *dare* to illustrate how the Chief framed his authority with reference to the ancestors, although at moments during *dare* proceedings, he articulated his legitimacy with reference to the state, (for example his appointment by 'the President'). That the *dare* was a state institution was evident in the material culture of the *dare* – the paperwork, the Chief's gold star badge – as well as the terms used to describe different roles, 'clerk of court', 'fine', 'messenger of court', 'presiding officer'. But while Chief Chigariro did at times articulate his legitimacy with reference to the state, and while elements of the *dare* reinforced its state-likeness, for the most part, the *dare* was explicitly cast and organised by Chief Chigariro as an arena of 'tradition'. Entering the *dare* was like entering a space that seemed to be of a different spatio-temporal dimension (Obarrio 2010: 269), even as aspects of the current socio-political context were clearly brought into and informed the court as well.

Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983) famously coined the term the 'invention of tradition' to describe the process by which colonial authorities codified and bound ideas about African society and used 'tradition' in order to legitimate themselves (pp.1-14). This work gave the impression that pre-colonial Africa was characterised by flexibility, multiple identities and pluralism in contrast to the rigidity that followed the colonial encounter. It led to a huge volume of scholarship that approached all 'tradition' as the suspicious product of colonial forces. In a recent appraisal of this famous work, Ranger (1994) has problematized the idea of the 'invention of tradition'. He has argued that the idea referred to a particular point in history, which in Zimbabwe most obviously applies to the period of Rhodesian 'ultra-traditionalism' in the 1960s, when the Rhodesian state turned to chiefs to try and regain legitimacy following the

disastrous opposition to the NLHA (Native Lands Husbandry Act). This as I discussed in the Introduction, led to an obsessive encoding of 'tradition', 'customary law' and chiefly and spirit medium genealogies. In Ranger's problematisation of the idea of the 'invention of tradition' he suggests in fact the process by which the 'inventing' occurred was much more sophisticated and complex than the impression given by the term 'invention', with its suggestion of a one-sided inventor (see for example Chanock 1985).

Sally Falk Moore (1986) has written that the idea of 'customary law' gives the sense of a strict code of rules. But she argues, in Kenya the recognition of 'customary law' concerned setting apart a distinct realm which was assumed to be static but actually dealt very flexibly with cases considered to be below or beyond the state (pp.317-318). Once established, customary law courts operated relatively independently, and those within them adapted to changes around them while still maintaining a 'rhetoric of changelessness' (Falk Moore 1986 as cited Ranger 1994: 45). To more accurately capture the dynamism of processes involved in the codification of 'tradition', Ranger (1994) proposes the term 'imagined traditions' instead (p.24). Rather than approaching customary law as a fixed body of rules invented by colonial officers to maintain the patriarchy, he suggests we trace the constant process of 'imagining and reimagining' involved in articulations of 'tradition' (1994: 48). In the *dare*, Chief Chigariro articulated his authority not only through claims to the land and his knowledge of the land (Chapter Six), but also his knowledge of 'tradition'. By 'tradition' he explained that he meant 'the laws of the people' (*mitemo yevanhu*). This was presented to me as a discrete body of knowledge concerning how people ought to behave in relation to each other, the land, and the ancestors, in order to maintain the sanctity of the land and a society that functioned in ways that preserved this sanctity and pleased (or at least avoided offending) the ancestors. In a similar fashion to that described by Falk Moore in Kenyan customary law courts (1986), Chief Chigariro referred to this body of knowledge as a static unchanging entity. Yet 'customary law', as it was practiced within Chief Chigariro's court, was not a seamless whole but 'an arena for debates about social morality, advancement and citizenship' (Ranger 1994: 45).

In Chief Chigariro's court, the Chief combined different bodies of knowledge, 'traditional' and 'modern', and different elements of law, 'customary' and Roman-Dutch. He also drew on different sources of sovereignty in making his proclamations and threats of punishment. The court formed part of Chief Chigariro's 'project of return' and was explicitly constructed as a space of 'tradition', a space in which he was the ultimate authority. Yet the court was also implicated in the broader political context in which it was held. Although the Chief explicitly declared that the court was free from the messy realm of party 'Politics', people still channeled disputes concerning party 'Politics' through the *dare* articulated as disputes of another kind.

Creating Chiefly Subjects, Reinforcing State Exclusions

Merry (1994) has conceived of courts in terms of ritual performance, involving specialized costumes, language, the demarcation of space and the ordering of time, features that not only 'enhance[s] the power of the court' but also 'impose[s] changes on the way people understand themselves and their rights and obligations' (p.37). The basis of the 'alternative imagined community' being promoted in the *dare* was not only articulated in terms of the Chief's knowledge of 'customary law' and in his pronouncements and judgements, but also in the organisation of the *dare* in terms of space and time and the disciplining of bodies and manners of speech. Through the enforcement of and attendance to what I term *dare* etiquette, those attending the *dare* were shaped as and enacted the role of being Chiefly 'subjects'. *Dare* etiquette concerned people's bodily and spoken manners within the court. In structuring the space and time of the *dare* in particular ways, Chief Chigariro constituted it as a space of 'tradition'. By disciplining the bodies of those who attended the court through insisting on the strict observation of *dare* etiquette, Chief Chigariro re-inscribed his authority over those within the court. By performing *dare* etiquette, those attending the court participated in constructing themselves as chiefly subjects, even if this was only in court sessions. *Dare* etiquette was also used by the Chief to reinforce particular exclusions from the community he was trying to create, even as he framed these in

terms of a generalized appeal to ‘our customs’. Failure to observe *dare* etiquette was used as the fault-line along which figures of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ members of the community were distinguished.

Every *dare* opened in a similar fashion, although here I describe the one I most often attended in Mhangura, where Chief Chigariro lived. The ‘clerk of court’ and the Chief’s advisors – his headmen plus a few male relatives – sat on wooden benches in front of the court audience under the roof of the tractor shed. As the Chief approached the shed from the farmhouse, those in attendance stood up, while the praise singer knelt on the ground clapping and singing a song that traced the ancestral lineage of Chief Chigariro back to Ambuya Nehanda. In this way, not only the Chief’s ancestors, but those considered ancestors of the entire country, were informed that the *dare* was open and were requested to offer guidance. Men clapped continuously through the song while women ululated and clapped at particular moments. All women wore a wrap of colourful cotton printed cloth (*zambia*) over their skirts and most wore a headscarf (*dhuku*) as well, signs of female respectability. Women explained that it was simply ‘what one had to do when attending the *dare*’. From the audiences’ perspective the Chief sat in front of the court on a chair to the left. His ‘advisors’ sat on a long bench next to him behind a table on which court paperwork was administered by the ‘clerk’. Women and men in the audience sat separately, women to the right, men to the left. Much like people unfamiliar with attending church, there was a sense of wonder and amusement at the formality of the *dare* among some of those who attended, particularly those of younger generations or those from towns, many of whom had never attended a *dare* before. Once the Chief was seated, the audience followed suit. The ‘clerk’ then opened the *dare* with a statement asserting the Chiefs authority, ‘There is only one authority and one judge here and that is the Chief. If you are rich you leave your money at the gate’. He outlined the *dare* etiquette, particularly with regards how to approach the Chief and the payment of court fees. This involved deferential bodily, discursive and spatial performances on the part of those in attendance: clapping when approaching the Chief, asking for permission from the Chief, as well as all those in attendance, before making the initial statement, and observing kinship taboos such as not sharing a bench with one’s in-laws.

After *dare* had been opened, those with cases were called forward and their summonses were collected. Both men and women were expected to kneel or bow when in front of the Chief and his advisers. Men were to remove their hats, and clap, women to sit on the ground, eyes cast down. Once those with cases had returned to their seats, a case would be read out by the ‘clerk’ (*‘Shamu versus Moyo, failure to pay maintenance’*). Kinship rules of hierarchy were enforced through the movement of people’s bodies, the manner and timing of when they spoke and the terms they used. In the photograph below the women can be seen to be wearing *zambia* and head coverings. Unless speaking, the women sat with their heads bowed. The accused and the complainant sat next to each other on the bench, while their daughters sat on the ground on either side. Women who forgot to kneel, sat ‘inappropriately’ or sat in the wrong place were publicly reprimanded and sent back to the audience to repeat their performance of deference, as were men who forgot to clap. Thus bodies were disciplined, or ‘traditional bodies’ (re)made in the *dare*, the underlying assumption being that one’s morality could be enacted and corporeally identified.



Fig. 11: Chief Chigariro (with hat) sitting with his advisers at the *dare* held at Mhangura. Photo taken with permission. Source: Author, May 2012.

Eloquent speakers generally began describing their cases with following kinds of statements, ‘Excuse me Chief, excuse me headmen, excuse me everybody seated’.

Those attending the *dare* referred to Chief Chigariro as ‘father’ (*baba*), ‘chief’ (*mambo*), ‘leader’ (*changamire*) or ‘*Musiamwa*’ (the Chiefs totemic name, deriving from totem of the Eland). However, ‘father’ and ‘Chief’ were the terms most commonly used. Chief Chigariro referred to those present and his ‘children’ (*vana*). In this mode, Chief Chigariro presented himself as an authority whose interests lay in the good of the ‘family’ (the community) and individual ‘children’ involved in a case. This caring, protective mode of authority was most commonly evoked in resolving marriage disputes and arguments between members of a family. In one case where a young woman had been beaten by her husband and sorrowfully told Chief Chigariro that she had no father to protect her, he replied, scolding her, ‘I am your father, am I not your father? You will stay in my house’. At other times the Chief would declare, ‘Even witches are my children. I don’t want you to hurt each other. If you have a problem you come here, you don’t take justice in your own hands’.

John Borneman (2004) offers a productive framework for understanding of the kind of authority Chief Chigariro was trying to wield and the kinds of subjects he was trying to constitute when he claimed to be the ‘father’ of those living in Mazowe. Borneman examines different ‘totalizing’ and ‘patricentric’ authoritarian regimes that revolved around charismatic male leaders in Europe and Japan. By ‘totalizing’ Borneman refers to these leaders’ claims to an absolute and exclusive power to rule, ‘in the name of a posited prior or future Utopian wholeness’ (2004: 3). By ‘patricentric’, their attempt to ‘unify their subjects and create a modern subjectivity through identification with a leader’ who ‘appropriates for himself all forms of paternal authority’ (ibid.). Chief Chigariro’s authority was not totalizing, even if it was ‘patricentric’. But the point is that he aspired for it to be. I do not claim that Chief Chigariro’s authority operated in the same way that Hitler’s did but some features of Borneman’s framework for understanding these ‘father’ figures’ authority echo the kind of position Chief Chigariro was attempting to carve out for himself amongst those living in Mazowe. In particular, he was trying to create an ‘exclusive kind of belonging’, and get those in Mazowe to attach to him as an authority with paternal affect. Chief Chigariro was trying to create the kind of authority that ‘partakes in both the power and the fragility of an intimate bond’ (Borneman 2004: 4).

The enforcement of *dare* etiquette was one of the most obvious ways in which Chief Chigariro constructed the *dare* as a space of ‘tradition’ within which he was the ultimate authority and through which particular notions of community were pursued. In the context of Native Commissioners’ courts in Southern Rhodesia, Alison Shutt (2007) has examined the way in which Native Commissioners (NCs) used charges of insolence to demarcate between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ members of the community. As a category of difference within NC’s courts, Shutt suggests that ‘insolence intersected with critical issues of state-building, most notably the debate over how to dominate unruly Africans within the constraints of colonial civility’ (ibid.: 670). NCs pressed for judicial powers to prosecute insolent Africans, because the poor manners of Africans in the courts threatened to undermine their authority. Insolence became ‘a judicial marker that highlighted threats to settler honour and prestige’ (ibid.: 654). Rules of etiquette legitimized racial and colonial hierarchies, as well as the authority of the NC within the court setting. In Chief Chigariro’s court, the observance of *dare* etiquette was used as a fault line along which ‘bad’ members of the community were marked out from ‘good’ ones. Those who failed to perform appropriate *dare* etiquette were accused of lacking *unhu* (moral personhood) and publicly shamed. However, even within the court, ideas of community were not simply enforced. Those attending Chief Chigariro’s court did not always agree with the Chief. Cases were discussed and orders were not always followed through on. Failure to observe *dare* etiquette was also the most obvious means by which those who attended the *dare* challenged the Chief’s claim to authority. In Southern Rhodesian Native Commissioners courts, ‘scenes of insolence were always disconcerting precisely because they disrupted the image of moral authority that settler officials fashioned for themselves and the colony’ (Shutt 2007: 665). The same applied to Chief Chigariro’s *dare*. When those in attendance refused to perform *dare* etiquette, they disrupted the image of unquestionable authority that Chief Chigariro was trying to carve out for himself.

Where people failed to observe *dare* etiquette, the Chief asked where they came from or whether they were ‘farmers’ (*varimi*) (as opposed to farmworkers). In instances when individuals failed to perform adequate deference to the Chief, or in the case of farmworkers, who were often picked out because of their accents or the bodily manner in which they approached the Chief, they were publicly shamed. ‘I am not your

foreman. I am the Chief of this area', Chief Chigariro would state. Farmworkers' mistakes were invariably used as an opportunity to re-assert not only the Chief's authority over the *dare* but the permanent fact of land reform and the necessity to adapt to new structures of authority in these areas. Thus, Chief Chigariro reinforced the idea of farmworkers as not only 'alien' but also 'immoral'. Farmworkers had to subscribe to a new 'mode of belonging' in line with the contours of what were defined by the Chief as 'our customs'. This sentiment was also reflected in the opinions of some older land beneficiaries outwith the *dare*, such as VaChikwira:

In the villages [communal areas] we were not mostly attending court cases because the offences there people knew about them already. But here there are a lot of court cases with the farmworkers, they did not know what an offence was. They did not know the courts as well, even a headman they did not know. For example, they can shout at a person. Now according to the Chief if you shout at anyone it is an offence, you will have to pay for it a hen or a goat. Now these people did not know, these people do not pay *lobola*, they just stay together, the children belong to the wife. Now those are all offences and they are now learning from us, we are now teaching them culture. Every time we are holding court cases it is mostly because of them. Most offences are coming from the compound because they do not understand how to live with others.

The state's narrative of farmworkers as 'other' was reproduced and reinforced through Chief Chigariro's *dare*. However, it was articulated in terms of their lack of 'culture' and *unhu*. For their part, farmworkers described their reluctance to attend the *dare* and often only did so under duress from the appointed headmen of the farm on which they lived. 'We used to report to the foreman', one old man told me, 'but now they say we have to go to the Chief'. As one male farmworker told me, Chief Chigariro was also 'a new farmer' (land beneficiary) and in cases between land beneficiaries and farmworkers, the Chief was perceived to always take the land beneficiary's side. Chief Chigariro frequently commented on farmworkers' lack of *unhu* and their need to learn the 'Zezuru' way.³³ However, such comments were not exclusively aimed at farmworkers, and those land beneficiaries who were not Zezuru or came from areas outside of the Chiweshe communal lands were also picked on often because they had failed to perform some bodily prostration, or because they disagreed with the Chief's

³³ *ChiZezuru* is a chiShona dialect widely spoken in Mashonaland and central Zimbabwe.

ruling. Such individuals would also be publicly reprimanded: ‘You are here now, you must learn the way. People from Dande are a pain. You need to learn how we do things here’.³⁴ As Berry (2002) has written in relation to ‘traditional’ land claims in Senegal, ‘Framed as an appeal to a virtuous past – a time when the ‘right’ people were in power, or in possession of land – ‘tradition’ is inherently exclusionary’ (p.654). In Chigariro’s court, narratives of ‘tradition’ reinforced ZANU PF’s politics of exclusion as well as being used by Chief Chigariro to distinguish between ‘children’ from Chiweshe (autochthons) and ‘outsiders’.

I now turn to three case studies of different kinds of cases brought to Chief Chigariro’s court. In the first set of cases, I use the most generic kind of cases brought to the Chief’s court – marriage disputes – to examine how Chief Chigariro constructed himself as a non-authoritarian figure by encouraging public participation in cases where he nonetheless always made the final judgment. In this way he created himself as an authority figure who was nonetheless ‘of the people’ and naturalized the judgments he made. At the same time, the righteousness of his judgments was reinforced. The second set of cases were ‘criminal’ cases in which a headman had brought someone to court. I show how the Chief evoked the state as a threatening disciplinary device and drew on multiple sources of legitimacy in order to legitimate himself as an authority over those living in Mazowe. In the third case I present, I explore how land beneficiaries used the court to channel disputes concerning party ‘Politics’. Channeling such cases through the court allowed those involved to engage in conflict over party ‘Politics’ without making *noise*. Just as the Chief claimed his court was ‘non-Political’ but then used it as a platform through which to attack party and local government officials who challenged his authority (Chapter Six), those in Mazowe also used the court for their own ‘Political’ ends.

³⁴ Dande is an area in Mt. Darwin District north of Mazowe where many of those given land in Mazowe originated. Those coming from Dande spoke *chiKorekore*.

‘Be Logical. Stop Wasting Our Time!’

I begin with a case that illustrates the dynamic in cases concerning marriage disputes (the most common kind of case brought to the *dare*), in which Chief Chigariro appealed to the court audience (those waiting for their own hearings) to affirm his judgment and qualify the fine imposed on the accused party. In doing so, he reinforced his authority and validated his judgment as being ‘of the people’, even as he always had the final say and could arguably be said to manipulate the audience by asking leading questions and controlling the way in which the case was discussed. The complaint, which involved a young man’s failure to pay maintenance to his former wife for the care of their child after their divorce, was similar to others in which a family dispute became a way of discussing and reinforcing gender roles and hierarchy typical in *chiShona* speaking families. Chief Chigariro approached the problem by framing it in terms of traditional roles of men and women in the family as well as gender equality and the need to respect women. These two constructions of events, one in terms of rights and one in terms of complementary gender roles, reflected the multiple subject positions to which Chief Chigariro appealed, even as he explicitly framed the *dare* in terms of ‘our customs’ and the past. Encouraging the court audience to participate in the hearing gave Chief Chigariro the opportunity to perform his own oratory skill and knowledge while simultaneously having his judgment validated as a ‘norm’ of respectable behavior. Public opinion was also used as a disciplinary technique to shame the accused into obedience, or at least the performance of obedience.

The complainant in this case was an old man taking his son-in-law to the *dare* because the son-in-law had failed to pay maintenance for his child after ‘divorcing’ the old man’s daughter. People explained that they took such cases to the *dare* because they sought material compensation rather than punishment. As one woman explained, ‘If I wanted the other person to be arrested, I would go to the magistrates *dare*. But I just want to be paid’. Examining marriage transactions in which a number of tokens are passed between different people before, during and after a marriage, Johan Holleman

(1952) asks, 'What is the function of these tokens?' His suggestion is that amongst Shona peoples:

[...] materialising' words or actions of particular significance into some tangible object or 'payment' is not confined to marriage law, but will be found in almost every field of legal practice, formal or informal. The usage is essentially due to the particular disposition of the Shona minds to express itself in terms of concrete action or by means of a tangible token, rather than by abstract words or formulae. Or, to put it more simply: seeing and feeling is more real and satisfactory than hearing (p.76).

Thus, as I will go on to show, in marriage disputes the first items of bridewealth payment were sometimes brought to the court to display payment had been made. However, other than these, I never witnessed the exchange of items in the court setting, although they may have occurred out-with the court. Instead, I suggest that the court was used, usually by elderly fathers or divorced wives, as a way of kick-starting the negotiation of payments outside of the court. In addition, the public humiliation of the 'guilty' party also served as a form of punishment, even if this was not as severe as taking someone to the police. As in the case I discuss, much emphasis was placed on public shaming in the *dare* as a way of pushing people to follow through on compensation and payments to the *dare*, or as punishment in and of itself.

The 'clerk of court' opened the hearing with the following statement: 'Shamu versus Moyo, failure to pay maintenance'. The men, Shamu and Moyo, walked to the front of the *dare* clapping as they approached the chief, and sat on the bench in front of him. Immediately Chief Chigariro reprimanded the younger man for sitting on the same bench as his father-in-law. 'Is he your friend?', Chief Chigariro asked the young man sarcastically. 'USD10 for sitting on the same bench as his father, write it down', Chief Chigariro instructed the 'clerk'. At this, the court audience tittered slightly. The young man moved on to the dirt floor. The process of humiliating the young man had begun, as had the enforcement of paternalistic and patriarchal authority (of the father-in-law over the son-in-law, and of the Chief over the young man) which was physically and spatially enacted by the young man sitting on the floor. By teasing the young man, Chief Chigariro established the informal nature of the court whilst simultaneously underscoring it as official and underwritten by force, in this case the threat of a fine.

As with Yngvesson's (1988) 'clerks' in Massachusetts, the Chief was in control of the questions, directing the audience discussion as well as the responses of each of the parties so that he could obtain the kind and sequence of information he wanted but exclude whatever he defined as inappropriate (p.423). The old man was given the floor to speak. He explained that the young man lived with his daughter for five years and had a child with her but had never paid any maintenance towards the child since the couple had split up. After his speech, addressed to the Chief, the younger man was given the floor to speak. He explained that the couple divorced because the woman had an affair. At this, the Chief stood up to make a speech, addressing the audience:

These people are really people', he says, referring to women. 'You men,' he says pointing to the men, 'you come home smelling of beer and cigarettes and refuse to eat relish prepared for you when you haven't brought your wife meat?!' At this point the women ululate. 'They [women] look after you. You are not people!' Chief Chigariro then threatens to call lawyers to judge the case. He asks the women in the audience their opinion but none of them speak up. He then declares, 'We have from 12.30 - 1.30 to let this man speak. This is an issue about maintenance of the child, not about the relationship between the parents.' The Chief asks if the young man brought any relatives with him. He has not, and the Chief takes this as proof of his guilt, 'You see, he was too embarrassed to bring anyone with him', he says, addressing the audience. The young man is told to speak. He wanders off topic and is reprimanded by the Chief, 'Be logical, stop wasting our time. Tell us if you have finished speaking'. The young man declares that he has, prompting men in the audience to mutter 'What did he finish? He didn't say anything'. A man in the audience stands up and speaks of gender equality ending, 'This young man has broken his children's rights'. A woman then stands up. 'I want to ask this man if to look after children is to pay school fees only? They don't need shoes, they don't need food, they don't need books?' she asks him. The young man who stubbornly refuses to admit his fault is then told by the Chief to sit in front of the *dare* and 'be judged by these people'. He is ordered to remove his shoes, hand his phone to the 'clerk' and sit on the dusty ground at the feet of the advisers. He looks at the floor, embarrassed. The Chief then says to the clerk, 'Write down six cattle to be paid. And you [pointing to the daughter who has been called to the front] give him a list of things that you want.' The young man stands up and signs a form handed to him by the clerk and the case is dismissed. The young man remains sitting on the ground until the *dare* is closed but then is free to go. [Fieldnotes, 11.11.12]

Chief Chigariro appealed to the *dare* audience to affirm social norms of respectable behaviour that applied across chiShona speaking cultures, such as the taboo against sharing a seat with one's parent-in-law or the payment of bride wealth. This had the effect of drawing the audience into individuals' cases and highlighting commonly held ideas of what it was to be a moral person. So for example, in cases where young men had failed to pay bride wealth, Chief Chigariro would at times insist that the man in question brought the initial items owed fourteen meters of 'African attire' and a blanket to be given to the woman's mother, to the *dare* for approval by the women convened. In one such instance the women insisted that the cloth was unsuitable and rejected it: 'its cheap cloth', 'That is cloth for children', 'The blanket is too small' and 'That is a blanket for a dead person'. This was accompanied by the damning indictment that the young man was 'rough' and lacked *unhu*. In such cases, having drawn the audience into a case, public opinion was used to shame the person in question into performing respectable behavior, at least within the court setting. Similarly, humiliating the 'guilty' person through teasing was another disciplinary technique used by the Chief. In a case between a young man and his father-in-law over the son's failure to pay bride wealth the Chief suddenly asked the son about his dreadlocks. The young man was dressed in snazzy aspirant urban fashion, a bright yellow shirt tucked into baggy suit trousers with shiny pointed leather shoes. 'That kind of hair is for women', the Chief declared. 'I have read a newspaper that told me that they do those things in Jamaica, but this is not Jamaica. Have you not heard of *ngochani*?'³⁵ Chief Chigariro then appealed to the women in the *dare* for their opinion. Amidst much laughter one woman piped up, 'They will be competing to use the mirror in the morning'. Having stated the amount of bridewealth owed, the Chief ended the case by advising the young man to cut his hair with a disapproving shake of his head. Here being a good person was defined not only in terms of adherence to 'social norms' with regards particular ritual practices, but also in terms of gender roles and personal attire. The contours of 'culture' were aligned with those of morality and this was something performed through dialogue between the Chief and those who brought cases to the *dare*. However, ultimately Chief Chigariro made the decisions on all cases. Audience

³⁵ *Ngochani* is a derogatory word used to describe homosexual men, and more rarely women, in Zimbabwe.

participation was more to do with bolstering his own oratory skill and knowledge and validating cultural norms and their applicability despite the resettlement context than a process of democratic decision making. Land beneficiaries put the popularity of Chief Chigariro's *dare* down to the fact there were more disputes in new resettlement areas owing to the heterogeneity of people from different areas with different 'customs' and the lack of 'morality' on farms. People told me that they attended the Chief's *dare* because they sought material compensation. Although this was rarely paid in the court, land beneficiaries nonetheless used the court to kick-start the process outside of the court.

'Don't be like the Whites who Chop Trees'

This case involved a dispute between two men, Bvuma and Shumba. Bvuma had trespassed on to Shumba's land to chop trees. The case, unlike the one before, was more akin to what Bourdillon (1987) refers to as a 'crime' in the sense that it concerned the well-being of the land (p.159). Interestingly, however, the Chief did not refer to the land as a sacred entity, but instead as an environmental one and invoked the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) as a threat of force for exacting a fine on Bvuma for chopping the trees. The two men were neighbouring A1 land beneficiaries, and the land boundaries in question were determined by the state's demarcations of each man's six hectare plot. Bvuma claimed that the trees belonged to him because they grew in his wife's 'garden'. 'Gardens' refer to the small vegetable patches found in most households for household subsistence. They are usually the province of women. While Chief Chigariro was not officially allowed to rule on land boundaries and questions of land allocations, he saw it as within his jurisdiction to rule on cases concerning the land as a sacred and environmental entity. Yet, at the same time, Chief Chigariro first insisted on seeing the two men's 'offer letters', which they duly produced. He then further reinforced the state's authority and demarcation of the landscape by making a speech directed at all the 'farmers' in the audience to respect the land boundaries set by the state. This was followed by invoking EMA as a

disciplinary authority to whom he would report the tree chopping. In this case it was not so much about public shaming but through reference to an external force that Chief Chigariro invoked a threat of punishment against Bvuma, and any other land beneficiary who might have been chopping trees.

Judging a case on someone trespassing into someone else's garden to chop trees, Chief Chigariro rose and asked everyone who was a 'farmer' (land beneficiary) to stand. Most of the *dare* stood. He asked them to verify facts about the plots given to them, how many hectares, and emphasised the fact that 'gardens' no longer existed. He then told those present at the *dare*, 'Remain within your six hectares. Even if you see a tree two inches into the yard of someone else, those trees are not yours. If you haven't got permission from EMA then don't cut them'. He took this as an opportunity to lecture those seated. Standing up he declared, 'Cutting trees, they belong to the country. Do you know that? What happens if you cut trees?', he asked rhetorically. Replying his own question he stated, 'It will not rain.' He then explained the water cycle to the audience ending with the statement, 'Don't be like the whites who cut trees. How did they burn their tobacco? With gum trees. Do you know that the fine issued by the Forestry commission for chopping trees is USD1000?' [Fieldnotes 13.10.12]

The case ended with the Chief fining Bvuma USD300 US to be paid to the *dare*. It was illegal, according to general law, for those living in new resettlement areas to chop young trees. Nonetheless, the demands for wood to burn tobacco were high and most people chopped trees anyway. As such, headmen frequently took large groups of land beneficiaries to the Chief's *dare* for chopping and sometimes selling wood. The case illustrates the multiple roles and sources of knowledge, legitimacy and threat used by the Chief. Chief Chigariro combined 'our customs' with the legal aspects of land administration in new resettlement areas. He reinforced the audience's subject positions as land beneficiaries and citizens of the state, subject to the state's rule of law and re-ordering of the land. By stating that 'gardens' no longer existed, Chief Chigariro referred to the fact that unlike in 'communal areas' where gardens were common and families distinguished between their land, fields for crops, and these small vegetable patches, 'gardens' did not exist in new resettlement areas. By appealing to those present 'not to be like the whites', he simultaneously constructed this as a question of a good moral order (that of the state and of the Chief) replacing a bad, immoral one.

The Chief evoked and switched between multiple roles in relation to the *dare*: father, custodian of the land and pedagogue of both ‘cultural’ and ‘scientific’ knowledge (his own classification). His judgments were justified with reference to ‘our customs’ and general law and he called on the ancestors, God, the President and the National Council of Chiefs in legitimizing his authority. Traditional leaders have always switched between multiple roles and sources of legitimacy in Zimbabwe. However, I suggest that the particularly high diversity of roles, sources of legitimacy and kinds of authority evoked by Chief Chigariro in relation to land beneficiaries and farmworkers in the *dare* not only reflected the fact that, in general, traditional authority derives its legitimacy from multiple sources, but also reflected the ambiguity around chiefs’ authority in new resettlement areas and the challenge of legitimising oneself amongst people from such a variety of places. It was not only a question of whose culture but whether ‘culture’ and ‘tradition’ even applied in new resettlement areas. These questions spoke to the larger issue of structures of authority in new resettlement areas and what land reform meant to different people involved.

An interview my research assistant Nyaradzo and I conducted with an A1 land beneficiary revealed the multiple loyalties to different chiefs among those living in Mazowe maintained at the same time. The land beneficiary was an older man who came from Mt. Darwin (an area north of the Chiweshe communal lands):

Nyaradzo: Coming to Chief Chigariro, are you satisfied that you are in your own soil or maybe, those times when it was said people are going to get their land back, even the Chief thought they would be moved back to the villages, do you feel at home here in Chief Chigariro’s land?

Man: Yes, I am very fine here with Chief Chigariro

N: You don’t feel oppressed?

M: No, when we first arrived, those issues were there. They used to say between the 45 and 15, they wanted only the 15. The 45 were told, ‘you are going back to Darwin soon’.

N: What do you mean by 45?

M: Numbers on the ID, people with 15 came from Chiweshe, people with 45 came from Darwin. So us with 45 were told by the war vets, 'you are going to go back'. But then the government sat down with the Chiefs and resolved that when we say 'son of the soil' we mean everyone, whether from Masvingo or where, they should be free wherever they are, so when I see Chief Chigariro, I also see chief Nembire who is my chief in Darwin.

N: When we attended Chigariro's court it looked like people did not always respect the Chief well. We asked why and people said it was people who have come from different places are different. One person has behaviour of Chief Nembire and doesn't know those of Chief Chigariro. Is this not very difficult to the community, to be taught new behaviours when they are adults already?

M: Our behaviours as blacks is not very different, the way Chief Nembire operates is the same as Chief Chigariro, there is not much of difference, the difference is that Chigariro is a Zezuru and Nembire is a Mukorekore. So, for example, when appeasing the ancestors, it's the same, it's not very different, the only difference is the language, but the laws are the same. The people who do not respect the Chief are his own people from Chiweshe. I see this when I attend the courts because they say he is our relative, these are our courts. For those who came from Nembire, ah... only a few disrespect Chief Chigariro because we want to live well.

Yet others attending the court stated in interviews afterwards that they did not take the Chief seriously because they had their own chiefs 'back home' and because chiefs did not have authority in new resettlement areas. Older A1 land beneficiaries were most obviously in support of Chief Chigariro, whilst younger land beneficiaries and large-scale land beneficiaries were more doubtful. At times, people (often younger) intentionally flouted *dare* etiquette in protest of the judgment or the case against them. Such instances were judged particularly harshly and often caused the Chief to launch into long winded speeches about how his authority was sanctioned by the President, the National Council of Chiefs and the ancestors.

Apart from humiliating 'guilty' parties in front of the *dare* audience, Chief Chigariro would call for the 'arrest' of those who refused to pay fines, disputed his judgment or worse, disputed his authority to judge. Sly, for example, was a young relative of the Chief's and one of the Chief's 'policemen'. He was a community officer trained by the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP). The Chief, on being challenged, for example,

would call out for his ‘policemen’: ‘Where are the handcuffs, arrest this man’. Sly would then roughly instruct the person in question to sit on the floor, remove his shoes and take his phone from him. On occasion handcuffs were produced, but rarely were they used. However, as in the example at the start of the chapter, those ‘arrested’ were always ‘released’, albeit with a good telling off from the Chief’s advisers, when the *dare* closed. Sometimes Chief Chigariro went even further and threatened reporting the case directly to Augustine Chihuri (Commissioner General of the ZRP). In this way he simultaneously displayed his personal connections with the political elite and evoked these as a way of enforcing his rulings.

‘There is No Politics in the Dare’

Here I focus on three separate cases brought to the *dare* by three different women against each other. The actual cases concerned an argument over money, chopping trees and public defamation. However, by examining the relationships of the women outside the *dare*, it becomes apparent that what underlay these cases was the struggle over the position of ZANU PF chairwoman at the ward level, or ‘Politics’. Here my focus is less on the goings-on within the *dare* and the Chief’s role in the *dare* than on the way in which these women used the *dare* for their own party ‘Political’ ends, and pushed the Chief into action that would support these.

The three women involved in the cases were: Amai Nyati, Amai Jonas and Amai Nzou. The story behind the cases concerned a fight between Amai Nyati and Amai Nzou over the position of ZANU PF district chairwoman. Their power struggle was channeled through the *dare* disguised as a dispute over failure to pay for clothes, chopping trees and insults. Amai Jonas, Amai Nyati and Amai Nzou all drew on discourses of what it was to be a good person, which involved ‘living well with others’ in order to publicly shame each other before the Chief and those in the *dare* audience. The cases can be understood as something akin to a local public defamation campaign.

Amai Nyati was a large, smartly dressed woman who lived with her husband in a house she had built for herself on the 137 hectares she had been allocated in 2003. Nyati was a war veteran who married and moved to Nigeria in 1966 but returned to Zimbabwe in 2003 because '[...] my children needed a place they could call their own. So I came back and started going up and down with my papers.' 'Up and down' referred to the bureaucratic hierarchy and the personal connections she needed to call on to obtain an A2 plot. The 137 hectares that Nyati was allocated formed part of Mannenburg Farm, which had been split into five A2 plots and included the area on which the previous white farmer's house and outbuildings stood. However, when Nyati arrived, the wife of a retired minister who had been allocated the plot next door, was living in the farmhouse. The couple refused to move from the farmhouse despite Amai Nyati's efforts. In 2008 (an election year) the minister started spreading a rumour that Amai Nyati was an MDC supporter. 'That's when I entered into politics, over that issue of the house', Nyati told me. Nyati re-joined the ZANU PF party and held the position of chairwoman at the time of our conversation. However, Amai Nzou, who had previously held this position, was trying to win back the post in the next local election. Amai Nyati wanted to retain her role as party chairwoman in order to better access resources for her plot of land. She also felt the position would enable her to foster better connections within the party which she felt would eventually enable her to take the farmhouse 'back' from the minister.

In the first case brought to the *dare*, Amai Nzou made a case against Amai Nyati for overcharging her for a women's trouser suit she had sold her some time back. Amai Nzou argued that she no longer wanted the suit since she was a respectable woman and did not wear trousers, but that Amai Nyati was still harassing her for the money. Here Amai Nzou was attempting to paint Amai Nyati as someone who could not be trusted, in front of an audience of potential voters for the next internal ZANU PF elections. This she did in order to try and regain the position of party chairwoman for herself. The Chief nonetheless ruled in Amai Nyati's favour and demanded Amai Nzou pay for the suit.

Amai Jonas was then drawn into the dispute between these two women. Amai Jonas worked for Chief Chigariro as a messenger of court. Her job involved serving people

summonses and reporting issues to the Chief so that summonses might be issued. A confident woman in her mid-thirties, Amai Jonas put her appointment by the Chief down to the fact that in 2006 a message had been relayed around Rua Farm where she lived that people were to go and meet their new Chief, but she was the only one who went. She was also the political commissar (PC) for ZANU PF at the ward level. Amai Jonas was embroiled in an on-going argument with Mai Nzou over the farmhouse on Rua Farm. Amai Nzou and her husband had been allowed to occupy the farmhouse because of their political connections. Amai Nzou was then voted into position of party chairwoman. The land surrounding this particular farmhouse had not been allocated during ‘fast track’ because it was supposed to be maintained as a nature reserve. However, after moving into the farmhouse Amai Nzou and her husband had ‘sold’ plots to various people, claiming that the land belonged to them because they occupied the farmhouse. In this way, Amai Nzou was able to amass a loyal population of personal supporters who depended on her to have plots of land. Amai Jonas, who felt that she should have been allowed to move into the farmhouse since she had led to occupation of Rua Farm, claimed that it was this mass of personal supporters who voted Amai Nzou into the position of chairwoman. Amai Nzou then lost her position to Amai Nyati but was involved in a campaign to regain her seat. Amai Jonas decided she would support Amai Nyati (Mannenbun Farm) in trying to retain the position of chairwoman because she had a personal vendetta against Amai Nzou for taking over the Rua farmhouse and refusing to move out.

In the second case brought to the *dare*, Amai Jonas (from Rua Farm) took Amai Nzou to court for having chopped trees on Rua. In the *dare* session, Amai Jonas argued that Amai Nzou ‘did not know how to live well with people and that she lacked *unhu*. The Chief ruled in Amai Jonas’ favour and issued Amai Nzou a hefty fine of USD300. In the third case some months later, Amai Nyati took Amai Nzou to the *dare* for calling her a prostitute at a party meeting. ‘Do you know that is an abomination in our culture? So now it becomes something for the Chief’, Nyati explained. All three women used the *dare* as a space in which they could channel a ‘Political’ dispute without making *noise*.

A conversation I had with one of the local AREX officers, a neighbour of Amai Jonas, revealed to me the background of the story:

Amai Nyati and Amai Nzou are power hungry for a party position. The actual argument is a simple one, they are just power hungry. You know Amai Nzou lost her post as district chairwoman. Now she started to accuse Amai Nyati of different things... I don't know exactly, but something to do with credit for clothing or something. There is just politics there.

However, as the AREX officer explained, because Amai Nzou had a large network of support amongst those whom she had sold the plots of land surrounding Rua farmhouse, she was likely to win back her position in the next election. In addition to her personal supporters, those more senior in the party were likely to support her efforts to regain her position.

We are talking about a population of 1200 votes. We are talking about a level above the Amai Nzou's. These politicians above Amai Nzou don't want to risk losing 1200 votes from their constituency so they think, 'I will just protect Amai Nzou even though there is nothing that is being gained by having her being in the position'. This is because politics is all about votes and politics is all about elections. So Amai Nzou reports to those above them and make the point that, 'Can you say that 1200 should leave because there is one or two people that want that house and want a party position? So weigh between those things.

As a result, Amai Nyati and Amai Jonas channeled the issue through the Chief's court to defame Amai Nzou in front of the audience of potential voters, and in front of the Chief who was well-connected within the higher echelons of the party.

As described in Chapter Six, Chief Chigariro presented himself as a neutral authority figure, in terms of party Politics and in terms of personal connection to those whom he judged in *dare*. These sentiments were expressed through three oft quoted statements, 'There is no Politics in *dare*', 'I know no one in *dare*', 'I have no relatives in the *dare*'. Yet, in a place with no formal dispute resolution mechanisms and with a constant attempt to suppress internal party 'Politics' from the public view, party power struggles were nonetheless channeled through the *dare*. However, they were disguised as issues about seemingly mundane things like trees, trousers, public defamation. Discourses of morality were used by Amai Nyati and Amai Jonas to paint Amai Nzou

as a bad person who should not be part of the community. The Chief's judgments against Amai Nzou further served to paint her as a 'trouble-maker' and an immoral person. In spite of Chief Chigariro's declarations that there was 'no Politics in the *dare*' land beneficiaries here used the *dare* to do 'Politics' without making *noise*.

Conclusion

In this chapter I explored the moral and political economy of Chief Chigariro's court. I showed how the Chief used the *dare* to constitute his 'subjects' and a community based on a kind of 'moral' belonging, framed in terms of a return to 'culture'. Chief Chigariro's calls to general social values, 'our customs', reinforced state exclusions within Mazowe but were also used to emphasise his own claim to authority since people from 'elsewhere' now needed to learn the ways of living in Mazowe. Two notions of community were at play, that of the ZANU PF state and that of Chief Chigariro. These were different but not opposed, and the Chief often combined them so that being a good citizen and being a good 'subject' of the Chief were constructed as involving similar obligations and duties and entailing similar rights. As described by Obarrio (2014), the subject positions that emerged were constituted as a blend of rights bearing citizens and customary 'subjects', embedded within kinship networks that included one's personal ancestors as well as the particular spirits of Mazowe. Yet the court was also an interactive space where the authority of the Chief was negotiated and challenged. The question of whether 'tradition' applied in new resettlement areas remained unresolved. Chief Chigariro was able to control this within the court, but not outside of it. By constituting the *dare* as a site of moral rather than Political belonging, Chief Chigariro attempted to bound the Political. However, as I have shown, people nonetheless used the *dare* to channel Political party disputes. In the following chapter I examine how the ZANU PF state sought to maintain chiefs within their control and further my argument that these two public authorities in new resettlement areas were constitutive of one another's power.

Chapter Eight: The Chief's Two Funerals

A week before I was due to leave Zimbabwe and return to the UK, I received a phone call from Amai Jonas, one of the Chief's 'messengers of court'. 'The Chief has died', she told me breathlessly. The news came as a shock. I had seen him the week before to say goodbye before moving back to Harare for my last week. He was, as always, fit and healthy. Thinking she must have been misinformed, I called Baba Basim to check. He told me that he'd just heard the Chief's brother had died, and not the Chief. My calls to various other members of the Chief's close retinue were left unanswered. Amai Basim (Baba Basim's wife) then called me and asked sharply, 'Who told you that the Chief has died?' Sensing that the information passed on to me was in some way illicit I gave a vague reply, not wanting to get my source in trouble. 'It's true', Basim's wife told me. 'He died yesterday. But don't speak about it'. Amai Jonas then called me back to inform me she'd been on her way to the Chief's house when she received a phone call telling her that the Chief was still in hospital and no one was at his home. Thinking that I might have had preferential access, she asked me to call the Chief's son to find out which hospital he was in so that we could go and visit him. However, I got the strong sense that the Chief's family were trying to prevent news of his death from circulating and decided not to pursue the issue any further. In the immediate days following Chief Chigariro's death, rumours of his death circulated amongst those who worked with him in the *dare* and lived within the vicinity of his house, but the official news of his death was kept a secret by his family members and the spirit mediums who worked with him. After two days, I received a call from Shadrek, the son of one of Chief Chigariro's spirit mediums, who informed me that the Chief was indeed dead. [Fieldnotes: 25.04.13]

Chief Joseph Chigariro died in April 2013. As is characteristic of chiefs' burials in Zimbabwe, the precise timing of his death and the burial process in the few days that followed it was kept secret from the general public. In contrast, a week after his secret burial, he was given a massive public state funeral, attended by local government officials, ministers, the head of the National Council of Chiefs, and local and district party leaders, in which a coffin full of stones was publicly interred. Why did Chief Chigariro have two funerals? What is the significance of his first secret burial as compared to his second public burial? What can these two funerals tell us about local and national 'politics' in the context of land reform? To answer these questions we have to understand the complex political role that chiefs (and their dead bodies) play

in localised processes of state-making in Zimbabwe in the context of a new resettlement area. In this chapter I examine the political significance of the materiality of Chief Chigariro's secret burial in this context, the role of chiefs in legitimating the state in the process of land reform, and the use of public state funerals as performative occasions at which particular local and national level political agendas are pursued by individual actors.

In Chapter Six I placed chiefs' relationship to the state in Zimbabwe into historical and current political context, particularly within a new resettlement area. I discussed how the ZANU PF state turned to chiefs at the end of the 1990s in order to gain legitimacy amongst local rural populations, and how chiefs in turn used this as an opportunity to push their own vision of the state, a vision in which chiefs occupied a far more prominent role as state actors. This final chapter brings together some of the themes explored in the previous two chapters. I explained that chiefs in Zimbabwe embody two qualitatively different sovereignties, that of the ancestors and that of the state. I showed how Chief Chigariro constructed his 'project of return' as non-political by appealing to the sovereignty of the ancestors in order to pursue his particular vision of the (re)made state through the process of land reform. These two 'orders' were qualitatively different and concerned two different temporalities, but co-existed simultaneously and came together in the body and figure of the chief who was both a state actor and a living representative of the ancestors. Chief Chigariro's two funerals corresponded to these two sources of sovereignty. In this chapter I show how at Chief Chigariro's death, as in his life, the 'transcendent' ancestral realm and the 'political' 'state' realm came together, such that even though his two burials were qualitatively different, they both had a political significance that went beyond the reproduction of the Chiweshe lineage.

In the first half of the chapter I analyse how the materiality of the chief's first secret burial in the soil in hills near his farmhouse in Mazowe was an act that transformed him into a transcendent *mhondoro* ancestor, while also asserting a present and future oriented political claim over the land and those living on it based on being of the land. While in the last two chapters I focused on the Chief's role as a state actor and representative of the ancestors, and showed how he drew on both for his legitimacy,

in the second half of this chapter I show the inverse. The ZANU PF state's provision of Chief Chigariro with a public funeral was a performative gesture aimed at showing that the regime cared about chiefs (even though the state refused to officially increase their powers in new resettlement areas). The state funeral confirmed the Chief (and all chiefs) as a state actor, whilst serving to emphasise the alliance between chiefs and the state over the land reform project. However, it was also used as an opportunity by local government and party officials, as well as national level politicians, to perform particular positions and push particular agendas on a range of local and national issues. These performances were aimed at the massive crowd in attendance, the nation-state at large (since newspaper and TV reporters were in attendance), as well as dignitaries in government or the party who were in attendance. In other words, there was a lot of 'politics' going on at the Chief's funeral. Both funerals then, reveal Chief Chigariro as being embedded, in death as in life, within a complex network of local and national political processes.

In his examination of 'patricentric' and 'totalising regimes', Borneman (2004) is particularly concerned with the after-effects that follow the 'death of the father'. His interest lies in how the 'mode of death and the self-representation of that end over time' affects the democratizing processes that follow these 'ends' (p.2). His work is useful in its suggestion that we pay attention to 'ends', and in particular, the way in which the 'mode' of death, and the way in which these deaths are represented and understood, has important repercussions for the political processes that follow. As he has written, funerals can be considered 'performative occasions' crucial for the exercise of sovereignty (p.12). My concern in this chapter is not with the repercussions following Chief Chigariro's death, since my fieldwork ended a few weeks after this occurred. Nor do I examine the motivations of those involved in the Chief's funerals, since this was impossible to ascertain. Instead I am interested in the political significance of Chief Chigariro's two funerals. I focus on how his secret burial and public funeral were handled and what the manner of these two 'ends' can tell us about state-making and the role of chiefs in the context of land reform. More specifically, I look at what these reveal about the tensions of authority in the Mazowe new resettlement area. These tensions were emblematic of broader struggles around the meaning of land reform and the opportunities it presented for different actors seeking

to pursue their vision of the state, and their positions in it, as it was being re-made through the process of ‘fast track’.

Bodies, Belonging and the Reproduction of Chiefly Authority

Once I had received the call from Mai Jonas, informing me that the Chief was dead, I drove to Mazowe, collecting her and Baba Basim en route. We arrived at the farmhouse and were greeted by a dishevelled looking uncle of the Chief, a headman and a spirit medium whose job it was to inform the ancestors that the *dare* was open. Usually dressed in a shirt and trousers, he was now wearing his spirit mediums’ garb, a black cloth which covered a vest and a pair of trousers, while a pair of copper anklets adorned his ankles. Baba Basim went to sit with a number of other headmen and spirit mediums under a tree in the yard, while Amai Jonas and I proceeded into the house. The dining room table had been removed and women sat on the floor, crowded around the outer edge of the room. Chief Chigariro’s wife sat in one corner surrounded by female relatives. We greeted her, shaking hands and muttering, ‘you have suffered’. A few women occasionally sobbed. Moved, I shed a few tears myself until Amai Jonas whispered that one was not supposed to cry at a chief’s funeral. The lack of loud wailing was indeed noticeable since the public performance of grief is usually prominent at this first stage of Shona funerals. Here the women sat mostly in silence. After about an hour, bread and tea were served and then Amai Jonas and I made to leave. We were told that Chief Chigariro’s official funeral was to be held in a week’s time, and the modest gathering at this stage contrasted to the massive public event that followed. In the yard as we left, Shadrek, who had informed me of the death, explained what had happened.

The Chief’s older brother, Sekuru Simon, was having his daily afternoon walk when a huge swarm of wild bees flew into the yard and attacked him and one of the Chief’s dogs. Hearing his screams, Chief Chigariro rushed out and was attacked himself. He ran through the house to try and escape, and eventually managed to get into his car and

drive fifty meters down the road before collapsing at the wheel. His brother survived. Shadrek, looking hard into the distance told me, ‘Those bees were sent. Someone sent those bees to kill the Chief. Why did the chief die while his ninety-year old brother survived the same bees?’ On the drive home Amai Jonas and Baba Basim concluded that if it was not a family member who sent the bees, then a family member must have assisted because only family were close enough to the chief to be able to organise such a death. Perhaps it was someone who wanted the chieftainship for himself.

Why all the secrecy around the immediate news of Chief Chigariro’s death? In order to answer this question I need to address some of the general beliefs around chiefs and their deaths in Zimbabwe. Herbet Aschwanden (1982) has written, ‘where death and decay appear most clearly the Karanga already perceive signs of the life sustaining principle (in the earth and ancestral spirits)’ (p.253).³⁶ This is because the dead are believed to eventually transform into benevolent family ancestors who protect their living descendants. The same basic principle applies to chiefs. However, as I have already discussed (Chapter Six) chiefs in Zimbabwe are believed to embody royal *mhondoro* ancestral spirits and are therefore future *mhondoro* themselves (Lan, 1985: 66). Discarding for a moment their role as state actors, their authority derives from the belief that as living embodiments of *mhondoro* ancestors, they ensure the fertility of the land and therefore the well-being of the people by performing the correct rituals as well as ensuring adherence to ancestral taboos. Their deaths, Lan tells us, are considered to be a ‘source of fertility for the land’ (ibid.: 173). What is crucial is that the correct funerary and burial practices and rites are undertaken to ensure their proper transformation into protective and benevolent *mhondoro* spirits. The same applies to regular people’s deaths, except the stakes at a chief’s death are much higher since their death has implications for the fertility of the whole territory (*nyika*) over which they ruled, as well as the continuation of the lineage of their particular clan. As a result chiefs are always buried secretly. This is also partly because of fears of witchcraft: a ‘chief’s influence and power are desirable targets for witches’ who ‘through the flesh of the deceased [...] acquire some of his strength’ (Aschwanden 1982: 190). The delay in the news of Chief Chigariro’s death can be explained by the fact that his family and

³⁶ The ‘Karanga’ refers to those who speak the *chiKaranga* dialect and live in the south-east of Zimbabwe but the same basic belief applies across most of the country.

spirit mediums needed a few days to conduct the correct burial procedures before the wider public arrived.

While the particular burial practices of chiefs vary across the country, a general set of practices is held in common and the fragmented account provided to me by one of the Chief's nephews echoes those given by Aschwanden (1982), Bourdillon (1987), and Fontein (2011) who worked in different parts of the country. Chief Chigariro's body was kept in the 'spirit hut' behind the farmhouse for the day after his death. In the middle of the night, a group of close male relatives (in particular his nephews) made a hole in the back wall of the hut and quietly carried the corpse on a stretcher into the car (in order that no one would see them take the body). They were driven to the base of a large hill unknown to any of them, and led (I was not told by whom) to a cave where Chief Chigariro's corpse was covered in the hide of a black ox and left. Thus the precise location of the cave was known to very few. However, what was known was that it was set amongst the hills surrounding the Mhangura farmhouse, where Chief Chigariro claimed the graves (*mapa*) and ruins of the homesteads (*matongo*) of his ancestors lay.

Amongst chiShona speaking peoples, dryness is associated with seniority, an association reflected in the fact that young children are buried in wet soil, whilst adults must be buried in dry soil (Lan 1985: 93). As the most senior member of a lineage and future *mhondoro* spirit, chiefs are left to dry out before they are buried. Aschwanden (1982) describes how chiefs are mummified, either in a hut in the chief's homestead or in a cave (p.267). His description highlights two points of significance for my own account: that is the sons of the chief's sister who carry the body to the cave and conduct the mummification of the body, and that the 'blood' (or fluids) that leak out of the body soak into the soil which is later collected by these nephews and taken to a different place where a shrine for the chief is built (1987: 267). Thus it is literally through the land, through the mixing of the chief's blood with the soil, that his transformation into a protective ancestor, the fertility of the land, and the continuation of the lineage is ensured. The land becomes the chief, and the chief becomes the land. The relevance of the sister's sons conducting these rituals is explained by Aschwanden (1982) by the fact that these are considered to be persons belonging to an alien circle

(being children of the chief's brother-in-law) but connected to the chief through the uterus of their mother (pp.266-269). These sons then marry a daughter of the chief's clan and thus, symbolically, as the 'blood' leaves the body of the chief another circle in the lineage is opened through marriage and the lineage continues (ibid.). To my knowledge those who conducted these rituals for Chief Chigariro were already married. Nevertheless, this suggests that what is was at stake in Chief Chigariro's burial was not only his transformation into a benevolent ancestor, but also the continuation of his lineage and the importance of the mixing of his body (or 'blood') with the land (or 'soil') in this process.

What was more significant than the secrecy of the burial was the location of his burial. Given the fraught nature of his claim to authority in the Mazowe area, and the politics around chiefs' claims of authority, and claims over land in terms of land restitution in new resettlement areas generally, burying his body in this particular area can also be understood as a political act. Fontein (2011) has written of a similar process concerning the burial of a chief in his field-site in Masvingo in 2004. He suggests that in the context of land reform, the chief's desire to be buried in a particular set of hills in a new resettlement area can be explained as a political move as well as a response to ancestral demands and emotional longings (pp.708 - 710). I suggest the same analysis can be applied to my case. Chief Chigariro's burial in these particular hills can be understood as a continuation of his life's project, to 'return' home. We have already seen how Chief Chigariro and his close inner circle understood his occupation of the farmhouse as having been guided by his ancestral spirits because of the presence of his ancestors' graves and ruined homes in the hills surrounding the house (Chapter Three). And we have seen how he articulated his claims to the land and his jurisdiction over the Mazowe area in terms of the presence of ancestral graves and ruins as well as his knowledge of the history and scared places of the area. His burial then can be understood in these same terms, as a political act, an assertion of autochthonous ownership by which a claim to authority and land ownership were materialised through his burial in the Mazowe hills, in a context in which his land restitution claim, and his authority was not officially recognised by the state. By burying his body in the hills surrounding the farmhouse his relatives and clan members also materialised their own claims to autochthony in the area, which could be used to substantiate future claims of

land ownership and authority by the Chiweshe lineage and by Chief Chigariro's own clan.

In Zimbabwe, as in other parts of Southern Africa, it is widely held that 'there is no such thing as a natural death' and witchcraft accusations following death, particularly sudden death, are extremely common (see for example Aschwanden 1982; Ashforth 2005; McNeill 2009). Similarly it is relatively common for family members to be accused of having used witchcraft to cause deaths within the family.³⁷ However, in the week before and after the funeral, the dominant narrative that circulated amongst headmen was that an enemy of the Chief had sent the bees and that witchcraft was afoot. In private conversations between headmen, the DA, Chief Makope and Chief Negomo, with whom Chief Chigariro had long-standing land boundary disputes in Mazowe, and a group of people who had been heavily fined and publicly shamed on the basis of having 'witched' a child, were all discussed as possible suspects. These rumours reflected Chief Chigariro's fraught relationship with local government officials, neighbouring chiefs, and family members who challenged the legitimacy of his claim to the chieftaincy, as well as his claim to land and authority over those living in Mazowe.

Death, Funerals and Sovereign Perpetuity

Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry (1982) have written of how funerals across different societies are organised to legitimate an ideal of an eternal, unchanging social order and authority structures within it. Drawing on Robert Hertz (1960), Bloch and Parry have written of the 'double aspect' of funerals across different cultures (p.4). In the first part of the funeral the individual is disaggregated from the collective; in the second they are re-incorporated into the collective and their role amongst the living is re-allocated (ibid.). According to Hertz, an individual death threatens the social order because the

³⁷ This has interesting implications for understanding Shona kinship. Close kin are often the first suspects in witchcraft accusations precisely because of their proximity to the person who has been witched. Bourdillon (1987) puts this down to the fact that close kin 'cannot readily bring their differences to a public court' (pp.: 215-216).

social is 'grafted' on to the physical individual (Hertz 1960: 77 as cited in Bloch & Parry 1982: 4). Bloch and Parry suggest, rather, that the social order is an ideal (ibid.: 27). It is an ideal of society as enduring and ordered that is threatened by the reminder of the mortal, time-bound lives of the individuals that make it up as well as by the contingency of death. Thus funerals, Bloch and Parry assert, are organised to negate these aspects and construct death as re-birth, a source of continuation, and fertility (social and material) (ibid.: 10). Funerals are used to legitimate the existing social order and its structures of authority by promoting a particular ideal of the social order (ibid.: 41). The individuality and 'unrepeatable time' of the individual death are vanquished by representing death as part of a cyclical process of renewal.

Bloch and Parry (1982) tell us that the death of authority figures in places where authority is premised as deriving from the sovereignty of an eternal, unchanging social order is particularly threatening (p.11). Death of traditional authority figures in societies where authority is linked to an ideal of an eternal, unchanging order poses particular problems of legitimacy (Bloch 1982: 222). By revealing the king (or chief) to be a mortal individual, the conceptualisation of these figures as belonging to an eternal and unchanging order is threatened, and so too is the ideal of the social order. As such, the funerals of traditional authorities in particular become 'important occasions for asserting this eternal order' (Bloch & Parry 1982: 15). Amongst the Merina in Madagascar, where Bloch works, people are organised into localised kin-groups called *demes*. *Demes* have a strong association with particular areas of land and Merina people believe that ancestors and the land are merged; since the ancestors are buried in the land, the land is made by the ancestors (Bloch 1982: 211). ChiShona speaking people in Zimbabwe have, as I have discussed, a similar cosmology. There is a double aspect to funerals in Zimbabwe that is similar to that of the Merina in that there are two parts to any funeral, the first individual 'burial' (not a burial in the case of the chief) and the second 'coming home' ceremony (*kurova guva* lit. to beat the grave) a year later. In the 'coming home ceremony' the spirit of the deceased is brought 'home' and finally transformed into a protective ancestral spirit. In this way, as with the Merina, Shona funerals are organised to make productive the tension between the ideal of the transcendent, eternal, unchanging social order, and the mortal individual death by reinforcing the ideal.

Bloch (1982) writes that amongst the Merina one solution to the problem of legitimacy that death poses for traditional authority is to stress the ‘royal *line*’ rather than the individual monarch (emphasis in original, p.35). Here Bloch echoes Ernst Kantorowicz’s (1957) idea of the ‘king’s two bodies’, in which two bodies coexist in the figure of the king, the mortal body of the individual and the body politic and eternal sovereignty of the office of the king. The funerals of medieval kings, Kantorowicz tells us, were organised to ensure the continuation of eternal kingly sovereignty, in spite of the mortal death of the individual king. This is captured in the proclamation at death ‘The king is dead, long live the king!’ In Kantorowicz’s conception, the figure of the king encompassed the ‘natural body’, physical mortal and time-bound, as well as the ‘body politic’, the eternal corporate body of the kingship, its policy and government. However, as Hansen and Stepputat (2005) stress, in a similar way to Bloch, this notion of absolute sovereignty was an ideal rather than a reality (p.5). In reality medieval kings’ power was ‘embedded in and dependent on the recognition of subjects as well as the blessing of the Church’ (Kantorowicz 1957: 7-23 as referred to in Hansen & Stepputat, 2005: 5-6). Nonetheless, sovereign power was represented as being temporally absolute (Kantorowicz 1957: 330).

There are a number of parallels and differences between Merina death rituals, European monarchs, and the constitution of Chief Chigariro’s political authority that are productive for understanding the political significance of Chief Chigariro’s two funerals. Chiefs’ ‘traditional’ authority can be thought of as both dynastic and ‘divine’. They are the living representatives of royal *mhondoro* ancestors and thus embody a royal lineage which is perceived as a form of divine, eternal, and unchanging sovereignty. The figure of Chief Chigariro consisted of the physical body of the individual, Joseph Chigariro, and the body politic of the Chiweshe chieftaincy and lineage. In Zimbabwe, unlike in medieval Europe, it is precisely the mixing of the physical corpse of the chief with the physical landscape that ensures the continuity of the chief’s lineage. Rather than the individual physical corpse being negated, as in the case with Kantorowicz’s kings and Bloch’s Merina elders, the transcendence of chiefly authority is affirmed through the mixing of his individual corpse with the soil by which he becomes, if all goes well, a *mhondoro* ancestor via the land. In effect, the chief becomes the land. Lan tells us, for example, that:

The territory belongs to the chief's lineage because its ancestors lived *in* it. The most important sites in the territory (hills, pools, certain trees) are named after the ancestors (Lan 1985: 20).

In some ways chiefs' deaths can be perceived as the high-point of their lives, the point at which their legitimacy is most affirmed rather than threatened. In Zimbabwe, chiefs' funerals are organised around similar and different concerns to those mentioned by Bloch. At stake in chiefs' funerals is the continuing fertility of the land, the chief's lineage and their claims over particular territories as well as their transformation into a benevolent and protective ancestor. But Chief Chigariro's first secret burial also materialised a political claim over to authority and over land in Mazowe. Chiefs' territorial claims are almost always contested in Zimbabwe. However, in the fraught context of a new resettlement area, I suggest Chief Chigariro's burial in the hills surrounding the farmhouse was particularly poignant. In addition, chiefs in Zimbabwe embody two different sovereignties which are entwined, that of the state and that of the ancestors. The question then is how did Chief Chigariro's two funerals relate to the sovereignty of the state?

Bloch might say that the ideology around chiefs' burials in Zimbabwe has been constructed precisely in order to deal with the threat the death of authority figures poses to the idealised social order in which male elders, such as the Chief, occupy positions of authority. My interest is less with the motivations behind these funerary practices than with their effects. The procedures involved in the Chief's secret burial had the effect of reproducing chiefly authority as timeless and eternal. One final note worth mentioning here concerns the political effects of the secrecy surrounding his burial. I have already discussed how chiefs' burials in Zimbabwe are always secret because of fears of witchcraft as well as desecration of the grave. However, I suggest that the political effect of this secrecy was to create new social hierarchies based on circles of knowledge as well as contributing a sense of mystery around chiefly authority in general amongst those living in Mazowe, which emphasised its transcendent aspect. As Graham Jones (2014) has written, 'secrets produce value through both the exclusion of outsiders and the inclusion of insiders' (p.54). Furthermore, knowledge about the existence of a secret, is a 'way of socially

mobilizing the secret as a form of socio-cultural capital without dispersing restricted knowledge' (ibid: 55). Concentric circles of knowledge about the Chief's secret burial established and reinforced hierarchies dependent on who knew and understood what. These then formed the basis for future claims to the position of chief amongst his clan and family members on the basis on holding such secret knowledge, as well as the importance of the spirit mediums for the next chief. The person who led the nephews to the cave reinforced his personal position through his secret knowledge and understanding of the exact location of the cave. And it was precisely, although not exclusively, the possession of such 'secret' knowledge that was passed on to Chief Chigariro by spirit mediums, and used to legitimise his own claim to authority in the area in the first place. Finally, at the public funeral, rumours of the Chief's secret burial passed between those in attendance. None knew exactly what had happened but all knew that something had. However, this was not openly spoken of and my questions were met with shrugs of the shoulders and statements such as 'It's what they say' and 'These are the things of chiefs'. Both these effects, the mystification and the reproduction of social hierarchy based on holding secret knowledge, emphasised to those who attended the public funeral the other social (and temporal) order that the Chief embodied. I now turn to the Chief's public state funeral to examine how these two parallel orders came together, and to show how the politics of one was entangled within the politics of the other.

The Chief's Public Funeral

Chief Chigariro's official funeral took place on a brisk Saturday morning a week after his secret burial. Dozens of cars were parked in and outside of the farmhouse yard. People gathered in small throngs, warming themselves in the morning sun. Many had been up all night singing and dancing for the Chief's spirit. After greeting various clusters of headmen I entered the house. Men and women sat together on the dining room floor while members of the Salvation Army, the Chief's church, sat on chairs and beside them, Chief Makope and a representative of Chief Negomo. In the living room a large expensive looking wooden coffin had been placed on two chairs and three

enormous flower arrangements placed on top. Two portraits of Chief Chigariro had been hung on the wall behind; one in which a younger Chief Chigariro, suit clad and serious looking stared into the distance and the other, a more recent photograph of the Chief dressed in a black shirt with his chief's badge prominently displayed. The coffin, I was later (privately) informed, was empty but would nonetheless be interred and had been filled with stones so that it would feel like there was a body inside to those who carried it. More and more people filled the house. The corridors swelled with moving bodies and family members flitted between rooms making sure everyone was where they ought to be, seated appropriate to their status, and introduced to the people they ought to be introduced to.

After rounds of bread and tea, we were ushered outside for the official funeral ceremony. An enormous crowd had gathered outside the yard fence (the national press reported that 1000 people were in attendance).³⁸ Fortune Charumbira (Chief Charumbira), head of the National Council of Chiefs, the Governor of Mashonaland Central, and a couple of ZANU PF party officials sat on armchairs on a small stage decorated with banners of the Zimbabwean flag. Two enormous green tents with chairs for 'VIPs' ran down either side creating an aisle that led up to the stage. One was filled with headmen, relatives of the Chief and wealthier land beneficiaries, and the other with 'VIPs', a mass of men and women in dark suits. The Chief's immediate family sat in the front row of the 'VIP' tent. I perched on a rock alongside hundreds of others on the ground between the two. Some climbed on to the walls of old tobacco barns for a better view, others made themselves comfortable in trees. Whispers about who was who circulated amongst those sitting on the ground. People were impressed by the presence of the Governor and rumours circulated that the Home Affairs co-Minister would also be in attendance. She did eventually arrive, an hour later than everyone else.

Angelique Haugerud's (1995) work on political culture in Kenya has focused on the social institution of the *baraza* as a lens through which to examine Kenyan social and political life. *Baraza* are public assemblies of different scales whereby those who work in the capacity of the state, from district officials and chiefs to the President, address

³⁸ The Herald, May 3rd 2013, <http://www.herald.co.zw/chief-chiweshe-laid-to-rest/> [Accessed 07.07.13]

the Kenyan public. They are popularly attended, often held outdoors and constitute, ‘the principal meeting ground between ordinary citizens [...] and state officials and bureaucrats’ (p.2). These are instances of ‘state-making at the level of the local’ in which ‘elite group cohesion and exclusiveness’ are put on public display (1995: 2-3). What is crucial here is the display of ‘the state’ as cohesive and monolithic and Haugerud writes that a good *baraza* is judged to have been one in which little or no dissent has been openly expressed. Thus, while occasional dissent is expressed, ‘much of the time...*baraza* speakers and audiences practice what Bailey terms [...] a ‘strategy for keeping open secrets out of the public domain’’ (Bailey 1991: 52 as cited in Haugerud 1995: 66).

In Zimbabwe, the term *musangano* (meeting) is roughly equivalent to *baraza* and is used to describe anything from a small local ZANU PF meeting, to the Forestry Commission event described in Chapter Six, to a large-scale ZANU PF rally. In Mazowe *musangano* are associated with meetings concerning the ZANU PF party and the government even if, as in the case of the Forestry Commission meeting, the ‘meeting’ is not explicitly about party politics (Politics). Funerals in Zimbabwe are not the same as *musangano*. However, as in many parts of Africa they are arenas of spectacle and performance. In addition to being sites in which belonging is asserted or reaffirmed, even if multiple notions of belonging are at play (Geschiere 2005: 59; Geschiere 2009; Cohen & Odhiambo 1992; Shipton 2009), in Zimbabwe funerals have in recent years often also been transformed into political party rallies geared towards multiple different ends (Fontein 2010; see also Englund 1996 [Malawi]). Fontein (2010) has examined how during the political party violence of the 2000s in which many MDC activists were killed or ‘disappeared’ by people acting in the name of ZANU PF, MDC activists’ funerals often became sites of commemoration and assertion of the opposition party’s refusal to be silenced by the ZANU PF regime (p.434).

Chief Chigariro was not an MDC activist but a stalwart ZANU PF supporter. His state-organised public funeral was a gesture on the part of the ZANU PF state which materialised their support of chiefs and was intended to show that the state cared about chiefs, particularly those loyal to the regime. This tapped into the broader turn to chiefs

on the part of the state in their revival of cultural nationalism towards the end of the 1990s, as well as the state's aim to gain legitimacy amongst rural populations and legitimise the land reform project (Chapters Six and Seven).

Chief Chigariro's public funeral contained many of the same features of Haugerud's (1995) description of a Kenyan *baraza*. His close relatives complained to me afterwards that the funeral was 'hijacked by the politicians'. Like the *baraza*, the funeral can be understood in terms of a 'political spectacle' or 'political theatre'. However, there are important differences between Haugerud's field-work in Kenya and the political context of my own field-site. Haugerud's work took place in the depths of Moi's one-party rule in Kenya in the 1990s. She suggests that Moi's government and party officials used the presence of a large and attentive audiences to pursue, enact and reinforce an already existing particular socio-political order and give the impression of a unified 'state' (ibid: 104). Chief Chigariro's funeral took place in 2013, just before the dissolution of the GNU between the leaders and the two MDC formations and President Mugabe. This was the end of a period in which ZANU PF was trying to regain national and regional legitimacy in the wake of the widespread political violence of the early 2000s, and particularly in 2008. The rhetoric of peace and injunctions against *noise* that was being heavily pushed by Mugabe and the ZANU PF party at the time spoke of this attempt to regain legitimacy. However, ZANU PF factionalism belied these attempts. Mugabe's succession dispute threatened to tear the party apart, particularly in rural localities where competing factions drew local populations into their power struggles by recruiting local-level supporters who played an important part in voting 'their' people into important party and government positions, which had a knock-on effect on internal party elections at a national level.

Those who spoke at Chigariro's funeral were district and provincial level government and party officials, ministers, and Chief Fortune Charumbira – head of the National Council of Chiefs. All these actors had personal political agendas as well as being official representatives of different interest groups. The speeches given at Chief Chigariro's funeral revealed the fractured nature of the state at the local level in new resettlement areas and the multiple personal agendas that are pushed through individual positions of office. It is highly likely that these personal political struggles

were entangled within broader national factional politics relating to Mugabe's succession dispute. But as Fontein (2015) has pointed out, internal ZANU PF politics are almost impossible to research owing to the high stakes involved in them (p.48). Individuals acting in the name of the state and the party used the funeral as an opportunity to perform for the benefit of those in attendance (the large audience of locals and dignitaries), as well as for those beyond this particular locale since national newspaper and television journalists were also present.

In spite of Haugerud (1995) stating that *baraza* were used to display 'elite-group cohesion', drawing on the work of Susan Gal (1989), she also emphasises that events such as the *baraza* are not simply reflective, implying that political culture is not a static 'text' to be read, but a means through which order is enacted, created, and contested. Haugerud citing Gal (1989) writes that 'some groups make contingent claims to shore up a social order, in response to others attempts to dismantle it' (Gal 1989: 442 as cited in Haugerud 1995: 10). Haugerud also highlights that while the audience of a *baraza* might appear to comply and be in support of those leading the event, 'meanings that cannot be contested openly are reworked in other contexts such as offstage gossip' (1995: 67). These features of the *baraza* apply more easily to Chief Chigariro's funeral. The funeral was an important instance of state-making, where district and provincial elites came into contact with the local population, but no unified conception of the state was being pushed. It was not only in 'off-stage' gossip amongst the audience, but in the speeches of various dignitaries where tensions between the different individuals acting in the name of the state or the party, that the lack of unity of 'the state' was revealed. Following Haugerud I focus my analysis of this part of the Chief's public funeral on who spoke when, for what length of time, what was publicly spoken of and not (i.e. in Haugerud's words, the 'speakable' and the 'unspeakable', or 'onstage' and 'offstage') and the particular rhetorical devices used by speakers as a way of examining what political agendas were being pursued and how these linked to different visions of the state.

As in *baraza*, 'who shows up, who speaks, and who sits next to whom on the speaker's platform' attracted keen interest amongst those who attended the funeral, as these provided clues about individuals' positions, factional politics, who was included and

who was not, and what could and could not be spoken of publicly (Haugerud 1995: 3). The ‘status gulf’ between the local population and these local elites was displayed and enacted in the separation of those inside the house from those outside, of the VIPs from the masses, and of the political elite on the stage from the rest. The separation between the ‘spiritual’ and the ‘political’ realms was reflected in the fact that, as we shall see, the large number of spirit mediums and their acolytes present in the morning did not attend the public funeral and instead remained gathered near the ‘spirit hut’ that had housed the Chief’s body at the back of the farmhouse. This is because spirit mediums are at the funeral for different reasons: in order to ensure the Chief’s successful transformation into a *mhondoro* ancestor and the continuation of his clan lineage.

The DA was the ‘master of ceremonies’. As with the *baraza*, the choice of master of ceremonies was politically charged as this person regulated *who* could speak, while the order and length of people’s speeches indexed their social status (Haugerud 1995: 64). Standing in front of the stage, and talking through a crackling PA system after the initial greetings, the DA asked different groups to stand one after the other: war veterans, counsellors of the ZANU PF party, headmen, and myself as ‘a close friend and student of the Chief’. The introductory address ended with the DA requesting ‘all farmers’ to stand. The audience hesitated until the DA prompted: ‘Everyone here is a farmer – soldiers, headmen, counsellors – can you all stand please’ at which the crowd got to its feet and women began to ululate.

Approximately three hours of long-winded speech-making followed. Family members of the Chief had been lined up to speak but did not get the chance. There was much murmuring in the crowd about the presence of the Governor and other senior government and party officials, their presence validating Chigariro’s status. The Governor was called on by the DA to give the first speech. He extolled Chief Chigariro as a leader who ‘ruled subjects from both the ZANU PF and the MDCs’. The next day, the state-run Herald newspaper quoted him thus:

As we are going towards elections it should be noted that violence will not be tolerated. Gone are the days of violence [...] Zimbabweans are educated and are not expected to be violent. It is the right of everyone

to choose a political party of his choice and one should not force people to support any party.³⁹

Abandoning the microphone and walking towards different sections of the seated crowd, the Governor requested different sections of the audience repeat the words ‘peace, peace’, echoing the slogan that Mugabe popularised between 2012 and 2013 that, Mugabe claimed, were originally spoken by the late Joshua Nkomo: ‘Peace begins with you, peace begins with me, peace begins with all of us!’⁴⁰ The upcoming internal ZANU PF party elections and national elections were purportedly months away (the elections kept on being delayed) and the rhetoric of peace and political tolerance was thick in the air. After forty minutes along the same lines the Governor took his seat. Those on the grass around me looked somewhat bemused. Apart from a few minutes at the start, the Governor had said little about Chief Chigariro.

The second speech was given by Chief Charumbira, head of the National Council of Chiefs. Chief Charumbira described Chief Chigariro as having had a ‘great passion for the country’ and the ‘preservation of our culture and traditions’. The state-run Herald newspaper reported that Chief Charumbira commended Chief Chigariro for working hard to make sure land imbalances caused by the colonial land-grab were corrected and that the ‘identity and heritage’ of blacks was well-protected.⁴¹ What was not reported was that Chief Charumbira went on to discuss the position of chiefs in resettlement areas. In particular he said that he knew there had been fighting between a local ZANU PF counsellor and Chief Chigariro but he wanted to remind everyone that chiefs in Zimbabwe were above DAs, above counsellors, and above political parties. The allusion to the authority of chiefs over politicians was pointed given Chief Chigariro’s struggle establishing his authority in Mazowe, and in particular his dispute with the DA about his headmen. It also spoke to the issue of chiefs’ struggles establishing their authority vis-à-vis the government and political parties more

³⁹ The Herald, May 3rd 2013, <http://www.herald.co.zw/chief-chiweshe-laid-to-rest/> [Accessed 07.07.13]

⁴⁰ Daily News, 15th April 2013, <http://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2013/04/15/peace-begins-with-you-me-us> [Accessed 19.07.13]

⁴¹ Nomore Kudzedzereka for Nehanda Radio, April 28th 2013, <http://nehandaradio.com/2013/04/28/chief-dies-after-being-stung-by-wild-bees/> [Accessed 20.07.13]

generally. The fact that the writer or editors of the Herald chose not to report Chief Charumbira's words on the position of chiefs reveals the state's attempt to cover over and control chiefs' voicing of such issues.

The final speech was given by the Chief's older brother, Conrad, and took a completely different tone from those that preceded it. Conrad spoke of Chief Chigariro's life and the different roles he had played, as a teacher, as a detainee during the liberation struggle, and as a chief. Visibly angered, his closing words referred to the rumour circulating that the bees that stung Chief Chigariro to death had been sent by an unknown enemy: 'Those bees have not finished their work. They need to go back to where they came from and finish their work there.'

Taking my lead from Haugerud (1995: 95), I ask what was at stake for each of these different actors. My analysis draws on my own knowledge of the background of these different individuals, their positions and agendas, as well as snippets of conversation I caught while seated amongst the crowd, and a longer discussion with those I gave a lift to after the funeral. Personally, I was surprised that the DA had been chosen to give the opening address at Chief Chigariro's funeral, given their dispute at the time of his death over the dismissal of his headmen. However, I had clearly not understood the politics of public performance at play. A woman I gave a lift to commented that to have not had the DA perform the role of 'masters of ceremonies' would have risked grave offence given her status in the area. It confirmed the authority of local government over the resettlement area, and in particular over the Chief. What was at stake for the DA was to show to her political seniors in government and in the party that she had the capacity to generate popular support. 'She was just campaigning', one audience member explained, by which he meant she was campaigning to cement her own position as DA as well as any potential future positions she might have applied for amongst those present who were higher in government and in the party than she. In calling on 'war veterans', 'ZANU PF counsellors', and headmen to stand, the DA courted these different groups by giving them public recognition. By then calling on 'all farmers' to stand she reminded everyone that their presence in the area was due to the generosity of the ZANU PF regime and the government and that in spite of their differences they were 'all farmers'. This gave an impression of a cohesiveness and

unity that aimed to cut across the status and class differences of the crowd, which was particularly important given the fraught nation-wide issue of ZANU PF factionalism that threatened to cause serious cleavages in the party months before a general election. Audience members' quiet, cynical commentary on the DA's speech revealed their critical awareness of the personal agendas that lay behind these performances. Clearly, the audience's 'on-stage collusion' did not mean, as Haugerud points out, that there was universal support for the DA (1995: 90).

The Governor's calls for 'peace' similarly displayed his capacity to unify a crowd in support of the ZANU PF regime. By persuading the crowd to chant 'peace, peace', the Governor involved the audience, which gave the impression of support and consensus while simultaneously exerting control (Haugerud 1995: 71). As I have said, the rhetoric of peace was being heavily pushed by ZANU PF and President Mugabe at the time. Speaking of 'peace' acted as an implicit warning against making *noise*. The Governor tacitly opposed 'peace' and 'quiet' to *noise* and 'disruption', reinforcing ZANU PF's position that political violence, and, as I have shown, any form of open confrontation concerning 'Politics', constituted a threat to the national and social order. *Noise* here not only referred to violence between ZANU PF and MDC but also to the increasingly violent factionalism within ZANU PF. Thus the DA's and the Governor's speeches referred to the 'public secret' (Taussig 1999: 216) of the 'Politics' that could not be spoken of: party factionalism and the competing regimes of rule in new resettlement areas, while simultaneously drawing a boundary around what constituted acceptable open political discourse (Bailey 1991: 52 as cited in Haugerud 1995: 66).

Chief Fortune Charumbira pursued a different agenda. As Fontein (2011) has written, Charumbira used 'fast track' land reform as an opportunity to advocate for the 'return of chiefs' powers' (p.709). Although he appeared to be positioning 'traditional' leaders against 'politicians', this did not imply a break from the ZANU PF regime but rather a stronger position within it. Thus Charumbira deftly positioned Chigariro within ZANU PF's anti-imperialist agenda by asserting that he had fought hard against the 'colonial land-grab' but, at the same time, he discussed the position of chiefs relative to government and party officials in new resettlement areas and asserted that chiefs

were above both. What was at stake here were different visions of what the state that was being re-made in the process of land reform should look like and what chiefs' positions in it should be. Furthermore, this was a particular 'traditionalist' vision that articulated closely with ZANU PF's desire to use chiefs to bolster the legitimacy of the party, in which the role of spirit mediums was dwarfed by the role envisioned for chiefs.⁴² In making such an assertion, and openly speaking of the dispute between Chief Chigariro and various ZANU PF counsellors, Chief Charumbira broke from the pro-ZANU PF and pro-government script set by the previous two speakers. The fact that the state-run Herald newspaper did not report his critique reveals that the government and the party silenced those parts of his speech that threatened to undermine them, even if they were unable to do so locally.⁴³ This dynamic reflects the complexity of chiefs' relationship with the government and the ZANU PF regime in which the latter attempted to present an impression of unity between these, as part of their 're-imagined traditionalist rule in which chiefs had a central role' (Fontein 2015: 85) to which the whole state-sponsored funeral referred.

Finally, Chief Chigariro's brother, Conrad, sought both to commemorate his brother, express his anger and threaten whoever 'sent the bees'. His speech hinted at witchcraft and angry spirits. In Zimbabwe it is extremely unusual for witchcraft to be spoken of so publicly. Conrad's articulation of something that would usually be more subtly insinuated spoke to the high stakes of the Chief's death. Those who sent the bees were political opponents, either family members who wanted the chieftainship for themselves or someone else, or people from government who opposed Chief Chigariro's authority in the area. In addition, he invoked the threat of the Chief's angry spirit. In Zimbabwe, it is often at funerals that a sort of public reckoning takes place. The delay of burial until grievances are settled 'whether through the payment of overdue *lobola* (bride wealth) or more serious atonements for murder or unlawful

⁴² Spirit mediums might argue that they are more senior than chiefs since they are the mediums for dead ancestors who are more senior than living representatives of ancestors.

⁴³ Fontein (2015) has described a similar situation in which the state-run national press selectively reported statements made by Charumbira concerning the success of national level bira ceremonies, instead reporting these in terms of bumper harvests and thus failing to acknowledge that chiefs might have been responsible for the rains. This, Fontein suggests, might be because it highlighted the potency of traditional regimes of rule that perhaps did not serve ZANU PF's political agenda (p.95).

death is a well-established practice' (Fontein, 2010:436). Conrad's speech cut through the politicking of the politicians in order to pursue a different agenda, the question of who had killed the Chief. Conrad's speech attempted to take back the space that had been dominated by the politicians. Thus, the fracture lines along which the different interests of individuals with very different stakes in national and local politics were revealed.

After the official ceremony it was time to eat. Officials, special guests, and the chief's family were herded round the back of the house where a feast had been set out. The rest of the crowd gathered in small clusters in the front of the house waiting to be fed. Slowly plates of beef, *sadza*, and cabbage circulated. Spirit mediums dressed in blue, black, and white, with threads of copper beads round their ankles sat separately from the rest of the crowd down one side of the house. I walked over to greet those I knew. Despairing looks were exchanged. A few old women clasped my hands, 'We have lost our chief. What will we do?' I sat with them awhile, enjoying the peace of their presence after the hours of speech-making as I wondered the same.

While chiefs have enjoyed increased positive attention from the state over the past two decades, which has been materialised in various forms of support as well as an increase in their powers, spirit mediums have not, or not to the same degree. Unlike chiefs, they are not state actors. Lan (1985) describes how 'though the distinction between medium and *mhondoro* is habitually blurred, the impotence and ignorance of the medium [i.e. the living person] must be stressed from time to time if the unimpeachable authority of the *mhondoro* is felt with its full weight' (p.166). Lan goes on to tell us that in practice mediums do much more than 'merely advise and teach' but must perform their ignorance and disinterest in ruling (ibid.). Thus mediums must also perform their neutrality, but more so than chiefs, in order to remain legitimate. This is not to say that they are not embedded within different projects and alliances within their own clans (Maxwell 1999: 120-149; Fontein 2004). However, while 'lineage politics' might have an importance within broader local and national political party 'politics', mediums are much less state actors than chiefs are since they are not appointed by the state. Chief Chigariro's spiritual projects and future plans had involved a large network of spiritual practitioners. Their apprehension partly stemmed from the fact that these mediums had

allied themselves to Chief Chigariro (as opposed to other clan or family members), and partly stemmed from the fact that the various projects they had embarked on with him at the helm were likely to be discontinued because these relied on his position as a state actor with resources and influence to mobilise.

I moved round to the back of the house. Sekuru Tsoko and his group of *mbira* players sat on logs near the 'spirit hut' where the Chief conducted ceremonies involving the ancestors. They were exhausted. The Chief's nephew was amongst them. He was a school teacher who was usually dressed in suit trousers and a shirt though now he was clad in a black t-shirt with beads strung around his neck and ankles. 'We have not slept all week', he told me. Sekuru Tsoko and the mediums' focus before and during the public funeral had been quite different from that of the politicians. They had spent the week conducting spiritual rites and rituals involving the Chief's spirit and ancestors and many had not even attended the official proceedings. Their 'spiritual' work was conducted round the back of the house and this marked it off as a different realm from that of the public funeral, even as the two fed into each other. Hours later, having eaten and spoken with various people, Baba Basim and I prepared to leave, when the coffin (of stones) was brought out of the house. The 'VIPs' had already left and the majority of the attendees had begun to disperse. A small crowd followed the pall bearers around the back of the house to where a grave had been dug and a tombstone set. Unlike most Shona funerals, the burial of the coffin was seemingly deemed irrelevant. This, I suggest, was because most people knew in a general way that chiefs are buried in secret and that his body was not in the coffin. The state's performance of Chief Chigariro's burial was politically significant. It can be understood as a performance of care and support for chiefs on the part of the state, a performance that simultaneously constructed chiefs as actors answerable to the state. Yet, at the same time, the fact that Chief Chigariro's actual body was buried somewhere in the hills surrounding the farmhouse meant that his power did not entirely derive from that of the state.

At the end of the 1990s the ZANU PF state needed to revive its legitimacy and sense of nationhood. This was done through the revival of cultural nationalism and the land reform project (Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems 2009). Although Zimbabwe is a totalitarian one party state and the cult around Mugabe does exist, the ZANU PF

regime's concern with giving an appearance of legitimacy within the country, and importantly within the region, is striking. For example, the ZANU PF state has put much effort into presenting itself as a political body that still works within the rule of law (Verheul 2016). So, what has Chief Chigariro's body and non-burial got to with the legitimacy of the ZANU PF state?

Chiefs were drawn into ZANU PF's project of cultural nationalism partly because the ZANU PF state needed chiefs to legitimate this particular brand of nationalism. This placed chiefs in a difficult position in which they had to balance the demands of the party, local populations, and the ancestors. Individuals like Chief Chigariro took advantage of this turn towards them to pursue their own vision of the state in which chiefs have a more prominent role, as well as to pursue their own material and spiritual interests. Chief Chigariro's two funerals reflected the multiple ways in which land reform was harnessed by different individuals as well as different interest groups trying to pursue their own interests. The Chief's second funeral can be understood as a performance on the part of the state of the fact that chiefs were state actors and that part of their power derived from the state. At the same time, the state relied on chiefs for legitimacy. Chiefs and the state mutually constituted one another's authority.

The question of where chiefs are buried has at least one historical precedent in the body of Chief Reikai Tangwena. Chief Tangwena's territory spanned the Mozambique/Zimbabwe border and he famously resisted the Rhodesian state's attempts to co-opt him and take over his people's lands, while also assisting Mugabe and other prominent nationalist leaders to safely make their way into Mozambique. After the Lancaster House ceasefire he was declared a national hero. The state wanted to inter his body at Heroes Acre in Harare, although his family wanted to inter him in the mountains where his forebears were buried. Moore (2005) describes how, locally, those from Tangwena's area were split into two camps: those proud that their 'leader's' body had lain in a place of national honour, and those 'who objected to the nation-state's claiming their sovereign's body and spirit who argued unsuccessfully in 1984 for Reikai's burial in the Tangwena royal graveyard' (Moore 2005: 65). Chief Chigariro was not a national war hero. However, I suggest that the fact that his family,

clan, and spirit mediums rapidly and secretly buried his body in the hills above the farmhouse spoke of their resistance to having his body and his sovereignty totally claimed by the state, even as they were willing to engage in a performance of this.

Conclusion

Two levels of activity operated simultaneously at the Chief's funeral. One concerned the spiritual aspect of the Chief's death rites and rituals conducted largely behind the scenes by a retinue of spirit mediums and family members. The other concerned the Chief as a state actor and a party 'Political' figure. These two levels of activity spoke to different socio-political 'orders' as well as two different sovereignties, that of the ancestors and the spirits, and that of the 'state' or the government and the ZANU PF regime. Yet these sovereignties were not separate but existed in tension and were intricately entwined. The placement of Chief Chigariro's body amongst the hills, as I have discussed, was an overtly political claim that laid the basis for future claims to belonging and authority over territory and people in an area where such claims were contested by local government and party officials.

Multiple regimes of rule overlapped, competed, and reinforced each other in Mazowe. Individuals acting in the name of the state and the party pushed for their own political agendas. More fundamentally I suggest that in the speeches made, and the audiences' discussion of them afterwards, different visions of what the state and its citizens should look like, as well as individuals' positions within it, were being debated and pursued. In the court Chief Chigariro attempted to present himself as a unified figure of 'tradition' (even as he also referred to the government as a legitimizing authority). At his funeral his complex engagement and entanglement with the party and the government as well as local politics were fully revealed. At the same time, his secret burial in a cave amongst the Mazowe hills went some way to fixing his position as one of a royal lineage ultimately answerable to the sovereignty of the ancestors. I suggest that this was not simply about the individuals representing government and the ZANU PF regime simply taking advantage of the large number of people in attendance to

pursue their own and their parties' political agendas, but also about the attempt to contain the authority of the Chief within the 'body politic' of 'the state'. This bolstered the legitimacy of the different parties that made up 'the state' in these areas, and reminded those living in these areas that their loyalty should ultimately be directed at the beneficent 'state', and framed the Chief's authority in reference to the sovereignty of the 'state'. The fact that the Chief's family were side-lined reinforced the message that chiefs were under 'the state': that it was the state that was in charge of chiefs, and even in charge of their deaths. Yet this was resisted precisely through the 'secret' prior burial of the Chief in the Mazowe hills. This secret burial not only laid the basis for the possibility of future claims of jurisdiction for the Chief's lineage, but can also be understood as a reminder that a social, political, and moral order beyond that of the state – that of the ancestors – also existed. In spite of the state's attempt to contain the land, to harness it to particular ends, and to attempt to define land in relation to the sovereignty of the 'state' and to use it to legitimise the 'state', the land (and the Chief) could not be contained within one meaning or within one regime of rule.

Conclusion: Between Stability and Clarity

In the final week of my fieldwork, Amai Hove, the local AREX officer, suggested I throw a farewell party to thank the ‘V.I.Ps’ in the area. According to Amai Hove, the ‘V.I.Ps’ were those who worked in the DA’s offices, the DA and district level AREX officers, as well as Chief Chigariro. I suggested inviting my hosts, Baba and Amai Basim, as well as some of the farmworkers who lived on Dam Lake Farm. My suggestion was met with a slight pause after which Amai Hove responded that I could invite the Basims but a separate party would need to be thrown for the farmworkers. ‘This will be a party for the V.I.Ps only’, she declared.

I knew that the Chief and the DA were still arguing over his headmen and that the DA and Amai Hove had angered the Basims by failing to secure their land claim against the advances of their neighbour Nhafu. Since I had spent most of my fieldwork moving between these different disputants, the idea of bringing them all together was nerve-racking. In addition, much of my fieldwork had been spent trying to keep a low profile so as not to attract the attention of district level party officials, since I worried that they would interpret my work as being ‘Politically motivated’. Finally, I was uncomfortable throwing an exclusive party for the ‘V.I.Ps’. However, I reasoned that perhaps Amai Hove was simply communicating what was expected of me by the local district administration and knew better than I what an appropriate gesture of thanks to those who had ‘allowed’ me to work in the area might be. I decided to consult the Basims.

Baba Basim smiled and tentatively said ‘Ok’. Amai Basim frowned and quizzed me about who had made the suggestion. Brushing aside my impression that Amai Basim disapproved, I decided to go ahead with the party. I had already bid farewell to Chief Chigariro and decided to call him from Harare once I had picked a date, and informed Amai Hove, who would tell the DA and those who worked in the DA’s offices. I took my leave of the Basims, expecting to return in a week to throw the party – unaware at this point that I would come back not to celebrate my departure, but to attend the Chief’s funeral. Nyaradzo, my research assistant, and I loaded our bags into the car.

As we drove down the dusty road that led from the Basims' homestead to the wide tarred highway that would take us back to Harare I began asking how much meat she thought I should buy for the 'V.I.Ps'. Nyaradzo interrupted and said, 'Amai Basim told me that the Basims would not attend the party. Don't you know that they are fighting with everyone from the DA's office?' Her comment confirmed my suspicions, but I was confused. I did not understand why the Basims said they would attend when they clearly thought the whole thing was a bad idea. Nyaradzo gently berated me for being naïve and said, laughing: 'You think those people are going to sit and eat together?! Ah Leila...they are all fighting.'

Amai Hove's suggestion that I throw a party, my quandary over whether to throw one or not, and the evasive manner in which the Basims dealt with my suggestion reflected many of the dynamics I have tried to capture in this thesis. First, Amai Hove's suggestion can be understood as an act of self-promotion vis-à-vis the DA and more senior district level AREX officers. Had I thrown the party, Amai Hove would have delivered the invitation to the DA's office herself. Being somehow involved in organising an exclusive party for these different local authorities would cast her as something of a mediator between them, and might also have resulted in them looking on her more favourably for having recognised and sought to promote their authority.

The fact that the DA or Chief Chigariro were unlikely to have attended my party because of the presence of the other, reflected the politics of authority at play in Mazowe. The hidden power struggles between these actors were informed by and were also local manifestations of broader nation-wide political processes: specifically ZANU PF factionalism and the struggle between chiefs and the ZANU PF state. ZANU PF's attempt to regain legitimacy and internally regroup during the GNU period and the anticipation of the 2013 general election pushed these struggles under the surface. That neither farmworkers nor the Basims (small-scale A1 land beneficiaries) were initially considered by Amai Hove to be worthy of an official farewell mirrored the existing socio-political hierarchies in this particular locale.

How can we understand these local-level 'politics' in the context of a new resettlement area in 2012? Land reform was about state-making. At a local level, this involved individuals pursuing quite different personal agendas. The Chief, the DA and the

AREX officers were all known ZANU PF members and state actors. However, they had different, though overlapping, visions of how the state should be (re)made through the process of land reform, and of their place within it, as individuals, and as representatives of particular interest groups. Thus, on one level, what they were competing over was different visions of the (re)made state. If land reform was about ZANU PF state-making, then what, at the local level, should this remade state and its citizens look like? On another level, in addition to a genuine sense that land distribution addressed outstanding material inequalities and restored the country's sovereignty from 'the British', individuals working in rural district councils as well as the Chief saw land reform as an opportunity to (re)instate their personal authority within government and party structures as well as to gain more influence over those living in new resettlement areas. Land reform gave individual state actors the opportunity of increased access to material wealth, either directly through allocation of rights over resources (land, houses) or indirectly by having privileged access to them (for example seed, fertiliser) for those who played their cards right. Chiefs, of course, had an additional interest regarding outstanding spiritual imperatives.

In the story above, the Basims can be understood to represent the 'citizens' or the mass of small-scale A1 land beneficiaries. While they were subject to the DA and her officers, they could also silently protest against the local state's failure to protect their land claim by refusing to attend any gathering at which the DA would be present. They too were attempting to shape the meaning of what it meant to be a citizen in this process of re-making the state. However, the extent to which they were able to negotiate with these more powerful actors was limited by their lower social, economic and political positions. This indicates the existence of class tensions between A1 and A2 farmers. The exclusion of the farmworkers as a separate group with whom the 'V.I.Ps' would not wish to socialise also spoke of the emergence of a rural underclass in new resettlement areas, maintained as morally inferior as well as lacking material and political rights. The evasive manner in which the Basims dealt with my suggestion of throwing a party was precisely how people dealt with disputes in Mazowe. Disputes between different local authorities, neighbours, farmworkers and land beneficiaries

were ever-present and well-known, but never openly or publicly acknowledged because people wanted to avoid being accused of making *noise*. The Basims did not openly refuse to attend the party, nor would they have used the opportunity to openly confront those with whom they had long-standing disputes. Instead they performed acquiescence to humour me, but would simply not have turned up. Similarly, Amai Hove could agree to my inviting the Basims to the party because she knew that they would probably not attend. By this means of non-confrontation, all the disputes between people remained unresolved. However, by avoiding direct confrontation and open public exposure of these tensions, a certain degree of local-level stability was generated, which is what those living in Mazowe desired.

In this thesis I have explored the uncertainties of belonging in a new resettlement area a decade after the implementation of Zimbabwe's Fast Track Resettlement Program (FTLRP). These uncertainties were part of the process of state- and citizen-making that was taking place through land redistribution. I have examined how the FTLRP and the broader political environment created tensions and uncertainties in peoples' day-to-day lives in Mazowe, and shown how these were negotiated and dealt with. I have also shown the limits to these negotiations, which were class and the fear of being accused of making *noise*. I have argued that despite the ZANU PF regime's best efforts, the meaning of land reform remained multiple, contested and created at a local level at the same time as being informed by broader national politics. Tensions (financial, material and in terms of peoples access to powerful socio-political actors) between A1 and A2 land beneficiaries, and between land beneficiaries and farm workers, suggest that new class distinctions are emerging in Zimbabwe's rural landscape.

If citizen-making and state-making are two sides of the same coin, then the 'coin' is belonging. What does belonging mean? This is ultimately a question that cannot be separated from power. In other words, it concerns who defines who belongs and what this means. However, neither can the question of belonging be reduced to power alone. Rather than broadening citizenship through the redistribution of land that had previously been in the hands of a white minority, 'fast track' played a crucial role in engineering an exclusive form of citizenship based on ZANU PF loyalty. This was

reflected in the individuals who were allocated land, as well as in the land administration and local authority structures that cemented ZANU PF rule and patronage networks at a local level. However, on the ground, for those newly resettled on the formerly commercial farms, as well as for those who remained living on farms, land reform had many other meanings. These depended on people's relationship to the past as well as on their aspirations for the future. Equally, multiple ideas co-existed as to what belonging meant, who belonged and who did not, and what rights they had. While the state attempted to narrow the definition of belonging in new resettlement areas through allocation of land rights, locally the question of belonging remained contested and contingent.

As Geschiere and others have argued, (Geschiere 2005; Geschiere 2009; Lynch 2011; Konings 2001), autochthonous claims to 'belong' seek to naturalise particular peoples' connection and rights to that place: use rights, access rights, rights to exclude. The notion of belonging suggests fixity and stability. However, in spite of the apparent 'naturalness' of such claims, they are in fact fragile and their social and historical construction means that there is always a chance someone else will claim to be the first owner of a place (Geschiere, 2009; Lynch, 2011). Anthropological work on land reform in Zimbabwe has focused on explicit autochthonous claims to 'belong' (e.g. Fontein 2015; Mujere 2010). Drawing on Rutherford's (2008a) concept of 'modes of belonging', I have argued that the question of belonging in new resettlement areas must be approached as a socio-political process that continues to be negotiated. At the same time, as Peters (2004) has pointed out, there were limits to the 'negotiability' of belonging, whether through access to land, socio-political positioning, or material wealth. Claims to belong, as we have seen with the Chief and in the relationship between land beneficiaries and farmworkers, also claims of control and influence over other people. Finally, belonging in this context was about community, and belonging to a socially coherent group united by a sense of commonality. Approaching belonging as a social process highlights its contingent and unfixed nature and emphasises the fact that claims to belong depend on social recognition as well as legal codes. Belonging – as a citizen, as a neighbour, as a worker – in Mazowe depended on subscribing to different moral economies which in themselves were emergent and contested. While Rutherford suggested that only farmworkers needed to submit to and perform new

‘modes of belonging’, I have shown that land beneficiaries’ belonging was also dependent on particular performances of citizenship and a particular moral contract with the ZANU PF state. By 2012, land beneficiaries, like farmworkers, both acquiesced to and challenged these, depending on whether the state maintained its end of the bargain – to secure them land (Chapter Five). But the history of white farmers’ settlement on the land, present in their houses, remaining farm equipment, physical inscriptions on the land as a material entity, and in the on-going presence of farmworkers, acted as a stark reminder of the states’ power to quite suddenly dismantle people’s claims to belong.

A second important theme in this thesis is the link between belonging and ‘morality’. Politically constructed tensions around competing claims to belong were experienced and re-cast as moral problems by those living in Mazowe. Questions of morality were central to questions of belonging. Land beneficiaries conceived of themselves as not only a landowning ‘class’, but a morally superior community compared to farmworkers (Chapter Four). State-led discourses, for example those regarding farmworkers as being ‘foreigners’, were reworked and sometimes reinforced as moral arguments at the local level. Similarly, the Chief’s vision of the state and his place in it was depoliticised by casting it as a moral problem regarding people (and the state’s) relationship with the ancestors (Chapters Six and Seven). Building on Scott (1986) and Fassin (2009; 2012), I have shown how multiple moral economies were at play in Mazowe. ‘Morality’ was contested and became part of a broader terrain of political negotiation by which claims over resources and authority, as well as exclusions from them, were justified. Hume argued that community was generated through sympathy and recognition. In Mazowe, the idea of community, with its implications of social cohesion around a common background, shared belief system, common goals, shared interests, was fraught. While land beneficiaries recognised and even sympathised with farmworkers’ situation, they also refused to formally recognise farmworkers’ claims over land, since to do so would de-naturalise their own claims. Here, arguments about farmworkers’ lack of morality were used by land beneficiaries to distance rather than create bonds between the two groups.

In 2015, many anthropologists are talking about morality. What it is, how we study it, the moral implications of our own positions and work as anthropologists. Fassin (2012) defines moral anthropology as ‘the study of moral sentiments, judgements and practices’ (p.5). He suggests the concern of moral anthropology is with ‘how moral questions are posed and addressed, or, symmetrically, how non-moral questions are rephrased as moral’ (ibid.). Rather than defining ‘morality’ a priori, anthropologists have tended to pay attention to how people define and evaluate the ‘moral’, or ‘good’ or ‘bad’. Throughout this thesis I have explored how, while local perceptions of morality in Zimbabwe are conceived of in terms of an essential moral fibre *unhu*, *unhu* is only judged and recognised in terms of action. One exercises *unhu* through interactions with others, the land and the spirits. Respect for social hierarchies is crucial. Questions of morality in Zimbabwe then, cannot be separated from questions of power. Moral character is judged in terms of a person’s maintenance of a hierarchical social order through respect for others as demonstrated in action. This local notion of morality was combined with state-led constructions of a hierarchical social order in new resettlement areas such that the exclusion of farmworkers as citizens was justified locally in terms of their lack of *unhu*.

A third major theme that underlies much of this thesis is the question of community formation. Community is a category most anthropologists take for granted. It has implications of social cohesion around a shared belief system, common goals and/or shared interests. In Mazowe, land beneficiaries were brought together because they were allocated land and because they were ZANU PF supporters. The unstable political context in which they lived bred distrust and encouraged alienation from neighbouring households, rather than cooperation. Relationships between land beneficiaries and farmworkers were structured so that land beneficiaries were positioned as materially and morally superior citizens compared to farmworkers. Nonetheless, a degree of local level stability and a sense of community were generated in Mazowe through the avoidance of direct conflict, which left these tensions and uncertainties unresolved. This superficial stability, in turn, allowed for the emergence

of tenuous forms of local belonging to the place, and a fragile sense of community amongst those living there, even as these were socially and politically contingent.

‘Fast track’ positioned people in particular relation to one another, the land, the government, traditional authorities and the ZANU PF regime.. Questions of belonging and authority in Mazowe emerged from, overlapped with and opposed official and dominant government delimitations of who had what rights in these areas, and on what basis. Divisions and tensions ran between different public authorities working in new resettlement areas – the Chief, the DA, party officials – even as all were state actors and ZANU PF supporters. The ‘state’ was both the source of uncertainty and instability, and the means of allaying that uncertainty to confer some level of stability. On the other hand, people’s daily relationships at the local level cut across the ZANU PF state’s casting of these, and local senses of community were beginning to emerge by 2012, even as these were fraught.

Everyone in Mazowe was trying to navigate a politically turbulent terrain at a time when the political context forced such turbulence under the surface. Different histories informed, were evoked and animated their lives, which affected their orientations to the future. People were concerned with productivity, safety (financial, physical, spiritual) and morality amongst all these negotiations. Most people, ultimately, wanted to live at peace with themselves. In this context, living at peace meant maintaining some level of social stability in spite of the broader political context of uncertainty and instability. Life in Mazowe was about how to manage, negotiate and navigate the tensions and uncertainties that underlay daily life without making *noise*. This logic pervaded every aspect of life and every conflict, from the family sphere, to people’s relationships with local government, to the Chief’s relationship with the state, and ultimately, to my leaving party.

In order to understand the impact of land reform on people’s day-to-day lives, and understand what *de facto* citizenship in rural Zimbabwe is coming to mean and involve, one must understand how land reform fitted within imagined personal temporal trajectories, political projects and aspirations, with ideas of what land is, with people’s relationships to history, and with broader party politics at a local and national scale. My thesis fulfils this purpose. I have shown how state-led definitions of who

had what rights and for what reasons were reworked as moral arguments at the local level. In other words, the ‘political’ was constructed as being separate from the ‘moral’. In Chapters Six, Seven and Eight, I examined the politics of authority in Mazowe with a particular focus on the relationship between chiefs and the state. In dispute were different visions of the state, the place of chiefs within it, and how the subjectivities of those living in these areas should be constituted. Moving in the same direction as Oomen (2005) and Obarrio (2014) this thesis challenges over-simplified accounts that would dichotomize the state and the customary or traditional authority. Instead I have shown that for those living in Zimbabwe’s rural areas, the authorities through which local forms of belonging were multiple and were used to serve different purposes.

A number of events in recent years suggest that the ‘land question’ in Zimbabwe is far from resolved. Chief amongst these has been the increasing number of evictions of small-scale A1 land beneficiaries by wealthier and better politically connected elites, most notably in Mazowe by Grace Mugabe, wife of the President. The hitherto successful thwarting of a national land audit by ZANU PF elites, intended to prevent land beneficiaries from holding more than one farm, suggests that the imbrication of land and ZANU PF patronage networks is increasing rather than decreasing. ZANU PF’s electoral success in 2013, accompanied by a noticeable lack of *noise*, and Mugabe’s election as the chairman of the African Union in 2015, imply that ZANU PF did succeed in re-gaining its legitimacy between 2008 and 2013, even if this is still viewed with suspicion by some camps within and outside of the country. The ongoing (ir)resolution of these issues will continue to produce uncertainty and instability in the lives of those living in new resettlement areas such as Mazowe for years to come.

Belonging, authority, security of tenure and entitlement to land in rural Zimbabwe have never been stable, or at least not for the past hundred years. Fast track rendered the multiple ways in which these issues are contested and debatable highly visible. Yet, placed in historical perspective, it is clear that the uncertainty that those living in new resettlement areas faced over claims to land and authority was not something new, even if it was experienced as such by many of those living there. Instead, I suggest that

all attempts at creating stability around these issues by different governmental regimes and authorities have, in the end, been contingent.

The question of belonging has become increasingly significant in Zimbabwe over the last fifteen years as a result of broader political and socio-economic shifts within the country. The ZANU PF regime has become thoroughly imbricated with Zimbabwe's state apparatus, particularly the judiciary, police and military. The regime has narrowed the definition of national belonging, with those critical of or resistant to the regime labelled 'traitors' and accused of siding with Western imperial interests (Ranger 2004). Recent ZANU PF in-fighting has meant that even those who do support the regime occupy an uncertain position. This period has also seen the increasing mismanagement of the state by the regime, the severe hyper-inflation of the late 1990s/early 2000s and the collapse of state services across the country being most obvious examples. Many have left the country, through choice and/or self-preserving exile. Those who remained have come to rely on themselves and their personal networks to manage the demands of daily life. Belonging at a community/local level then, has arguably taken on much more significance in Zimbabwe. At the same time, most Zimbabweans have attempted to cultivate an open-ended approach in which they have many different sources of income, and many different networks to call on for assistance and access when required (Jones 2010). These personal networks and the meaning making that accompanies them often undercuts state renditions of events, even as the state tries to control these. Finally, the separation of 'Politics' from daily life has become a prevalent means of coping with its destructive potential, even as in many areas of the country it is impossible to avoid. For those in Mazowe, the question is whether local forms of belonging that cut-across state and party definitions of belonging will solidify enough for small-scale land beneficiaries and farmworkers to be able to begin to hold the regime to account without risking their lives and livelihoods.

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