

PERSPECTIVES ON LAND AND WATER POLITICS AT MUSHANDIKE IRRIGATION SCHEME, MASVINGO, ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

Access to, control and ownership of land and water, amongst other natural resources in Zimbabwe, shape and affect rural lives, livelihoods, social relations and social organisation. Rural poverty has been entrenched and exacerbated by, amongst other factors, highly restricted access to these scarce resources. Historically, Zimbabwe's rural areas (such as communal areas, smallholder irrigation schemes and resettlement areas) have existed as sites of struggles where contestations and negotiations over access to, control or ownership of these resources have taken place. Resultantly, multifaceted and dynamic social relations have been weaved and contested social spaces carved out.

In rural Zimbabwe, contestations have tended to be complex, nuanced and intricate, working themselves out in different ways across time and space. In their heightened and more visible state, they have been characterised by violent physical expressions which, in the history of the country, involved two wars of liberation, the First Chimurenga (1896-1897) and the Second Chimurenga (1960s to 1980). The most recent violent manifestation was through nation-wide land invasions, politically christened the Third Chimurenga, which peaked in 2000 and continued sporadically to this day.

Few studies on smallholder irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe have focused on understanding how contestations for access to scarce land and water resources are framed and negotiated at the local level. Cognisant of this lacuna, this thesis uses social constructionism in examining, as a case study, Mushandike Smallholder Irrigation Scheme in Masvingo Province in order to understand and analyse how land and water politics occur at the local level. The study deploys a qualitative research methodology approach in examining local water and land politics, which involved original irrigation beneficiaries and more recent land invaders.

Findings of the thesis indicate that land and water shortages have increased considerably in the past two decades at the irrigation scheme due to the influx of land invaders into the scheme. This influx has had a negative impact on agricultural production and other livelihood strategies. Both scheme members and land invaders lay claim to land and water at Mushandike. These claims are

intricately constructed and contested, and they are linked to broader issues such as partisan party-politics, policy developments, and tradition, origin, indigeneity and belonging. Though the struggles over land and water at Mushandike are firmly rooted in the concrete conditions of existence and experiences of beneficiaries and land invaders, external actors such as political leaders, state bureaucrats and traditional chiefs tend to complicate and intensify the contestations.

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ACRONYMS

Agritex	Agricultural Technical Extension
AIDS	Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome
ALAA	Amended Land Apportionment Act
BC	Before Christ
BSAC	British South Africa Company
Conex	Department of Conservation and Extension
DA	District Administrator
DDF	District Development Fund
Devag	Department of Agricultural Development
DERUDE	Department of Rural Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IMCs	Irrigation Management Committees
IMTs	Irrigation Management Transfers
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LAA	Land Apportionment Act
LHC	Lancaster House Constitution
LHA	Land Husbandry Act
MCA	Maize Control Act
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MLAR	Market-led Agrarian Reforms
MRDC	Masvingo Rural District Council
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPA	Native Purchase Areas
NR	Natural Region

RO	Resettlement Officer
SLAR	State-led Agrarian Reforms
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
WUAs	Water Users Associations
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front
Zinwa	Zimbabwe National Water Authority

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

“The earth, in its natural uncultivated state . . . was the common property of the human race”

(Paine, 1797: 12).

Post-colonial Zimbabwe grapples with the daunting task of assuaging the vulnerability of poor rural lives and livelihoods whose susceptibility to social, economic, political and climatic change is palpably high. Poverty, resource deprivation and change (climatic, socio-economic and political) rank high amongst the causes and effects of the precariousness of rural lives and livelihoods. To combat some of these and many other challenges, the Zimbabwean government amongst many other interventionists bent on salvaging the situation, has since 1980 engaged (slowly though) in land reforms which include redistributing land to land deprived rural households (Palmer, 1990; Deininger et al., 2002). To a lesser extent, it has extended access to water to beneficiaries of land redistribution programmes.

Although there is limited contestation on whether land reform is necessarily one way of promoting inclusion in Zimbabwe, there is no consensus on the implications that it has on the lives of Zimbabweans. Using different methodologies and focusing on different aspects, some writers highlight failures within the land reform process in Zimbabwe (Kinsey, 1999, 2004; Magede and Mukono, 2014), while others view the process as mediocre but with some potential for success (Deininger et al., 2002). Others go further by suggesting that land reforms positively transform livelihoods, expand opportunities and increase incomes for beneficiaries (Kinsey, 1999, 2004; Juan, 2006; Magede and Mukono, 2014).

Overall, in Zimbabwe, land is viewed as an indispensable source of livelihoods whose accessibility is vital for reducing poverty, food insecurity and social exclusion. But Zimbabwe's land is so varied in terms of its potential productivity that, in some arid regions, the transformative potential ranges from low to very poor. This is largely compounded by poor access to water (FAO, 2000; Wratt et al., 2006; Mugandani et al., 2012; ZimVAC, 2016). For instance, in agro-ecological

regions IV and V where most of the country's rural people reside (as shown throughout the thesis), profitable rain-fed production can hardly be realised. Therefore, there is also a dire need for a substantial supply of irrigation water for meaningful crop production to occur in such areas. In response to this challenge, though at a negligible level, the Zimbabwean government extended water access to a number of rural communities through establishing smallholder irrigation schemes (FAO, 2000). The schemes at times became islands of meaningful production and food security at household level on a small-scale and within expanses of unproductive, food insecure, highly populated marginalised communal areas (Mudimu et al., 1988).

However, communal farmers in Zimbabwe need more than just access to natural resources in order for their lives and livelihoods to improve. Instead, they also need various forms of assistance such as enabling legislation, functional support structures and secure land tenure (with accompanying water rights where necessary) to successfully fight poverty and socio-economic inequalities (Le Meur et al., 2006). Where such support is lacking, there is the possibility that contestations, conflicts and even violence develop, escalate or flourish. Potentially, all these negative factors lead to an increase in poverty, vulnerability, food insecurity, stunted human development, and an escalation in inequality and suffering. As well, change within the social, economic and political environment equally impacts on productivity, poverty, food insecurity and so forth, depending on how it occurs. For instance, the nation-wide land invasions from the year 2000 and the subsequent Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) significantly transformed the agrarian sector (Moyo and Nyoni, 2013), with major implications for rural livelihoods.

While these land developments have received significant scholarly attention (Moyo, 2005; Matondi, 2012), this thesis focuses on a localised land invasion which took place in Masvingo Province in 2000 at a smallholder irrigation scheme called Mushandike, with the Mushandike scheme also becoming a victim of the nation-wide social transformation taking place simultaneously. At Mushandike, hundreds of households invaded the grazing land of the scheme, subsequently affecting the scheme's socio-economic life and triggering land-related contestations and conflicts that have prevailed to this day. These invasions, whose causes are not entirely clear, have plunged both irrigation scheme beneficiaries and the land-invaders themselves into deeper

vulnerability and poverty as shown in this thesis. Land-invaders are conceptualised in this thesis as people who are informally and illegally residing at the Mushandike Smallholder Irrigation Scheme, though the findings suggest that they did not actually invade but were nefariously allocated land. Land-invaders, land-seekers, land occupiers and informal settlers are terms used interchangeably throughout this thesis.

This study was motivated by the desire to understand land and water politics at the local level. This was made more interesting by the co-existence within the scheme of two marginalised population groups: land beneficiaries (scheme beneficiaries who were formerly allocated land by government) and land-invaders. The study set out to interrogate and understand how both groups framed and problematised their reality, understood and negotiated co-existence and contestation for access to natural resources, and resolved conflict as and when it developed. Furthermore, it seeks to comprehend how multi-stakeholder involvement influenced this co-existence, shaped livelihood strategies and impacted productivity and social relations in general. Thus, the motive was to understand diverse and competing local level lived experiences and constructions.

The scenario at Mushandike Smallholder Irrigation Scheme helps to engage with such questions as: what does land and water access and ownership mean to different people at the local level?; what factors define land ownership and possession?; and what are the weaknesses of ownership/possession in a context dominated by deprivation and marginality? Through various qualitative research techniques, pertinent experiences, views, ideas and perspectives were gathered and analysed. Local experiences and constructions emerged as highly nuanced, exhibiting (among other aspects) the intricate interconnection between local happenings and more universal occurrences within the province and across the country. This study has endeavoured to give a deep empirical understanding or thick description of local happenings, though within a conceptual explanation of land conflict and contestations obtaining at a smallholder irrigation scheme. Its argument is that such conflicts are multifaceted, caused by and advancing several interests of different stakeholders.

Land and water have different meanings and functions. Their significance in the lives of rural populations is broad including life sustenance, human development, economic prosperity, social

interaction and political participation. Access to land and water potentially broadens chances for livelihood diversification, accords or reinforces a sense of security, emboldens identity, belonging and a sense of personhood, and contributes to the realisation of social citizenship. That is why denial of access to these two invaluable resources entrenches marginalisation and vulnerability and sometimes triggers contestations, conflict or even war. In the next two sections, I consider important themes around land and water.

1.2 Conceptualising land, interrogating supposed positivity of exclusion

“With land, it is never over” (Li, 2014: 591)

This section strives to accomplish two things. First, it seeks to highlight various ways in which land is conceptualised. Second, it interrogates the importance of excluding others from land. The way land is conceptualised relates closely to how it is used and governed. Therefore, to gain a sound appreciation of the various ways in which land is used and governed, it is necessary to develop an awareness of how the people in question conceptualise it. For those doing the excluding, exclusion is considered vital for many reasons, one being that it allows those who possess or own it, to work and/or recoup appropriate rewards from economic activities on the land without interruption.

Land, as mentioned by Kumar (2014) and discussed by Goheen (1992) and Greider and Garkovich (1994), has different meanings to different people. Different actors such as farmers, villagers, interventionists, politicians, scientists, investors, legal experts and government officials as noted by Li (2014: 590) “have distinct views on what land is, its ontology, what it can or should do (its affordances) and how humans should interact with it”. For instance, to some land is “a place to work, an alienable commodity or an object of taxation” (Li, 2014: 589). To others, as argued by Goheen (1992), land is a means of subsistence and a form of accumulation. Furthermore, to some living in rural areas, as pointed out by Andrew, Ainslie and Shackleton (2003) and Adams et al. (1999), land can also be a major livelihood supporting resource.

Therefore, meanings and uses of land are fluid and can easily be contestable and even disputable. As well, meanings people ascribe to land and its control shift over time as interests change, new technologies are introduced, and values change (Goheen, 1992). Some of these meanings and ideas

compete for dominance while many others can co-exist in an inter-connected, overlapping or embedded way. One enduring invaluable characteristic of land as indicated by Li (2014: 589) is that it inherently has a rich and “diverse array of affordances”, that is, “uses and values it affords to us, including the capacity to sustain ... life”. More importantly, it is immovable, and hence can only be exploited from where it is. Similarly, its immovability dictates that excludability can only be practiced where it is found (du Plessis, 2011).

Exclusion, as noted by Foltz (2005), can be done through regulation in the form of formal property law, customary law or land use zones; by means of market forces which exclude those who cannot afford to pay the price; as well as through forceful or physical means like fences, hedges and guns. However, the accomplishment of exclusion in land is difficult when it has an extensive span or in a context where it is scarce (du Plessis, 2011), as shown later. Regimes of exclusion, as noted by Li (2014), are vital for land utilisation in that, on the one hand, these regimes distinguish legitimate from illegitimate users and uses and, on the other hand, they inscribe boundaries using various means as discussed above. Li (2014: 591) emphasises that the usefulness of land to humans depends quite importantly on exclusion for the simple reason that it allows the excluding party to recoup some benefits from accessing the land. Even under communal tenure (which often commands minimal levels of excludability), a measure of exclusion exists and this enables individuals to work and recoup benefits without disruption from land that is rendered inaccessible to all others by policy, law, physical barriers or a shared socially constructed regime of exclusion (Foltz, 2005).

The costs of enforcement of exclusion tend to be high both in instances where marginalisation is high, according to Li (2014) and when legal instruments or physical barriers are used, as argued by Hess and Ostrom (2003). But where exclusion is viewed as legitimate, either due to the fact that the excluding party possesses titles, or that the practice itself is framed acceptably, exclusion tends to be less costly. Factors such as land scarcity, new ideas, infrastructural or technological demands and need for land by upcoming generations can lead to the waxing and waning of the legitimacy of exclusion (Lund, 1998). Where legitimacy of exclusion is not readily upheld, it is challenged in varying degrees by members of society. The rejection or disregard of exclusion plays

out in different ways which may include contestation of authority by individual citizens or organised groups (Lund, 1998) which can assume the form of mass mobilisations, occupations, arson and even revolutions (Li, 2014) or wars (Murombedzi, 2010).

Regimes of exclusion can be contested whether existing as constitutional provisions, property rights, localised by-laws or as socially constructed and shared ideals (Ngoitiko et al., 2010; Whande, 2010; Li, 2014). Contestations could be over ideas informing regimes of exclusion or the practice of exclusion itself. In the colonial context, for instance, various ideas informed exclusion, justified various forms of expropriation and created supportive laws and institutions facilitating exclusion. In contemporary Zimbabwe, the Third *Chimurenga* (or land occupation movement and FTLRP from the year 2000), which was supposedly informed by emancipatory ideas, disregarded existing land laws and justified violent acts of expropriation which excluded many from retaining or accessing land. Authorities saw justification in the claims and legitimated the process through the implementation of the FTLRP as discussed in Chapter 3.

Pleading for moral forms of exclusion often occurs in a context characterised by rising inequality. Thus Thomas Paine (1797) implored humanity to remember that the earth in its original form once belonged to all people (Kelly, 2015). Therefore, when we parcel it out, exclude others from where we extract benefit, we should not lose sight of the view that the piece of land from which we exclude, like the rest of the earth, collectively belongs to the human race and not entirely to the colonising individual or group. Failing to share earth amicably, in a society as exemplified by the western world, developed a tendency well espoused by John Locke, of expropriating land from the weak, especially those who failed to access or lacked the resources with which to improve it, or to use it efficiently (Li (2014: 591). This Lockean view, which to a large extent could be accused of having given character to colonial land conquest and expropriation, still has far-reaching consequences even in contemporary society.

1.2.1 Land and land reforms in Africa

The global view, as noted by Raikes (2000), is that there is abundant land in Africa for all who might want it. This view is premised on the fact that Africa, the world's second largest continent (approximately 30,370,000 square kilometres) (Sayre, 1999) has a much smaller population size

(about 1.3 billion people) compared to Asia (about 4.5 billion people), (UN, 2017) the largest continent (approximately 44,579,000 square kilometres) (National Geographic, 2006). Despite Africa's supposed land abundance, its rural people largely own (or possess) small pieces of land and an increasingly number is becoming landless or land-short (Raikes, 2000; Whitehead and Tsikata, 2003). The primary cause of these shortages is skewed distribution which lies in colonial injustices whose correction remains deferred in many parts of post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa, coupled with immense competition for land by different national sectors and international stakeholders. Further, particularly in former white settler nations, customary tenure has significant land access implications for women in particular and communal persons in general (Whitehead and Tsikata, 2003; Peters, 2004). Land and tenure reforms are crucially necessary for the correction of these anomalies on the sub-continent (Feder and Feeny, 1991; Cousins, 2005; Moyo, 2005; Ho and Spoor, 2006).

In general, land reforms seek to avail land to those experiencing scarcity (land redistribution) or extend tenure rights to those who need them (tenure reforms). The need for land reform can be premised on political, economic and social grounds. Within post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa, these purposes compete for prominence. In South Africa, for instance, redistributive land reforms seek on the one hand to satisfy restitution needs (socio-political reasons) and, on the other, they focus on employment creation, poverty reduction and rural development (socio-economic reasons) (Cousins, 2012). On the whole, the country seeks to extend social justice to many through correction of historical wrongs (such as exclusion from access to productive land and distortion of ownership rights) through land redistribution, titling and institutional reforms (Hendricks, 2003; Ho and Spoor, 2006). In addition to the above reasons, land reform can be used to win over the electorate and to attack political opponents especially if they are part of (or identify with) the land holding elite. To many, Zimbabwe's radical land invasions which began in 2000, and were supposedly sanitised through a state-led FTLRP introduced in June 2000, partly served a political purpose (Cousins, 2005; Moyo, 2005; Zikhali, 2008; Matondi, 2012; Dabale et al., 2014).

To those who are development-minded, land reforms present an opportunity for economic restructuring despite the fact that they also drive both political and social goals (Sarkar, 1989).

Redistributive programmes such as those advocating for allocating land-to-the-tiller seek not only to transfer land, land use and/or ownership rights to many, but also sometimes effect a huge shift in class structure and social relations (Gorman, 2014). They allow many to become independent economic players rooted in agricultural production, hence allowing for significant changes in agricultural patterns within the rural context. In essence, land redistribution potentially leads to the expansion of the agricultural sector which translates to expansion of output and subsequently improved performance of the broader economy, especially one which is heavily dependent on agriculture such as that of Zimbabwe.

Titling is a vital component of land reform which involves defining and documenting the rights given to a piece of land newly allocated or where current rights are either unclear, ambiguous or otherwise (Feder and Feeny, 1991; Ho and Spoor, 2006). Titling not only brings clarity to rights to land but is also believed to have economic benefits like access to credit as well as an increase in land investments, land values and agricultural productivity (Feder and Nishio, 1998; Jacoby and Minten, 2007). Land titling answers fundamental questions such as: “whose land; how much land; and where is it located?” (Ho and Spoor, 2006: 581).

While in some parts of the world one of the advantages of formal title is access to credit as indicated above, in many others where title (no matter how substantive it might be) is not respected, this is not the case. The political environment, as in Zimbabwe’s recent past, might not guarantee the protection, but instead promote the violation, of tenure/collateral security (Vitoria et al., 2012) as evidenced by the 2000 land invasions and the subsequent FTLRP. Additionally, where small pieces of land cannot be used as collateral for political-administrative reasons as in contemporary Zimbabwe, title in-itself would not ensure collateral (Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development (MAMID), 2013). Therefore, in a context such as Zimbabwe, there is need to address the issue of formal title to make leasehold suitable for use as collateral at agricultural-related credit institutions (MAMID, 2013). This would also, it is claimed, increase participation in agricultural development by the private sector, which would in turn give farmers more freedom to choose who to borrow from (MAMID, 2013).

Due to the centrality of its roles, the state in sub-Saharan Africa should be the driver of land titling and defence of ownership or other forms of secure title. Titled land should also have clearly marked out boundaries. Unclear boundaries are a cause of contestation within and between communities. To avert local level boundary-related land conflicts and to ensure smooth land governance, the state should establish sufficient cadastral systems which avail accurate information to individuals, groups, communities and entrepreneurs with regards territorial boundaries and other details that reinforce the informed defence of land rights (Ho and Spoor, 2006). Tenure systems, especially in less developed and poor societies, should ensure that land resources do not end up in the hands of a few.

1.3 Conceptualising water

“By means of water, we give life to everything” (The Koran 21:30).

The centrality of water in the history of humanity is indisputable. Hassan (2011: 5) aptly notes that “[f]or human beings water was not merely a substance that sustained life. It was above all an elemental ingredient in the way people conceived of the world and a principal component in the expression of their thoughts and emotions”. This is supported by Eliade (1958: 188) who indicates that “water symbolises the whole of potentiality: it is the *fons et origo*, the source of all possible existence”.

This section looks at how humanity has, at different times and places, conceptualised and perceived water. It pays attention to the ways in which water has been intertwined with social practice from antiquity to the contemporary period. Similarly, it analyses the construction of water within mythical-religious, scientific and ecological paradigms. These categories, which I embrace for their concise and effective portrayal of broader ideas, are borrowed from Hassan (2011).

1.3.1 Past and present discursive constructions

The discursive construction of water has been changing across societies over time. Such changes have, to an extent, been accompanied by shifting human relationships with water. Tvedt and Oestigaard (2010) suggest that conceptualisations of water have over the years grown from myth through science to the current mixture of both. Water myths have significant meanings to societies that embrace them. For instance, the “myth of Sumer, where Enki brings order and life to the earth

by pouring water into the beds of the Tigris and the Euphrates” envisages water as complementing earth in ushering life unto this world (Tvedt and Oestigaard, 2010:2). The construction of water as giver of life influenced conservation and reverence of water and rivers. This in a way promoted what we would today call sustainable natural resource utilisation.

Most of the ancient and enduring water myths are located within or linked to religions and religious practices. For example, in many religious circles including Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Judaism, water is considered holy and of great importance (UNESCO, n.d.). Millions of Hindus in India still take a holy bath in Ganges River while, in France, millions of Catholics also collect water from the Lourdes every year because the water and the rivers are regarded as bearers of holiness and healing (Park, 2004; Provenzo and Buxton, 2009; Tvedt and 3, 2010; UNESCO, n.d). These religions regard water as holy and therapeutic and presumably a conduit between the creator and mortal individuals.

Relationships that people build with water draw from or influence how water is constructed. As an example, where water is constructed as holy, it is treated with reverence and used sparingly compared to where it is constructed as an economic commodity. For the latter, as discussed later, affordability is the main determining factor in how much water an individual or group uses. Therefore, water conservation discourses in the contemporary world might benefit significantly from seriously constructing water not merely as an economic commodity accessed and used according to affordability. Such discourses might benefit from emphasising the importance of water in sustaining life, the need to avail it to all people as a human right and how it is being affected by rapid depletion due to climate change. This might encourage societies to use it sparingly, and to conserve and preserve it.

However, in more recent times, water has been indeed constructed as a catalyst for industrialisation and as an entity affected by economic activity. During European industrialisation, water was seen as a stimulant of industrial revolution, hence it assumed an economic value (Tvedt and Oestigaard, 2010). Just as it had contributed to the rise of agrarian societies, as mentioned by Turner and Maryanski (2015), water likewise significantly aided the emergence of industrial societies. Water’s increasing economic and social signification led to its increased politicisation as well (Vernot et

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al., 2007). Politics assumed a significant role in determining ownership, control, distribution, conservation and defence of water.

During the late industrialisation period, water was further constructed as an embodiment of risk and hazards from which industrialising societies were liberating themselves, through industrialisation (Tvedt and Oestigaard, 2010). Water was then constructed as a hazard-imposing entity. For instance, Giddens (1989: 632) suggests that water had in the past exposed humanity to “insecurities” and “uncertainties about the future” through natural disasters, diseases, floods and so forth. But for Giddens (1989), in the industrialised world, concerns slowly shifted away from how water affects people to how people affect water. This shift, Giddens (1989) argues, reflects that modern societies have gained dominance over nature. Therefore, they now shoulder the responsibility of protecting and preserving nature. However, Giddens says very little about the persistent challenges that nature continues to pose such as droughts and floods (whether caused by climate change or otherwise), tsunamis and hurricanes.

In the contemporary world, ideas about water have in fact burgeoned significantly. Scientific, political, economic and social ideas evidently collide, diverge and sometimes converge. In some scientific quarters, religious and social ideas are dismissed as inconsequential while in other spheres, especially those concerned with water management, they are beginning to gain traction (Hassan, 2011). Financial-economic ideas about water maintain their emphasis on price policy as previously. This view, according to Rogers et al. (2002), is that sustainability of water-related service delivery can only be maintained through a price policy which demands profitable provision of water to consumers. Water is therefore constructed as a commodity that cannot be freely availed to users as that would prove ‘unsustainable’. However, the presence of the poor in many societies (especially in Africa), who are to a large extent unable to afford paying for water services, impedes the realisation of such an ideal were it to be implemented as such. The 1992 Dublin International Conference on Water and the Environment indeed contradicts the financial-economic view of water. It suggests that water should be accessed at affordable prices (Hassan, 2011), with this idea being sensitive to the plight of the poor vis-à-vis the indispensability of the resource. It recognises that every individual, regardless of ability to pay or otherwise, needs to access water for domestic

and sanitation purposes. Water should therefore be availed to every human being, rich or poor, able to pay or not, and in both rural and urban settings. In the end, these contemporary ideas about water influence the relationship between people and water in different parts of the world, and impact communities differently.

1.3.2 Water, life, rights, equity and social justice

Some literature emphasises that water sustains life and is indispensable for household and production purposes. Its availability is key to good health, economic growth and development, and for the environment, amongst other things (Rasul and Chowdhury, 2010). Maintenance of life, Franks (2000) notes, critically depends on an adequate water supply. Furthermore, water availability, as argued by Heller and Talarico (2009), avails freedom to exercise choices in life. Yet many people across the world face shortages of water for both domestic and livelihood uses. This section highlights the importance of water, and concomitantly the importance of why we should continue to pay attention to water issues.

Emphasising the importance and indispensability of water, the United Nations (UN) regards water as a “basic human need and a fundamental human right” (UNDP, 2006: v). Ironically, about 768 million people, according to UN-Water (2014), have no access to clean water while 2.5 billion lack adequate sanitation. In sub-Saharan Africa, as given by WHO (2015: 1-2), the number of people with no access to clean reliable drinking water and without access to improved sanitation are respectively 319 million and 695 million. These alarming figures function as a huge indictment on privileged human beings for failing to adequately govern and distribute this invaluable resource in a manner that allows for accessibility. What these figures indicate is that minute by minute, many across the world, including some in our own backyards, are exposed to disease and illness, hunger and starvation, increasing poverty, family and societal disintegration and conflicts either due to lack of water or subsequent contestations for its access. Lives continue to be lost the world over due to water shortages and weaker groups such as women and children, as always, are more vulnerable.

The UN suggests that the world has more than sufficient water for agricultural, industrial and domestic purposes (UNDP, 2006). The World Business Council for Sustainable Development

(WBCSD) (2005) concurs, pointing out that the world's problem is not water shortage but rather that it is not always available where and when people need it. Shortages, therefore, are not because the world does not have enough water for everyone but are largely experienced because some people, especially the poor, are systematically excluded due to poverty and inequality (UNDP, 2006; UNDP and Peace Child International, 2006). Furthermore, limited legal rights and public policies that limit access end up contributing to systematic exclusion (UNDP, 2006).

In some countries, poor budget allocation to water and sanitation exacerbates the persistence of the water shortage problems (UNDP, 2006). The poor who lack resources to harness, move and purify water for themselves and look to governments to deliver such a service remain excluded. In other countries, as given by UNDP (2006: 7), the poor fail to access water for both domestic and other uses because of the asking price. The world's poorest people, UNDP and Peace Child International (2006) observe, pay comparatively the highest prices (certainly, in human costs) in the current water crises. Therefore, even when water is physically accessible within the vicinity of the poor, affordability may still render it as inaccessible as it would be if it were physically scarce.

In poor countries, the poor, women, children, the disabled, the elderly and other disadvantaged groups who lack the voice to fight for water or wherewithal to cause significant change or attract attention, silently suffer water insufficiency. In Zimbabwe, for instance, many in rural areas have lacked good access to water for long despite that the country enshrines water access as a human right in its own constitution. Section 77 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, in the Declaration of Rights, thus explicitly states that: "Every person has a right to – (a) safe, clean and potable water and ... the State must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within the limits of the resources available to it, to achieve the progressive realisation of this right."

Human rights to water as any other rights are neither discretionary nor voluntary legal provisions that governments should willy-nilly uphold nor discard, but should be seen as binding justiciable obligations. Regardless, these obligations are flouted with impunity by governments in general and by the Zimbabwean government in particular (UNDP, 2006). This is not an indictment on the government of Zimbabwe but a mere factual observation. Deferred extension of access to clean water whether in Zimbabwe or elsewhere is tantamount to a violation of the human rights of the

excluded regardless of the causes. In this respect, Zimbabwe's constitutional provisions are in congruence with the current near-universal discourse on water access as a vital component of human security. It therefore proposes that every person, including the poorest, should have reliable access to water, water facilities as well as water services at affordable prices (UN, 2014). It argues that 20 litres of water per day, as advanced by UNDP (2006: 3), is the minimum that every person should access for basic needs to lead a dignified life.

In spite of the assumed global availability of water discussed above, water reservoirs in some parts of the world are drying up due to causes that include poor resource management, over use, poor ecological balance, increasing demand and climate change. The physical unavailability of water the world over is also becoming a factor compounding water shortages (UNDP, 2006). In some regions of the world, groundwater tables are receding and water-based ecosystems are depleting, and all this is exacerbating water shortages. The problem is compounded by the fact that transference of water across long distances is a costly undertaking requiring resources that maybe unavailable for poor countries and regions.

Water deprivation not only retards human progress but also affects social relations, human dignity and a sense of identity and belonging. It affects the way groups view themselves and others and, conversely, how they are viewed by others. This involves both deprived and privileged groups. The inequalities it engenders, and the indignity associated with poor sanitation, malnutrition and starvation tend to become enduring identity markers separating groups. This view gains impetus from the UN's assertion that sanitation, together with safe drinking water, are crucial not only for sustainable development but also for the attainment of each and every Millennium Development Goal (UN-Water, 2014).

Impliedly, individuals inhabiting communities with poor and backward sanitation services are themselves supposedly backward. Therefore, the importance of proper management of water resources and the diligent distribution and equitable allocation of water remain vital to promote, as already noted, people's "lives and livelihoods, ... economic development and ... social prosperity" (Rasul and Chowdhury, 2010: 4). Restricted access, competing needs and high costs tend to expose communities to possible developments of conflicts between competing groups. For

instance, competing needs arise between irrigators and non-irrigators, or between water agencies and irrigators concerning costs, or within a community of irrigators.

1.4 Land, water and irrigation schemes: significance, scarcity and competition

This section highlights the importance of land and water and how competition for access ordinarily plays out. It highlights scarcity as one major factor that heightens competition for access. However, discussions throughout the thesis show that competition and even scarcity itself are caused by different, numerous and even complex factors which do not readily trigger conflict but provide an exploitable platform for conflict to arise.

Land and water bolster life (human and non-human) and livelihoods especially in rural or agrarian contexts where livelihoods (both on- and off-farm) evolve primarily around access to land (Le Meur, 2006; Li, 2014). What is significantly disturbing though is the fact that these invaluable resources are increasingly becoming scarce (Le Meur, 2006; FAO, 2011). Militating against their sustainability and compounding their scarcity are such factors as rapid depletion, climate change, population growth, poverty, migration, poor governance and vicious economic exploitation (Le Meur, 2006; FAO, 2011). The UNDESA (n.d.) in concurrence with FAO (2011) suggests that the manner and level at which land and water are accessed, used, shared, managed and governed play a major role in promoting human and economic development, food security, peace, social justice, equity and human rights within social contexts. Competition for access increases or wanes contextually. Those on the margins who usually have insecure or limited rights of access to land and water are more affected by increased competition for access to these scarce resources (FAO, 2010, 2011; Prato and Longo, 2012).

Projections show that the world population is going to rise from an estimated 7.3 billion in 2015 to 9.73 billion by 2050 (United Nations, 2015; World Bank, n.d.). Concomitantly, the demand for land for agricultural, residential and other economic needs rises. Simultaneously the demand for safe, clean drinking water and water for agriculture and other uses also increases. Further, economic progress accompanying such transformation places an increased demand on land and water directly and indirectly as need for food as well as diversified diets increase (FAO 2011: vii).

With the world food demand rising as many countries across the world are increasingly developing, FAO (2011: vii) projects a global surge in food production of up to 70% by 2050 and a 100% increase in developing countries more specifically. Such changes will lead to a heavy demand on and provoke competition for both land and water. Climate change also continues widening the demand for land and availability of water. Rising temperatures, unpredictable precipitation and a shift in the hydrological cycle, among other factors, have already started resulting in land degradation, water shortages and subsequent poor production (IPCC, 2007; Backlund et al., 2008; Rosegrant et al., 2008). Land degradation, floods, rainfall and water shortages lead to increased demand for land through degrading existing arable and habitable land. In the absence of high innovation, mitigation, adaptation (IPCC, 2007) and astute management, land and water shortages are bound to increase.

Sub-Saharan Africa is in a particularly difficult position in this regard. This region, “with an estimated 217.8 million” malnourished people in 2014-2016, out of a total population pegged at 936 million people by 2013 (FAO, 2015: 1), needs to significantly improve land and water resource use management for production, accessibility and affordability of sufficient nutritious food. It needs improved mitigation, adaptation and the implementation of intensified, sustainable and effective land and water uses (IPCC, 2007; Backlund et al., 2008; Rosegrant et al., 2008; FAO, 2011).

The UN suggests that although irrigation is already the highest consumer of water in developing countries, governments in sub-Saharan Africa still need to rollout irrigation to improve agricultural production and other economic activities both downstream and upstream (UNDP, 2006: 18). Currently, the majority of the region’s agricultural land is highly dependent on rain-fed agriculture which makes it vulnerable to food insecurity (Singh et al., 2009). Rain-fed farmland in sub-Saharan Africa is at least 90% of all agricultural production (Joshi et al., 2009: 276; Oweis and Hachum, 2009: 182; Rockström and Karlberg, 2009: 36; Wani et al., 2009: 1). In this context, the poor in the region remain increasingly vulnerable to hunger, starvation and other vagaries of rain and water scarcity.

Irrigation schemes have the potential to increase crop yield as mentioned by Rockström and Karlberg (2009) and subsequently increase farm incomes which consequently reduces poverty for the beneficiaries. These impacts can indirectly improve rural employment and livelihoods overall (Bhattarai et al., 2002). However, they also foment social inequality across communities as those falling outside irrigation schemes are left behind. But the prevalence of poverty within irrigation networks is “typically 20%–40%” lower than outside (UNDP, 2006: 18).

1.5 Land and water symbiosis: contestation and conflict

Land and water are inseparable and symbiotic life-enhancing precious resources, as already demonstrated. Availability, non-availability or poor availability of water influences how land is used. For instance, the agricultural value of land, in relation to crop husbandry, closely draws from water accessibility or availability. Issues like cropping seasons, crop type and size of land used are equally influenced by the presence or absence of water. In many parts of the world, water access is dependent on access to land because water rights are ordinarily embedded in, and considered an integral part of, land rights. Water rights in that regard are subsidiary to land rights (Hodgson, 2004; Cotula, 2006). Thus control of land amounts to a significant measure of control of water and/or water resources on or underneath the land (Global Water Partnership, 2014).

The symbiotic relationship between land and water is sometimes overlooked when issues relating to land are addressed. Land access unaccompanied by water access has negative implications not only on productivity but on the quality of life of those engaged in agricultural activities (Adams et al., 1999; Manzungu, 2001; Greenberg, 2009). For instance, greater access to land outside agro-ecological regions I and II (the two regions with the greatest rainfall) in Zimbabwe would not necessarily result in high crop production in the absence of a corresponding supply of agricultural water. Instead, the legitimate fear is that water deficiency might accelerate environmental degradation. Therefore, in the context of land reforms, Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular need to avail both land and water to beneficiaries for land reforms to positively transform people's lives.

The poor have limited access to opportunities, more so in rural areas where employment is scarce (Le Meur et al., 2006: 13). Access to land and water resources offer the rural poor the rare and

limited opportunity of diversifying their livelihoods. The centrality of both land and water to the lives of the rural poor though is complicated by endemic challenges and contestations inherently bedevilling individuals and societies experiencing natural resource deprivation. In this context, contestations and conflicts are endemic to processes of accessing, controlling or owning natural resources. Lund and Boone (2013) suggest that land issues (contestation, competition and/or conflict) are rarely just about land where and when they occur. In support of this, Bob and Bronkhorst (2010), suggest that land conflict is caused by the interplay of many complex factors which include limited access due to such issues as poverty and inequality as well as power dynamics (in securing land tenure, when land is used as an instrument to manipulate for instance the rural electorate).

Lund and Boone (2013) claim that competition for land evolves around the meanings and interpretations of social relations arising in relation to land use. For example, Omolo (2010) argues that, in Kenya, climate change increased competition for land and water between pastoralists and sedentary farmers leading to violent conflicts. As pointed out by Bob and Bronkhorst (2010) and Hendrix and Brinkman (2013), because of the importance of water in agricultural productivity, water conflicts are usually linked directly to food security, besides the provision of fresh water. Because of this, access to water is not only shaped by the availability of the material entity, but by social relations, laws in place, climate change, quality of water and construction of place.

Le Meur et al. (2006) suggest that conflicts are actually indications of differences in interests and signs of deep social divisions. In dealing with conflicts, individuals and communities can be manipulated by political and social actors central to the conflict, or actors who are merely capitalising on the existence of conflict to advance interests or recoup gains. Interested parties might distort or manipulate the cartographic representation of natural resource conflicts to advance particular causes. This might include misrepresentation of causes and consequences of problems around water and land access.

In many instances, causes and consequences of conflicts might be multi-layered to the extent that what is on the surface might not be the real issues. For instance, political elites (both politicians and traditional leaders) might project contestations and conflicts over access to resources as

emanating from ethnic differences and limited supply or scarcity of resources (Klopp, 2001, 2002; Omolo, 2010). Yet, in essence, they could be deliberately exploiting resource allocation for political gains. As observed by Richards (1996: xviii), resource allocation can easily be used to “build support” and demand loyalty from the marginalised and excluded or intended beneficiaries. Deprivation in this case, especially for those who resist manipulation, might not be caused by shortages per se, although constructed as such, but by deeper underlying factors.

The existing literature thus suggests that deliberate and manipulative resource distribution wantonly occurs because patrimonial governance dominates most rural contexts especially in areas where there are chiefs or traditional authorities. In support of this, Lund and Boone (2013) assert that traditional leaders can manipulate the allocation and control of land and water. For instance, the control of water by a chief at Mutambara irrigation scheme in Zimbabwe, by which he deprives scheme members opposing his chieftaincy, is testimony of such manipulation (Manzungu, 1995). Traditional leaders and politicians can easily do this because in many instances they enjoy wide-sweeping legislative, judiciary and executive powers, and are often fundamentally accountable only to themselves. In such contexts, disloyalty of whatever kind (opposing political decisions of leaders) is tantamount to personally rescinding one’s enjoyment of social justice and social citizenship at the local level (Richards, 1996).

When and where patrimonialism is in crisis, violence tends to be one approach deployed for maintaining loyalty and control (Richards, 1996). The weaknesses of violence are of course numerous. One weakness is that, instead of addressing the concerns of the aggrieved or aiding negotiation that narrows differences, violence (when used by powerful groups to intimidate) pushes weaker groups into further submission and subjugation (Richards, 1996). When used by weaker groups, violence might function as a communication tool or depict liberatory behaviour. As pointed out by Masango (2004), the oppressed tend to use violence, conflict or war as a way of expressing dissent or to sound their concerns when dialogue will have proved ineffective or impossible. During contestations, conflicts and negotiation, war or violence, threats and symbolic action are deployed by actors to pivot processes advantageously.

In summation, conflicts tend to arise between individuals, social groups or communities due to, among other factors, deprived access stemming from shortages caused or exacerbated by degradation, demographic pressure, unfavourable policy, political and other forms of exclusion or claims of access rights (whether justified or not) to resources such as land, water, pasture and forests (Klopp, 2002; Le Meur et al., 2006; Omolo, 2010). Sometimes conflicts emanate from history, either of the people involved, of place/community and/or of resource conflict (Le Meur et al., 2006). Understanding, preventing or resolving conflict therefore requires proper understanding of its causes and effects.

1.6 The Zimbabwean water situation in recent years and its effects

According to the UNOCHA (2016), Zimbabwe, a country then facing a serious drought, had 2.8 million food insecure people, with about 99,243 of these being children below 5 years of age estimated to be very malnourished. This means that close to 30% of a total population of 9.4 million people living in rural areas across the country were in need of “urgent humanitarian assistance” and above all, about 72% of Zimbabwe’s population is living in chronic poverty (UNOCHA, 2016: 4-5). Furthermore, ZimVAC (2016), in May 2015, projected that around 1.5 million of the country’s rural population (about 16% of the rural people) were to endure serious challenges in accessing food adequate for an active and healthy life without any assistance during the January to March 2016 peak hunger period. Masvingo district alone was projected to have between 40,000 and 80,000 people in need of food assistance (UNOCHA, 2016).

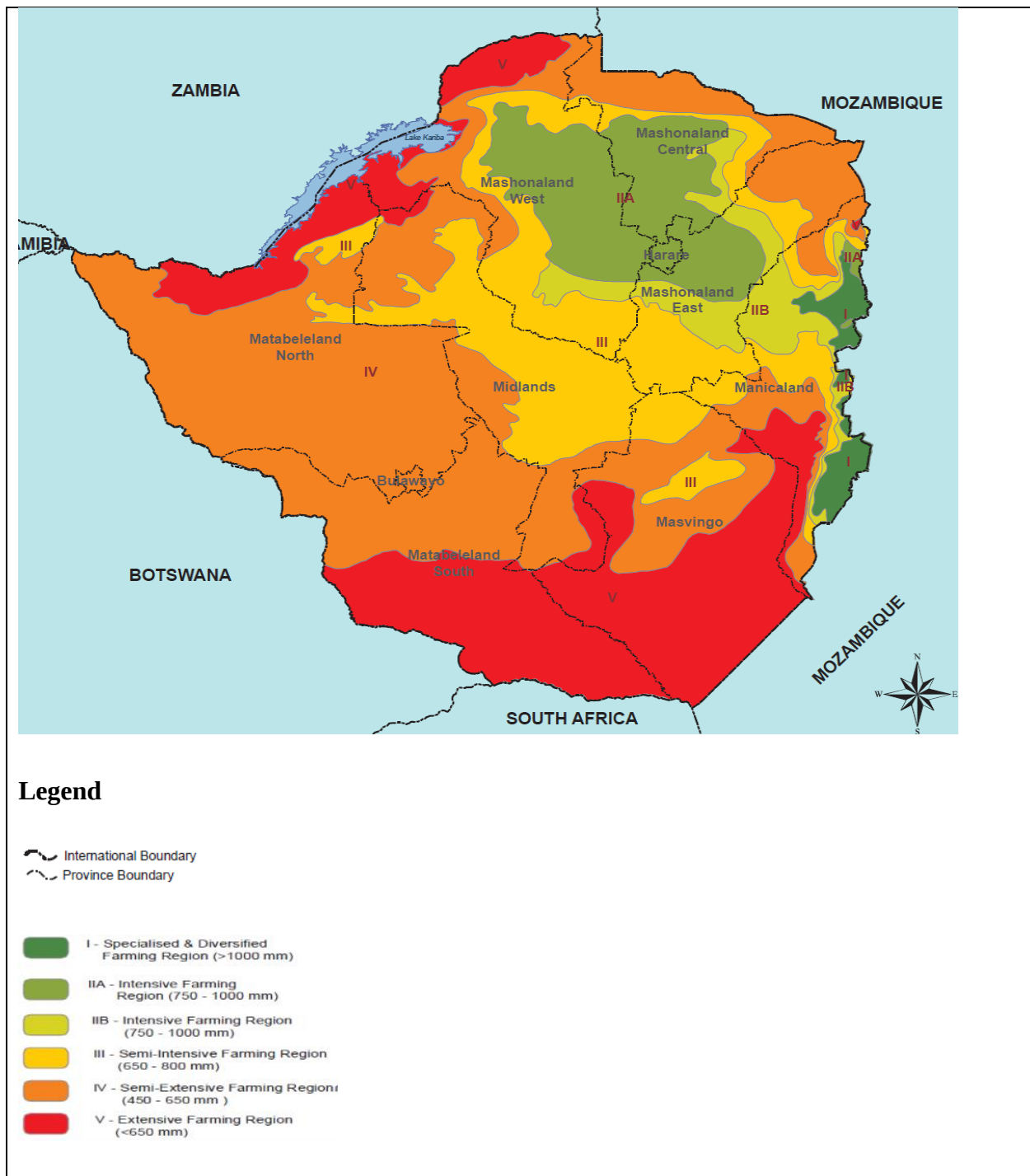
Food shortages have partly been aggravated by the fact that the country registered poor yields during the 2014-2015 farming season due to subdued rainfall. The 2015-2016 season was even worse, partly due to drought caused by one of the strongest El Niño experiences suffered in the last 50 years, resulting in the driest season in Southern Africa in the last 35 years (FAO and UN, 2016). Food shortages were also in part caused by poor management of the agricultural system of the country. This was evidenced by the fact that, during the 2015-2016 farming season, many districts did not have the maize seed type suitable for their respective agro-ecological region (ZimVAC, 2016).

Drought, the country's most easily discernible effect of climate change in recent times (FEWS NET, 2014), has had a major triple effect in recent years. First, it has exacerbated food shortages and resultant challenges such as malnutrition and diseases (UNOCHA, 2016: 5). Second, drought conditions are negatively affecting "land and water ecosystems that support crop production" thereby negatively impacting chances of an immediate improvement in production once good rains return (UNOCHA, 2016: 5). Third, people's resilience is being severely undermined by resultant water shortages that are affecting health (through poor access to safe, secure, accessible, clear clean water for consumption and sanitation), eroding savings and draught power while forcing more productive people to migrate to towns, cities and other countries (FEWS NET, 2014; UN, 2016). Nearly 1.9 million people are in need of "improved access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)" and they are exposed to higher chances of disease outbreaks due to "insufficient and unsafe water and poor sanitation" (UNOCHA, 2016: 5).

During the 2015-2016 rainy season, on average 35% of rural households across Zimbabwe did not have an adequate supply of water for domestic use, with Masvingo at around 41.7%, higher than the national average (ZimVAC, 2016). Challenges of access to water for livestock were equally high. ZimVAC (2016) notes that a national average of close to 49% of households reported that water for livestock was unavailable. Masvingo again scored slightly higher than the national average at 54.4% (ZimVAC, 2016). ZimVAC (2016) further observes that in terms of availability of water for agriculture, 90% of households in Masvingo, the highest for the country, reported unavailability, which was 9% higher than the national average.

It seems clear that Zimbabwe needs proper land use planning to meet its food and water demands in the face of climate change. For Mugandani et al. (2012), this should start with an up-to-date understanding of changing agro-ecological regions of the country to adapt accordingly. Zimbabwe, with an area of over 390,000 km² (FAO, 2000) is divided into five agro-ecological zones or natural regions (NR) with natural region one (NR I) receiving the country's highest rainfall and NR V the lowest. The regions, shown in Figure 1 below, were marked out in the 1960s taking "rainfall, soil quality and vegetation" into consideration (FEWS NET, 2014: 10).

Figure 1: Zimbabwe's Agro-Ecological Zones



Source : UNOCHA (2009: 1).

Wratt et al. (2006) note that agro-ecological zones provide useful information to farmers on the suitability of different areas for particular crops and also give valuable guidance on such issues as crop water needs for irrigation. In the light of serious climate change currently taking place, accurate zoning information would help reduce vulnerability as it informs the design of suitable agricultural adaptations and enables appropriate land use planning (Mugandani et al., 2012).

Table 1: Revised Natural Regions

Regions	Original land size km ²	Original % of land size in relation to country size	Land size km ² According to Mugandani et al.	Percentage of land-size in relation to country size % According to Mugandani et al.	Annual Rainfall mm/year
NR I	7 024	1.8	14, 439	4	>1 000
NR II	58 536	15	29,658.62	7.6	750-1 000
NR III	72 975	18.7	62,829	16.1	650-800
NR IV	147 800	37.8	155, 707	39.9	450-650
NR V	105 504	26. 7	126, 829	32.5	<450

Source: Mugandani et al. (2012: 366-367).

In fact, according to Mugandani et al. (2012: 362), sizes of natural regions are changing significantly (see Table 1) due to climatic change, and hence the need to know and plan accordingly. Crop types, fertilisers, cropping time, amount of water used for irrigation and so on have to match the agro-ecological demands for expected yields to be realised. Of note is that NR 1, suitable for diversified farming including dairy, forestry, tea, coffee, fruit, beef and maize production, according to FEW (2014), has doubled in size. This is good news that requires appropriate planning for suitable land utilisation. Sadly, though, poorly productive regions NR 4 and 5 have also expanded, with NR 4 encroaching into agricultural region III (Mugandani et al., 2012). This indicates that land and natural vegetation are degrading, rainfall is decreasing and temperatures are rising in many parts of the country with the exception of the few areas that have been upgraded to region one. Furthermore, it suggests that the size of arable or productive land is

decreasing significantly at a national level. Therefore, shortage of arable land and water is on the rise in Zimbabwe.

1.7 Problem statement

Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular experience land and water related contestations and conflicts. Social disintegration, poverty and even wars related to contested land and water access continue to bedevil the continent. At localised levels, land and water contestations result in conflictual social relations, low productivity, and low levels of social cohesion among other negativities. Therefore, land and water are real social issues that cannot be ignored even when occurring at a local level as conflicts around them tend to escalate to sometimes unimagined proportions.

Any discussions on land issues mainly and water issues to a lesser extent on Zimbabwe are largely emotive and have the potential of triggering disputes and even degenerating into very disturbing proportions of conflict if not fully addressed. Interests and values tend to affect the understanding of concerns pertaining to land issues (such as social exclusion), how such issues should be addressed and what the effects of specific responses to these issues could be. Similarly, interests and values affect the interpretation of social phenomena, exemplified by the various ways in which the land invasions in the year 2000 and the subsequent government land reform intervention are understood.

For Zimbabwe, one of the most recent and overt national political contestations cascaded into the land invasions of nearly two decades ago, which drew global attention (Moyo, 2001; Moyo and Yeros, 2005; Scoones et al., 2011; Matondi, 2012). The nation-wide land occupations caught the political establishment, the generality of Zimbabwean people and the global community unawares, as they were not expected. Numerous minuscule, sporadic and uncoordinated land invasions had occurred across the country since independence in 1980. The government and the landholding elite became acclimatised to their inconsequential effect. More importantly, peasant revolutions without the leadership of a centralised elite were uncommon in world history, such that one triggered by social exclusion just 19 years after independence in Zimbabwe was not anticipated. Lenin (1903) concluded that a peasant-led revolution was simply not possible. Even Mao's famous peasant

revolution was not entirely led by peasants but by an intellectual elite (Alavi, 1965; Rumba, 2015). Led by chiefs (Chief Svosve and others) and war veterans who might not entirely qualify as peasants, Zimbabwe's peasants (like Mao's revolutionary peasants) demonstrated that by the late 1990s they were a potent revolutionary force.

Zimbabwe's peasants prosecuted land invasions of wide-sweeping and devastating proportions and, to an extent, rendered the Zimbabwean government irrelevant for months. However, within a few months, the government jumped onto the revolutionary tide in the countryside and gained control of the occupation movement through approval rather than disapproval of the land invasions/occupations (Moyo, 2011). It gained control through electing to rationalise and sanitise the process aimed at expanding social inclusion (of marginalised rural blacks), through instituting the FTLRP which recognised and legitimised occupancy by invaders, among other things (Zikhali, 2008; Matondi, 2012; Moyo, 2013; Dabale et al., 2014). The effects of the invasions and the FTLRP were numerous and there is no consensus on this issue. Likewise, the causes, despite my views above, also remain shrouded in contestation. That these processes somehow transformed Zimbabwe's agrarian terrain and social organisation forever is the only commonly shared idea (Moyo, 2011).

Some views suggest that the FTLRP was a government project inceptioned in 2000 to accelerate "land acquisition and redistribution" (Zikhali, 2010: 124). This implies that the motive behind this state-centric intervention was to promote social justice and social citizenship through broadening access to land. This was to be achieved through speedy identification of about "five million hectares of land for compulsory acquisition for resettlement" (Zikhali, 2010: 125) and to accelerate distribution of the acquired land with just "limited basic infrastructure and farmer support services" (Zikhali, 2008: 5) provided. The FTLRP consisted of two government driven resettlement programmes, namely Model A1 (smallholder) and Model A2 (commercial production) (Dabale et al., 2014). The government prioritised Model A1 with the intention of decongesting communal areas. It therefore targeted for resettlement land-constrained communal farmers who, due to land shortages, could largely produce for subsistence only.

For Zikhali (2010: 137), the FTLRP caused the replacement of experienced commercial farmers not only with those with less experience but those whose thinking was not production-focused as it was “geared towards subsistence” as opposed to commercial production. Consequently, the FTLRP, according to Zikhali (2008: 3), impacted the economy negatively, undermined land equity through converting private land to state ownership from whom resettled beneficiaries lease, resulted in land losing three quarters of its aggregate value through loss of “property titles”, and led to tenure insecurity for beneficiaries which also provoked low investment. Similarly, for Dabale et al. (2014: 38), the FTLRP turned a country with a “once thriving ... agriculture ... once the bread basket for Southern Africa from being a net exporter of maize to a net importer”. In essence the FTLRP is accused of plunging Zimbabwean agriculture into mourning (Dabale et al., 2014).

In a similar vein, the Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2002) suggests that land invasions were a result of vindictive politics led by the ZANU-PF government following the constitution referendum defeat to the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in February 2000. ZANU-PF cadres were allegedly given a blessing to occupy white-owned land by the government while the army was tasked with coordinating and facilitating the occupations (HRW, 2002). The pretext, according to the HRW (2002), was that the government was embarking on a radical drive to fulfil land redistribution promises made at independence, yet the real agenda was to punish white landowners for supporting the MDC while intimidating the MDC and its supporters in the process. Increased violence was therefore unleashed towards various categories, classes and races of MDC supporters to intimidate, injure and subdue (HRW, 2002).

Although the MDC also reciprocated with a measure of violence, it was largely at the receiving end (HWR, 2002). Therefore, this suggests that land invasions gave ZANU-PF supporters an unfair advantage towards gaining access to land. The HRW (2002) argues that the FTLRP resulted in poor productivity as some land lay idle because those to whom it was offered hesitated to occupy due to tenure uncertainties that surrounded the process, which was worsened by the instruction issued by government not to erect permanent structures. These factors made many occupiers to leave the ex-commercial farm while others remained but chose not to invest on the land.

Furthermore, others refrained from moving onto the land because they lacked resources necessary for undertaking serious production while the government was not rendering any meaningful support. Many more who accepted offer letters under FTLRP and obliged by moving onto the offered land found that they were not the only ones with offer letters to that land. This triggered conflicts between these supposed beneficiaries (HRW, 2002).

Moyo (2013) provides a more sympathetic overview of FTLRP. He argues that the land invasions were a popular reclamation of land provoked by a deep-rooted history of deprivation and its consolidation in the post-colonial period through deferred land redistribution. Therefore, they cannot be comprehensively understood outside the realm of deep-seated marginalisation, such that the state was only pushed by “broad-based social mobilisation” to oblige to “a wide array of land demands” (Moyo, 2013:29) through the FTLRP; and this should be recognised and not be allowed to be eclipsed by the fact that the process was characterised by significant human rights violations. For Moyo (2013: 31), then, land invasions were not merely state driven, ZANU PF centred, vindictive and racialised land grabbing, as others suggest, but reflect a quest for social inclusion by diverse “local social forces” pursuing “diverse class interests”.

From Moyo’s (2013) perspective, land reforms resulted from land invasions, or at least were accelerated by non-state actors, to a point where the state had little choice but to come on board. In this way, land invasions, to an extent, fulfilled the very objective that state-led land reforms had pursued with little success between 1980 and 1999. Zimbabwe’s land reforms (1980-1999) were partly aimed at “broadening access to land and promoting peasant productivity” (Moyo, 2013:30). In so doing they would correct “class-based agrarian inequalities” created by “historical settler-colonial land dispossession and the related racial and foreign domination” that began with the colonisation of the country in 1890 (Moyo, 2013: 29). Land reforms would supposedly alter repressive social relations of production and reproduction existing then, through extricating “labour from the exploitative tenancy relationship used by large-scale farmers to compel the landless to work for low wages” and would open up free “movement of people, goods and services” across the country and end territorial segregation while promoting local and national sovereignty “in a unitary system of government” (Moyo, 2013: 30). Thus land reform would

promote “democratic land administration” while eliminating “enclaves of unequal political power and economic domination” (Moyo, 2013: 30).

To some scholars, what matters now is whether the lives of beneficiaries of the FTLRP were transformed for the better or not, and what can be done to improve the quality of their lives considering that the process is irreversible. Although Scoones et al. (2010) confine their study to one province in the country (Masvingo), their findings suggest that the FTLRP posted significant positive benefits in terms of the livelihoods of beneficiaries. As well, their findings are not dissimilar to those observed in other parts of the country (Helliker, 2011; Scoones et al., 2011). The Masvingo study found out that some farmers were increasing asset accumulation and regular production of crops for selling, or diversifying their off-farm activities successfully (Scoones et al., 2011). Many amongst those who were doing well were even contributing towards employment-creation through hiring labour (Scoones et al., 2010). However, many others were either struggling, hanging-in or dropping out (Scoones et al., 2011). Although many joined the land invasions, the land and resource demands for turning forests into productive crop fields revealed that it was not for everyone but for hardworking, highly determined and well-resourced people (Scoones et al., 2011).

Based on fast track, it is evident that contestations for land can be very complex and multi-layered with diverse issues intricately interwoven. For most of the critical literature on FTLRP, it seems clear that land shortages and subsequent deprivations, as experienced by communal people, were not considered of great significance in causing the land invasions. Politics is placed at the centre of the analysis while everyday human agency is trivialised. Moyo (2013) and Scoones (2010) are refreshing in that they point out that deep memories of land dispossession and livelihood complications arising from land shortages are crucial for understanding the land occupations, irrespective of the relevance of political and other interests and factors. Furthermore, the critical literature, in focusing on the effects of the invasions, is centred on politics and economics, including human and property rights violation, loss of land, and loss of employment. Focus on how the process affected the land hungry has been relegated to the periphery. Scoones et al. (2010) are among the few who have in a sense paid tribute to the occupiers and beneficiaries of fast track

by highlighting in an extensive manner the deep challenges they faced on the ground in the absence of any form of institutional support.

Local-level contestations draw national and global attention. As a consequence, they are analysed and explained from beyond the local perspective. It is however not the focus of this thesis to engage in land and water politics at an abstract and national/global level. Rather, the emphasis is on quotidian, somewhat mundane contestations that characterise the lives of ordinary people on a daily basis at a local level. However, an understanding of national land developments (and debates around them) provide a necessary political context for locating the case study at Mushandike Irrigation Scheme in the face of land invasions. In other words, it is important to think of localised processes in relation to macro-level developments. Thus studies on localised land issues in Africa in general suggest that demographic, environmental, political, economic, social and historical factors as well as change pertaining to these factors, favour, provoke, escalate or sustain contestations, tensions, contradictions and conflicts around land (Le Meur et al., 2006).

Given the complexity of national issues in Zimbabwe and the divergent views around them (particularly in relation to FTLRP), the thesis strives to carve out an understanding of how contestations for access to scarce land and water are conceptualised, constructed, framed, and negotiated at the local level and how this impacts lives and livelihoods. The thesis highlights how issues such as identity (political, social, cultural, historical, class), belonging, origin and indigeneity, are smuggled in so to speak, and deployed as vital resources for opening and closing entry into socio-spatial and economic realms (Dela Rey, 1991; Morris, 1998; Tshitereke, 1999; Danso and McDonald, 2001; Harris, 2002; Neocosmos, 2007). Considering the specific study area in question (Mushandike), these issues entail groupings of people who share national, racial, regional and ethnic identities and who have co-existed together for almost thirty years. In highlighting these issues at Mushandike, the study also considers practices of the (national and local) state and political parties in shaping and reinforcing local contestations around material resources and social spaces.

In this regard, there is a rich body of literature on smallholder irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe predominantly focusing on themes such as: the evolution and location of the schemes (Musara et

al., 2010; FAO, 2000; Manzungu, 1995; Makadho, 1994); water availability and management, inputs, infrastructure availability, technology provision and productivity (Svubure and Zawe, 2010; FAO, 2000; Pazvakawambwa and van Der Zaag, 2000; Manzungu, 1995; Mupawose, 1984); issues of food security (FAO, 2000; Nhundu, Gwata and Mushunje, 2010); employment creation (FAO, 2000); and non-agricultural uses of water and electricity (Svubure and Zawe, 2010).

Furthermore, and of relevance to the thesis, Magadlela and Hebinck (1995) and FAO (2000) point to strained relations between resettled irrigation farmers and surrounding (indigenous) communities over land ‘ownership’ and the distortion of inheritance customs (*nhaka*) by external decision-makers. Such a distortion tends to affect social relations, identity and productivity. Because of this, Samakande et al. (2004) argue for a reduction of external interference at the scheme level. Turning to internal contestations, Madebwe and Madebwe (2005) reveal – with reference to Ndongoma irrigation scheme – that some women farmers’ productivity is constrained by spousal interferences. Pazvakawambwa and Van der Zaag (2000) and Samakande et al. (2004) also touch on contestation and consensus over distribution and use of irrigation water within some irrigation schemes. Therefore, improvement in the performance of smallholder irrigation schemes is said to lie in addressing not only technological issues but also socio-political ones (Manzungu, 1995; FAO, 2000). But the multi-faceted and ambivalent social relations that develop within a ‘community’ of irrigators and between them and the surrounding population are not sufficiently addressed in the prevailing literature, and it is this lacuna in particular that this thesis seeks to fill.

1.8 Research questions and goals

The main goal of the thesis is *to identify and analyse how contestations for access and ownership of natural resources (notably land and water) are conceptualised, constructed, framed, negotiated and possibly resolved at the local level at Mushandike Smallholder Irrigation Scheme in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe*. Secondary goals include to:

- Identify and examine the socio-spatial environment that triggers contestations.
- Analyse how local communities as agents participate in processes of inclusion and exclusion.

- To examine the role of the state and political parties in exacerbating or resolving contestations at the local level.

The thesis was guided by the following questions:

- How are land issues problematised?
- Which land and what related challenges are being experienced in and around Mushandike?
- How are they conceptualised and what do different stakeholders perceive as causes of the challenges?
- What effects do they have on people's lives and livelihoods?
- How are the challenges addressed?
- If there are any constraining and enabling factors,
 - What are they?
 - How are they dealt with and to what effect?

1.9 Significance of the study

This thesis departs from the hegemonic and universalised economic and political explanations of the causes and consequences of land (and water) related contestations, particularly in relation to Zimbabwe, for the simple reason that they, to a large extent, overlook local realities. Using a social constructionist approach, the thesis strives to project local level land and water related contestations and conflicts as they are problematised, conceptualised and understood by local people, and hence it goes beyond grand narratives about land and water. In so doing, it gives voice and opportunity to local people to unpack and explain social issues as they understand them, not as they are supposed to be universally understood. The social constructionist approach (as discussed in chapter two) allows the researcher to make sense of local issues through paying close attention not only to what locals do and say and the symbols they use, but also grasping how they make use of language to conceal, reveal or share emotions, feelings and ideas which contribute towards shaping their local relations. Furthermore, the thesis attends to how locals relate with other stakeholders (such as the state, politicians, experts and contracting farming as driven by corporations) and how they make sense of these interactions. This endeavour adds a vital addition to various existing understandings of land and water contestations already in the academic domain.

1.10 Background to the case study area

The empirical focus of the thesis is Mushandike Smallholder Irrigation Scheme which lies between land-scarce Charumbira Communal Area to the southeast and Chivi to the west across the Tugwi River. It is located in Masvingo District, in Masvingo Province about 20 kilometres west of Masvingo town. The scheme lies in agro-ecological region IV. The entire district and surrounding districts, lie in agro-ecological region IV and V, which are very hot in summer, receive very low rainfall and are water scarce (both surface and underground water) throughout the year. Rain-fed crop production in Natural Regions IV and V is highly unrewarding. Farmers without access to irrigation water in these regions realise just about one decent harvest in every four to five years (FAO, 2000; Mutambara and Munodawafa, 2014). By 2000, these regions plus region III housed about 80% of Zimbabwe's rural population despite the fact that they are "too dry for successful crop production without irrigation" (FAO, 2000). Such spaces aggravate rural people's entrapment in poverty and marginality.

Together with many other government-initiated schemes across the country, Mushandike was established to improve food security, income generation, employment creation, nutrition and the standard of living of poor rural farmers in arid and semi-arid regions through the extension of irrigation and support services (FAO, 2000; Samakande et al., 2004; Musara et al., 2010; Fitshane, 2014). The establishment of these smallholder irrigation schemes, which attempted to modernise smallholder agriculture, was part of the post-colonial government's broader attempt at "positive social engineering" (Mollinga, 2008: 8). Government led social engineering of this kind, according to Mollinga (2008), is considered positive in that it supposedly focuses on stirring communities out of poverty through various forms of intervention. Findings suggest that this social engineering in relation to smallholder irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe has had some positive impacts despite the challenges being experienced. The positive transformation of local lives as narrated by irrigation scheme respondents reflects the indispensability of land and water symbiosis for crop production (Global Water Partnership, 2014; Merlet et al., 2014).

The Mushandike irrigation scheme was established in the mid-1980s. It was designed to have nine irrigating villages occupied by 417 irrigators when fully functional. Operationalisation was carried

out gradually with the first village becoming operational in 1986. Beneficiaries largely came from surrounding communal areas such as Chivi, Masvingo, Nyajena and Mapanzure. Each farmer was allocated 1.5 hectares of irrigated land, a residential stand and communally-controlled grazing land. The people of Charumbira who lived across the scheme on the other side of Old Masvingo-Beitbridge road are said to have largely refrained from joining the scheme because they were supposedly averse to being ‘exploited’ by the government; rumours circulating at the time suggested that government was going to demand a share of the agricultural produce from every irrigation farmer. FAO (2000) records similar experiences at Murara Irrigation Scheme in Mutoko (Zimbabwe), indicating that communication was regularly ineffective during the inception phase of irrigation projects.

After it started operating, Mushandike certainly gave beneficiaries better access to natural resources (including land) compared to those who remained in communal areas. In the light of their ongoing restricted access to land and water, residents of Charumbira, realising the benefits being realised by scheme beneficiaries, soon began to seek access to the scheme by lobbying through their chief. Their chief, Chief Charumbira of the time, secured a village on the scheme for his people which, being relatively small, absorbed a comparatively small population entirely from Charumbira. Their quest for sufficient land remained unabated and this later escalated into local land invasions during the nationwide land invasions.

Currently, scheme beneficiaries at Mushandike are recovering from the effects of rain-fed crop production which they reverted to between 2009 and 2013 as the dam had dried up. The scheme is also highly overpopulated and experiencing serious land shortages due to land invasions and other factors. Subsequently, residents of Mushandike are relatively poverty stricken due to poor yields, erosion of earnings and poor produce prices and, in some events, non-payment for produce by buyers. For instance, some irrigators are yet to be paid for the maize they sold to the parastatal Grain Marketing Board (GMB) in 2008.

1.11 Research methodology and methods

This section discusses the research methodology and methods used for the fieldwork for this thesis. A methodology, according to Harding (1987: 3), is a “theory and analysis of how research does

and should proceed; it includes accounts of how the general structure of theory” such as social constructionism “finds its application in particular scientific disciplines”. Addressing methodological issues requires answering the following question raised by Guba and Lincoln (1994: 109), namely, “How can the inquirer (would-be knower) go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?”. As discussed below, this relates to questions of epistemology and ontology. I now outline the underlying ontology and epistemology informing this thesis, as this influenced the research methods selected for the thesis.

1.11.1 Epistemology and ontology

It is important to discuss the chosen research philosophy (ontology and epistemology) which guide knowledge production in this thesis. The research philosophy gives an identity or label to knowledge claims that are made through sociological analysis (Tennis, 2008). The world of knowledge production suggests that the sociological view of social reality (or an ontological claim) normally affects the form of understanding of this reality (or epistemological claim) (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Within the realm of philosophical thinking about the social world, there are multiple and indeed competing ontological and epistemological claims or commitments. Overall, there are three dominant research philosophies, that is, positivism, realism and interpretivism (Auerswald, 1985; Tennis, 2008; Lawson, 2004).

Positivism’s ontological (the nature of being/reality) and epistemological (how we know/theory of knowledge) positions (Harding, 1987; Guba and Lincoln, 1994) made it unsuitable for this study. Its philosophical ontology, that is its theory of the nature of reality, suggests that reality consists of atomistic and independent events (Kaboub, 2008) about which correlations or preferably causal relationships can be established. This leads to an epistemological position which prioritises the value of explanatory power or simply ‘explanation’, involving the identification and development of causal relationships. Positivism tends to imply that social reality exists as an objective fact independently of people’s own understandings and interpretations of reality, and it also tends to reduce reality to what is observable to the senses. Interpretation-dependent realities and deeper levels of reality existing beyond the observable world (and which in fact might give rise to the world as experienced) are downplayed in positivism. Further, the causal relationships established through positivist reasoning are seen as theoretical constructs rather than as actually-existing

relationships within the ontology of the social world. In this light, Barth (1987: 87) argues: “Like most of us, I assume that there is a real world out there - but that our representations of that world are constructions. People create and apply these constructions in a struggle to grasp the world, relate to it, and manipulate it through concepts, knowledge, and acts.”

As with other philosophies, the ontological and epistemological positions of interpretivism are intertwined because “knowledge (understanding, meanings) is so essential in the ontological assumptions of the constitution of the world” (Goldkuhl, 2012: 5). An interpretivist ontology sees reality as an experiential reality which is not simply ‘out there’ as it is meaning-dependent. The notion of meanings and intersubjective meanings, and of everyday interpretations of the world, are central to interpretivism. This is not to claim that social reality is somehow reducible in its entirety to subjective interpretations; rather social reality needs to be understood through the meanings subjects attach to the world (Putnam, 1999). In this light, Barth (1987: 87) argues: “Like most of us, I assume that there is a real world out there - but that our representations of that world are constructions. People create and apply these constructions in a struggle to grasp the world, relate to it, and manipulate it through concepts, knowledge, and acts.” This entails a subjectivist ontology compared to positivism’s objectivist ontology, and implies that, in terms of epistemology, the focus is on ‘understanding’ and not explanation (Carson et al., 2001). Understanding involves identifying the meanings of subjects and the ways in which reality itself becomes the subject of complementary, divergent and competing meanings. In this sense, interpretivism is often associated with the notion of a constructivist sociology. In this thesis on the Mushandike irrigation scheme, and the politics of land and water at the scheme, every day and divergent interpretations of local reality are central to the analysis.

Realism, especially the critical realism espoused by Bhaskar (1989), emerges as a philosophical approach which adds value to the constructivist-interpretivist perspective adopted in this thesis (Campbell, 1998). According to Bhaskar, social reality is stratified such that the world as it exists is not reducible to our senses, experiences and even our everyday understandings of the world (Bhaskar, 1989). There are deep structures and mechanisms beyond our direct and immediate understandings of the world which need to be identified and studied, as these structures and

mechanisms have generative powers which give rise to the world as directly experienced and known. The structures studied thus are not mere theoretical constructs but have an ontological status. This of course implies a criticism of an interpretivist sociology which tends to ignore this deeper ('hidden') reality. But I would argue that – in the end – critical realism is compatible with an interpretivist approach or at least certain versions of this approach. It is possible to accept, simultaneously, deeper levels of reality generating the world as immediately known while still holding to the claim that the world as immediately known is animated by subjective and intersubjective interpretations (Frazer and Lacey, 1994). For one thing, both at least implicitly propose a relational sociology, though in very different ways, so that meanings for instance arise, develop and change through fluid social relationships (Owen, 1992). To use both at the same time, there simply needs to be an acceptance that: first of all, subjective understandings do not capture the full complexity of reality; and, secondly, in using an interpretivist approach, that it is necessary to focus as well on the underlying structures which give rise to the everyday world. This I seek to do by considering the political economy of land and water in the specific context of Zimbabwe.

The main philosophy used though is interpretivism, and this shapes the research methodology used in the thesis, which is qualitative (Denzin, 1997; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). In emphasising the importance of embracing the subjective foundations of knowledge, social constructionism (interpretivism) stresses that reality and truth are generated by meanings and the ways in which subjects understand and define situations, which are necessarily context-specific (both temporally and spatially) (Nightingale and Cromby, 2002). For instance, as an interpretive approach, constructionism employs principles of “multivocality and researcher reflexivity, sometimes using personal narratives and/or ‘reading’ data as symbolic ‘text’ rather than raw evidence” (Lerum 2001: 467).

1.11.2 Case study research design

On this basis, a qualitative research design was used for the thesis. Admittedly, quantitative studies have certain strengths that can be attributed to statistics that allow for generalisations about the population based on the studied representative sample, but they also have shortcomings. This includes the fact that requirements for an adequate and representative sample size (necessary for obtaining statistically significant results in quantitative analysis) cannot be met in certain situations

in which researchers want to conduct research (Berg, 2001; Hunt and Colander, 2001). More important for this thesis though is that quantitative evidence is simply not able to address the thesis goals, which require an in-depth understanding of everyday lives at Mushandike. Qualitative data provides a relevant alternative and thus offers a podium to convey individual and group experiences that cannot be meaningfully expressed by numbers and statistics generated through quantitative research (Berg, 2001). In this sense, a qualitative research design is consistent with social constructionism.

According to Berg (2001: 3), qualitative research and captures people's "meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things." As a result, it allows a researcher to investigate as well as to provide an in-depth description and analysis of complex social phenomena. Hence Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007) argue that qualitative research enables a researcher to gather as much information as possible in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the issue(s) being studied. Qualitative methods not only afford sociologists a means to access unquantifiable information about people, but also enable the qualitative researcher to properly search for answers to specific kinds of questions pertaining to lived experiences. This study thus used a qualitative research approach to understand contestations for land and water access in the Mushandike case study.

This study employs more specifically a qualitative *case study* research design to capture context-specific views, opinions, ideas, conceptualisations and perspectives of people as opposed to for example a questionnaire-based survey that aims at quantifying and generalising. Such a case study design is a research strategy that strives to generate an understanding of an issue within its natural setting (Lacono et al., 2009) and it is particularly appropriate when multiple factors and relationships are considered as important in a dynamic and fluid context (Fidel, 1984). Thus, a qualitative-based case study method in particular was pursued because it allows for encounters with perceptions, views, emotions, ideas, narratives, stories and voices of people – and interaction and relationships between people – within a lived social context. For this study, Mushandike was the socio-spatial environment selected for the case study. The study sought to understand the dynamics of land and water contestations and conflict at Mushandike Smallholder Irrigation

Scheme through the narratives of the scheme residents as well as government officials working closely with the scheme. The case study method thus assists with the investigation of contemporary phenomena within a real-life context (Yin, 2003). But importantly, it also allows for investigating the extent to which relations vary across time-periods.

Case study designs, Berg (2001) mentions, include descriptive, explanatory and exploratory approaches. The case study design is suitable for researching and understanding an issue that has not yet been adequately studied to date. As indicated earlier, the constituent elements of local-level land and water related contestations and conflict in Zimbabwe (and Africa more generally) and how they play out have not yet been fully investigated (Boone, 2012). Hence, the ability of the case study method to pave way for new findings is applauded as its key intellectual benefit (Berg, 2001). But the research for this thesis was not simply exploratory as it contained all three approaches. It sought not only to identify and describe the relevant social phenomena but also to provide an in-depth qualitative understanding-explanation of them.

A case study was thus deemed the most appropriate research design because the phenomena that had to be studied (practices, relationships, experiences etc.) could only be understood when attached to a specific context. There is no claim to the effect that the case study is in any way representative of a wider universe of irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe. However, despite this, the findings of the thesis about Mushandike, or at least the significance of the findings, could potentially stretch beyond the individual case study of one irrigation scheme (Fidel, 1984). In striving to generate deep knowledge of issues pertaining to a particular case, the case study design is able to identify and understand social relationships which are likely pertinent to understanding other cases of a similar kind (Becker, 1970).

Mushandike was chosen as a case study many years after I stumbled on (i.e. through serendipity) its land invasion problems during an earlier study on institutional arrangements in Masvingo province. The striking reality that black land-seekers had invaded land owned by land-short black smallholder irrigators created a desire in me to seek to understand this social phenomenon. When a chance to pursue PhD studies arose, I seized the opportunity to interrogate Mushandike's land politics. During this earlier encounter, water also had been hinted on as another major factor that

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had lured the land-invaders to Mushandike. Hence, this study focuses on both land and water and their impact on social relations in and around the smallholder irrigation scheme.

1.11.3 Research methods

Permission to enter the field area (Mushandike) was sought from Village Heads upon arrival at every village. Their positivity to the intended research was highly visible and, generally, the field experience was characterised by significant cooperation. The District Administrator (DA) who, as a gate-keeper, was supposed to be visited for permission (according to official protocol) to enter the field area, was deliberately visited a little later due to the fear of encountering bureaucratic delays.

Initially I paid visits to all the scheme villages and engaged in informal conversations with villagers and state agricultural extension officers and, from these, I was able to purposively choose a small manageable number of villages to study. My fieldwork at Mushandike Smallholder Irrigation Scheme was largely concentrated on five villages (Village 10, 11, 12, 15, 23B). These were purposively selected taking into consideration the presence and magnitude of the phenomena under investigation (that is, land invasions, land shortages, water problems and infrastructural problems). I left out one or two villages (which equally experienced significant land invasions) simply because they were similar to other selected villages. I chose Village 15 specifically because it was notoriously known for other factors under consideration such as cattle theft and intense political contestations.

This thesis, as indicated, used qualitative methods which allow for capturing social practices, actions and dispositions and how they are linked to how people negotiate and construct meaning within a natural setting (Joniak, 2007) through paying attention to both the non-verbal and verbal cues (Patton, 1990; Alshenqeeti, 2014). These methods allow for peering into people's lives seeking to understand their perspectives of social, economic and political issues that characterise their local world (Willig, 2001). Qualitative methods also allow for the interrogation of sensitive or difficult issues (in my case, political issues) because a measure of trust develops through repeated interaction (Willig, 2001). In seeking to understand the inner perspectives of various stakeholders pertaining to water and land politics at a local level, qualitative methods were highly

appropriate. The methods discussed below recognise the context specificity and fluidity of knowledge and are aware of the existence of multiple, multi-layered, context-dependent social practices and linkages (Nash, 2002; Joniak, 2007).

In the following sub-sections, I discuss my data collection methods. In addition to these methods, though, the thesis was deeply influenced by pertinent academic (secondary) literature. I perused this literature from the time of embarking on the thesis until its completion. The studying of this literature allowed for the very identification of the thesis focus and objectives. This literature facilitated my understanding of the problem being researched and ensured that I undertook research using a particular angle into the field, and thereby hopefully making a contribution to the existing literature (Johnston, 2014). Thus the literature provided the foundational understanding of land and water politics in general and with a specific focus on smallholder irrigation schemes in particular; helped to identify literature gaps on smallholder irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe which the thesis could address; and facilitated the formulation of the key questions that had to be answered through field-based data collection if the thesis had any hope of achieving its objectives and contributing to the prevailing literature.

I collected data between June 2014 and October 2016 during which period I undertook numerous two-week long visits to Mushandike. My initial plan was to reside on the scheme during my visits; however, residents warned me against doing so for political reasons. They indicated that if I stayed either with MDC or ZANU-PF supporters, it would not bode well with supporters of the other political party. Heeding their advice, I took the option of commuting to the scheme from Masvingo town, which is just 20 kilometres to the east of the scheme. During 2014, I interchangeably carried out interviews, transect walks, observations and in some instances participated in certain everyday activities of farmers. I triangulated these methods for the greater part of the study up to October 2017. In 2015 and in 2016, I complemented these methods with focus groups as I had saved enough money to allow me to hold focus groups.

1.11.3.1 Interviews

For this study, in-depth semi-structured interviews were used and fell into two categories: for key informants and community members. In this study semi-structured questions were administered,

as indicated, to key informants and community members. Key informants constituted of government officials (District Administrator, officers from the ministries of Lands, Agriculture and Local Government), politicians, traditional leaders (headmen), agricultural extension officers and veterinary officers. Other interviews were conducted with irrigation scheme members and land-seekers (invaders). Interview guides are attached (see Appendix 1 and 2).

However, the purpose was singular; to explore and perspectives, views, experiences, meanings, beliefs, values, behaviour and motivations of individual interviewees (Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Gill et al., 2008) with regard to local-level land and water issues. Interviews allow interviewees to speak in their own voice and express their own thoughts and feelings in their own words within familiar surroundings (Berg, 2007). Conceptually, an interview is regarded as an extendable conversation between people aimed at generating in-depth information about a particular issue, topic or subject, and through which a phenomenon could be understood or interpreted in terms of the meanings given by interviewees (Schostak, 2006). I used interview schedules with several key questions (open-ended, value neutral and understandable) that guided the interviewing process and defined the areas to be explored.

Open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview schedule allowed the interviewee and the researcher a good measure of latitude to depart from the chronology of the questions, thereby addressing or pursuing an idea or thought emerging during the interview process. Clarity, more details and nuanced opinions were sought during interviewing. This flexibility allowed for the discovery of new perspectives and even ideas unanticipated or trivialised at the beginning of the research process (Gill et al., 2008). For instance, follow-up questions that may not be on the interview-guide allowed the interviewer to probe deeper into issues of interest following up on responses availed (Kvale, 1996). Hence, the semi-structured interview process allowed the interviewee ample time to exhaustively discuss an issue while the interviewer listened attentively in order to acquire as much knowledge about the study topic as possible.

The flexibility that accompanies the administration of an open-ended and semi-structured interview also allowed the interviewer to start with any question which was contextually appropriate. For instance, during this study, I found out that as soon as I introduced myself and the

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purpose of my visit to the District Administrator, he started randomly addressing several questions that I intended asking him later in the interview, such that my first question was actually a follow-up for clarity on issues he had touched on. In some instances, especially where a respondent appears too tense, it is prudent to start the interview with questions that the respondent might find easier and comfortable to answer then proceed to more difficult or sensitive topics (political or personal ones). This approach helped calm the respondent, build up confidence and facilitated the development of rapport so that when the very important questions are asked, rich responses were given. Notwithstanding that the easing process begins with introductions, and subsequent talk about what the study is about, informed consent was ensured from the start. This included issues such as the respondent's right not to participate in the interview, to refuse to answer any uncomfortable question(s) and even to terminate the interview at any time he or she deemed fit. A guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality, when requested, was also given.

In this study, semi-structured questions were administered, as indicated, to key informants and community members. The categorisation of key informants depended significantly on the thoughts of Meis (2007), who defined them as individuals in authority working within or with people. Their responses were quite informative and deeply appreciated, considering that they touched on policy, administrative issues and even gave insights on political issues affecting socio-economic and political relations at the irrigation scheme. Community members (villagers and land-invaders) equally had rich responses including fascinating tales (narratives) to tell. Besides providing rich data, narratives also served to affirm the agency and selfhood of each respondent. Narratives therefore had the unintended effect of promoting closeness, which narrows the insider/outsider binarism between interviewer and storyteller. The data obtained from narratives, as observed by Brubaker and Cooper (2000), helped in creating an understanding of how individuals and groups relationally progressed over time through detailed personal-cum-group historical stories. In this study, stories contributed significantly towards the production of this thesis which, borrowing from Denzin (1997), comes close to being a significant part of a life-story of a people as interpreted by the researcher.

1.11.3.2 Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions occur best when guided by semi-structured questions that the moderator or interviewer uses to steer discussions towards harnessing perceptions on a topic or subject matter (Morgan and Kreuger, 1998). The interview schedule confines questions to a particular issue requiring interrogation in a specific, controlled setting (Smithson, 2000). Focus group discussions are carefully designed to obtain perceptions, views and the meanings on an issue, at the same time giving insight into participants' experiences, values and beliefs. A focus group discussion, according to Gill et al. (2008), is a discussion by a group of purposively-selected people on a particular topic organised for research purposes. The discussion is guided, monitored and recorded by a researcher and team members if there are any. In essence, focus groups accord primacy to interaction as data is in the main generated through participation in discussions (Kitzinger, 1995). Lindlof and Taylor (2002) suggest that verbalisation of experiences during group discussions enriches data as it stimulates memories, ideas and experiences in participants.

Group size and mix always need to be considered upfront. For instance, smaller groups of about four people might be easy to manage but deprived of serious engagement. Similarly, larger groups might have the potential of producing richer discussions but could prove difficult to manage. Groups of between six and ten tend to be manageable and produce rich data through interaction (Smithson, 2000). Group mix, say of various ages, genders, classes or professions either strengthens or weakens interaction depending on the subject matter being discussed, the culture of people involved and other contextually-specific factors. Therefore, the researcher is at liberty to address the issue in advance in accordance with how he or she sees it potentially affecting discussions.

In some instances, creating homogenous groups say of farmers of about the same age, gender, level of education and class (or socio-economic status) helps balance discussions while curbing the emergence of dominant voices. However, this is not always the case. Sometimes, dominant voices that override other voices arise even within homogenous groups as some people quickly emerge as experts on topics, or at least claim to be experts (Smithson, 2000). 'Othering' also might occur where those considered by some as group outsiders are not expected to make contributions or they

are seen as contesting the views of insiders. It is always the researcher/moderator's role to encourage all group members to participate. Some people only speak when they are directly appealed to while others use silence as a communicative tool and this should be respected. Sensitivity to individual differences and cultural variables and awareness of context and its constraints on peoples' accounts of their lives, and an acknowledgment of the things which are left unsaid, is integral to the research process more broadly.

Where there are wide asymmetries of power amongst group members, weaker members might either feel dominated or might seize the opportunity presented by the presence of an outsider (the interviewer) to speak truth to power without fear of immediate reprisal or some repercussions. During my study, I encountered young people (in their forties and below) who seemed to enjoy raising their own views in the presence of elders within focus groups and beyond. One young man suggested that *mvura bvongoki ndiyo terami* [stirred murky waters eventually settle] (Interview with Kuda, 4 September 2016). By this he implied that truth has to be told even to the extent of causing annoyance to some, since normalcy eventually returns after issues have been addressed. This suggests that issues should be honestly discussed for the benefit of society. However, truth is contested and in many instances agreements on what the truth is are hard to come by. Appendix 3 provides the focus group guideline used in facilitating group discussions for the fieldwork.

1.11.3.3 Observation, observational walks and informal discussions/questioning

Observation, participation, observational walks and informal discussions can all occur seamlessly during data collection. Observation and participation should be placed in a continuum. On one extreme, observation carried out without those being observed being aware (eavesdropping). In the middle is observation occurring with those being observed aware of this, which might also entail a mild form of participation. At the other extreme, is active participation as part of a group with the researcher enjoying different levels of acceptance. The research for this thesis tended to straddle all these options.

Observation helps the researcher understand and capture occurrences within a natural context, to see people interacting, behaving, working and negotiating on a day to day basis. Marshall and Rossman (1989) assert that observation allows for a systematic description of events, behaviours

and artefacts in studied social contexts. Its advantage, as noted by de Walt et al. (1998) is that it allows for accessing data through encounters and interactions rather than through the use of questions. It is about the researcher seeing for himself/herself as opposed to depending on respondents (Fox, 1998). It empowers the researcher to describe observed situations using all senses (Fox, 1998), providing what Erlandson et al. (1993) call a 'written photograph'.

The first-hand encounter that observation guarantees allows the researcher to make personal deductions and to seek clarity when need arises (see Appendix 4 for list of issues pertinent to observation and informal questioning during the fieldwork). For instance, when I observed the cleaning of the main canal at the irrigation scheme, I was convinced that it was a huge challenge not only because of the physically demanding work involved but due to the repugnant smell that filled the air coming from the dirty muddy surface of the canal. Observing community members, including the elderly (some barefooted) wallowing in smelly murky waters scooping stinking dirty muddy water, removing twigs, rocks and different forms of waste-matter from the main canal using unprotected hands, was somewhat depressing. Meanings of words such a horrible, sickening and difficult that had been used during interviews to describe canal cleaning became very vivid to me. My feeling of repulsion resonated with those of my informants captured on site through informal discussions. I could be forgiven for claiming that during those times I interpreted the world in the same way that those I studied did (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1989).

Participation/participant observation can also prove enriching. For example, when I spent about an hour helping a farmer and his wife with levelling their land with an animal drawn and manually controlled dam-scooper, I gained deeper appreciation not only of how physically demanding the exercise was but of how necessary it is that these farmers access better tools. Evidently, participation enhances one's chances of becoming cognisant of some aspects that one would not gain awareness of from observation or from interviewing people in the comfort of their homes. Conceptually participant observation is a process that enables researchers to learn about the lives and practices of a people being studied in the natural setting through observing and participating in what they do (Kawulich, 2005).

Observational walks help the researcher gain deeper appreciation of what obtains in the community. During these observational walks which are usually carried out in presence of a member or members of the community to maximise opportunities for interactions, the researcher pays attention to for example people, activities, resources and environmental features. The purpose of the walk determines its route. For instance, in my case, I needed to see how homesteads were set up, housing types, infrastructure (roads and water-supply for example), the layout of villages, invaded spaces and social amenities, illegal spaces, grazing spaces, cultural behaviours, and social, political and economic activities. Because of this, my social and land-use walks covered long distances (up to 15 kilometres). Before the walk commences, it is imperative to decide on issues to see and the information to be gathered so that there is focus. During the walk it is important to take notes, seek clarity and discuss issues and concerns observed with the local people. Examples of participation and observations given above transpired during such walks.

1.11.4 Sampling procedure

A population is the group of people, items or objects of interest from which the researcher acquires the information required to address the research questions and objectives (Mugo, 2002). Selection of a subset of the population, the sample, is done through sampling. A sampling frame refers to the listing of the population (or sampling units) from which a sample is drawn. An element or a sampling unit is every unit that is drawn from the listed population or sampling frame. A sample is thus a collection of elements pulled from a sampling frame, which are then used to obtain the information of interest. The target population for this study consisted of scheme members, informal settlers (invaders) and officials (including the District Administrator or DA, veterinary and agricultural extension or Agritex officers, Ministry of Lands officials, Ministry of Agriculture officials, Rural District Council officials, and Village Heads (referred to hereafter as *Sabhuku*).

Respondents were selected largely through purposive sampling (also known as judgmental sampling) and also snowballing. To emphasise, because random sampling was not used, there is no statistically-based claim that the study of Mushandike irrigation scheme is representative of irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe more broadly. In fact, the thesis seeks in many ways to identify the specificities of Mushandike, though this study likely provides the basis for understanding the kinds of social relationships and political tensions which may exist elsewhere.

Purposive sampling allows researchers to use their specific knowledge about potential interviewees to select a sample that promises to be the most appropriate for the issues being studied (Berg, 2001). This technique accords researchers the leeway to use their discretion or judgment to select respondents influenced by such factors as gender, age, marital status, socio-economic status, political affiliation and expertise (Palys, 2008). Purposive sampling was used to choose the respondents for focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews. In addition, snowballing was used to obtain respondents with specific characteristics. Snowballing was used thus to identify children of scheme members who are part of the land invaders, women-headed households, *Sabhukus* and Production Heads (community leaders in charge of all production-related activities) amongst others.

Table 2: Breakdown of formal and informal interviews

	Beneficiaries				Land invaders				Total
	Formal interview		Informal interview		Formal interview		Informal interview		
Age group	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
25-29	2	–	1	1	–	2	1	1	8
30-34	1	1	1	2	2	–	1	1	9
35-39	–	–	1	1	3	2	1	2	10
40-44	1	–	–	1	1	1	1	1	6
45-49	1	1	3	1	–	1	–	–	7
50-54	1	2	1	2	–	1	–	1	8
55-59	2	1	1	1	–	–	–	–	5
60-64	1	1	1	2	–	–	–	–	5
65+	-	2	1	3	–	–	–	–	6
Total	9	8	10	14	6	7	4	6	64

Source: Author's compilation

Table 2 provides the breakdown of community members selected and interviewed either in the formal interview process or informally during observational walks/activities and participatory activities. The total is 64, of which 30 were interviewed using the formal interview schedule. Most of the interviewees were beneficiaries (41) compared to land-invaders (23). Overall, there was an almost even split between the number of female and male interviewees.

Key informants were drawn from locally based people in authority as well as administrative offices elsewhere which work closely with the scheme and are knowledgeable about the scheme issues. The list of these key informants is provided in Table 3 and includes three traditional leaders, one production head (elected within a village to head production activities), one water bailiff (volunteer within a village who superintends village water allocation and canal maintenance) and two Zinwa officials, along with Ministry officials from the Ministry of Lands, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Local Government.

Table 3: Categories of Key Informants

	TOTAL	Gender		Traditional leadership	Production Head, water bailiff (local arrangement)	Zinwa	Ministry officials	Legislature
Age		Female	Male					
25-29	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
30-34	4	2	2	-	-	1	3	-
35-39	5	2	3	-	-	-	5	-
40-44	3	1	2	-	-	-	3	-
45-49	5	2	3	-	1	-	4	-
50-54	2	-	2	-	-	-	2	-
55-59	4	1	3	1	-	1	1	1
60-64	2	-	2	1	1	-	-	-
65+	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Total	26	8	18	3	2	2	18	1

Source: Author's compilation

Table 4 shows the sizes and age compositions of the four focus group discussions, with one group held with land invaders and three with irrigation beneficiaries.

Table 4: Composition of Focus Groups

	Beneficiaries						Land-invaders		Total
	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Group 1		
Age group	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
25-29	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	3
30-34	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	4
35-39	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	4
40-44	-	-	2	1	-	1	-	1	5
45-49	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
50-54	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
55-59	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
60-64	-	3	-	1		-	-	-	4
65+	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	0
Total	0	7	3	5	0	5	3	3	26

Source: Author's compilation

1.11.5 Data analysis

Data was thematically analysed both in-field and post-field. Prominent themes were identified and used to shape the analytical framework. Themes helped with describing, understanding and analysing prominent issues that emerged. Thematic analysis involves identifying patterned meaning within a dataset and reducing specific ideas from respondents to common ideas in order to generate themes from the data that run throughout the study (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Creswell and Designm, 2003; Malterud, 2012). The thematic analysis technique facilitates the study of data obtained from all the respondents in order to detect recurrent issues so that central themes summarising the views collected from all participants can be identified and, consequently, meaning and significance can be given to the analysis (Taylor-Powell and Renner, 2003). Thematic analysis entails conceptually construing main thematic categories; finding associations, inconsistencies or contradictions among themes; and establishing a greater understating of the issues under study. The thematic arrangement developed through this process provides the basic framework for the empirical chapters for this thesis.

1.11.6 Ethical considerations

This study, like other social science research, concerned itself with ethical issues to ensure that its findings were trustworthy and valid (Biber, 2005). Every research that has humans as elements of the study needs to take ethical considerations as fundamental to success or failure of study (Kelman, 1982; Berg, 2001; Resnik et al., 2015). If study subjects are known to the data collector(s), which is common in most qualitative research, it is important to give the subjects a high measure of confidentiality (Berg, 2001, Benčin et al., 2015). This study thus observed the ethical guidelines as given below:

- 1) Consent of respondents was verbally sought. No signing of documents took place due to the political sensitivity of the case study area.
- 2) The participants were informed that, should they elect to do so:
 - a. They had a right not to respond to questions they did not feel comfortable to answer.
 - b. They had a right to pull-out of the study at any stage.
- 3) All respondents were given the study outline, explaining the purpose of the research.
- 4) The respondents were informed that the results would be presented in an honest, respectable manner that does not misrepresent the facts.
- 5) The researcher and supervisor's contact details were given to the participants should they have any questions regarding the research.
- 6) Anonymity. They were assured that the research would not reveal identities of participants to ensure anonymity and confidentiality throughout the entire research process
- 7) Throughout the research process, no participant was placed in any form of risk or anxiety.

No major incidents arose that threatened to violate ethical issues during the period of fieldwork and beyond. A demand by a senior government official that I give him the names of Village Heads who had granted me permission to interview people in their villages without consulting him was the only point at which I felt ethical issues were under threat. However, upon informing him that ethical considerations of confidentiality forbade me from disclosing such names, he understood (Mugenda, 2011). Therefore, there did not arise any need for the Kantian consideration that “people should be treated as ends and never purely as means to the ends of others” (Hill and Jones, 2007: 391), suggesting that consideration should always be made of how a situation or act affects

the individual (Beauchamp and Bowie, 1997). Thus, there were never any teleological considerations which suggest that the researcher could act unethically if the importance of the research justifies it (Frankena, 2001). During writing, ethical principles were equally upheld as I strove to make sure that I protected the dignity of my informants in all respects, including writing as sensibly and honestly as possible (Blumberg et al., 2005, Fouka and Mantzourou, 2011)

1.12 Thesis outline

This thesis consists of eight chapters inclusive of this introductory chapter (Chapter One). This chapter has laid the foundation for the thesis, including outlining the problem statement, detailing the thesis objectives and discussing the research methodology and methods.

Chapter Two provides the theoretical framing for the thesis and for addressing the thesis objectives. The purpose of this chapter is to justify the use of mainly social constructionism in framing this study, though other theories are highlighted in doing so. Social constructionism, it is argued, is very suitable and appropriate in analysing how local level land and water issues are problematised, conceptualised and understood.

The third chapter gives a historical overview of land and other natural resources related to processes of agrarian exclusion with a particular focus on Zimbabwe. It shows how ideas about land and water construct a world and inform a set of practices often characterised by conflictual inclusion and exclusion from access to natural resources. The chapter strives to show how an understanding of the historical relationships between ideas and practices which shaped land and water politics in Zimbabwe is significant when it comes to examining the social relationships embedded at Mushandike.

Chapter Four traces the evolution of smallholder irrigation schemes in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe from their humble beginnings, and it shows the ways in which the state has subtly intervened in these schemes over time. This eventually led to an era of banal policy impositions cascading all the way to the present including in relation to contemporary schemes such as Mushandike.

In chapters five to seven, there is a more specific focus on the case study of Mushandike. Chapter Five analyses how landowners and land-seekers negotiate co-existence at the local level. It examines the problematisation of challenges across and within both social groups and by other stakeholders. Further, it analyses meanings ascribed to and the framing of land-invasions, land shortages, water, land ownership and identity and how these subsequently shape social relations.

Chapter Six examines, in relation to Mushandike, how land ownership, access and tenure changes shape land and water politics and condition or structure social relations and agricultural production. The chapter suggests that social change within the broader environment impacts individuals negatively or positively depending on how fast it occurs and how well it is managed as well as and the availability and accessibility or absence thereof of resources supportive of change.

In chapter seven, the emphasis is on temporal changes in the social constructions of Mushandike as a socio-economic space, from its inception to the present, and the implications of this on people's relations and productivity across the scheme. It analyses factors that inform or condition the production of various constructions and the consequences they trigger.

Chapter Eight is the final chapter of the thesis. Here I revisit the entire thesis, sifting out, summarising and laying bare the key points arising from the thesis and their significance.

CHAPTER 2: UNDERSTANDING LAND AND WATER POLITICS THROUGH A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

I came to theory because I was hurting – the pain within me was so intense that I could not go on living. I came to theory desperate, wanting to comprehend – to grasp what was happening around and within me. Most importantly, I wanted to make the hurt go away. I saw in theory then a location for healing (bell hooks, 1991: 1)

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the theoretical framing for the thesis and, in doing so, to justify why social constructionism is the most appropriate theory for analysing, explaining and understanding how local level land and water issues are problematised, conceptualised and contested. The chapter analyses the interconnections between natural resource ownership and utilisation on the one hand and social relations on the other. Through the social constructionist lens, this study analyses how smallholder irrigation scheme members, land-seekers and different stakeholders understand land and water shortages as well as land invasions. The chapter examines how intragroup and intergroup relations are constructed in the midst of these local challenges. It also interrogates factors, processes and relations that influence and shape agricultural production in the context of land invasions, long-term land and water shortages and an underperforming agrarian economy. The empirical case study area, Mushandike Smallholder Irrigation Scheme, like many smallholder irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe, occupies a tension-filled social field characterised by resource shortages, political polarisation and conflictual interests.

2.2 Land and water: ownership and utilisation as determinant factors of social relations

This section analyses the various constructions and practices of land and water ownership and utilisation across different historical periods bringing out their impact on social relations. Ownership and utilisation are central to this thesis as they significantly shape land and water politics. Touching on these issues, this section strives to throw light on the fact that the way society perceives natural resources is closely related to how it relates to them. Furthermore, it illuminates

the fact that members of an agrarian society readily develop a sense of community membership if they have access to natural resources. More still, it shows that culture plays an important role in inclusion and exclusion from material resources and subsequently affects the sense of community membership and belonging. Thus, the section emphasises that the link between natural resource access and community membership shapes social relations within society.

2.2.1 Natural resource access impacting social relations in an agrarian society

For sedentary tribal groups existing prior to the rise of early agrarian civilisations, land and water belonged to the collective in a manner similar, to an extent, to the current communal system (Gilman, 1984). The same holds for contemporary groups globally referred to as ‘indigenous peoples’, who are recognised as such within national and international law and by institutions such as the United Nations (Kipuri, 2009). A Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples issued in 2007 by the UN (2008) gives guidance to member-states on how to come up with and recognise both the individual and collective rights of indigenous people pertaining to issues such as employment, health, education, culture, identity, language and access to natural resources.

Indigenous people are defined within the law (within nations and internationally) as people commanding specific rights to a territory based on their historical ties to it, and whose cultural or historical distinctiveness renders them vulnerable to exploitation, marginalisation and oppression by politically dominant groups. For these groups, past and present, land is constructed discursively and in practice as a collective possession. Similarly, water was and continues to be a common resource playing important roles in people’s lives. It serves domestic and economic needs (UNDP, 2006) and, through its accessibility or scarcity, it shapes a people’s culture, religious perceptions and practices (Oestigaard, 2009). Although meanings ascribed to land and water might have differed across societies, collective ownership allowed for open access and collective responsibility over conservation and sustainable utilisation, as understood at the time.

As an entity that the entire group collectively owned, access to land was not marked by significant power differentials, greed or inequality. It neither openly allowed for privileged access nor promoted the exclusion of weaker group members (Gilman, 1984; Kipuri, 2009). The notion of collective ownership is succinctly summed up by the widely-quoted saying of the Ashanti chief of

Ghana (Nana Sir Ofori Atta), namely, that “land belongs to a vast family of whom many are dead, a few are living and a countless host are still unborn” (UN, 1970: 1). Land and land rights were bequeathed by one generation to another and this minimised intragroup exclusion from land. To the tribe/group, land ownership designated a strong connection between the dead, the living and the unborn. Therefore, land relations functioned as an unbroken conduit connecting generations (the dead, the living and the yet to be born). This connectivity-depicted continuity in contemporary discourses would allow for claims of indigeneity in land and identity politics.

Inheritance was and remains a major way in which land changes hands across generations. In the past, as in the present, inheritance functions as a social value and a custom upheld and observed by a people. A value is a commonly shared belief, a generally shared conception of good ideas pertaining to what is worth striving for, what end is worth pursuing or the relative desirability of things. Values are integral to the culture of a society and aids in the stability of a social order through informing and guiding social conduct. Thus, the transfer of land was accompanied by that of societal values, beliefs and interests that promoted continuity of a specific worldview, social cohesion and stability (Kearns and Forrest, 2000; Jenson and Saint-Martin, 2003). This connectivity between the dead, the living and the yet-to-be-born constructed land ownership as largely bordering on usufruct rights for the living. In principle, land belonged to the dead, the first generation to settle or conquer that land; the living would only enjoy the right to possess, use, conserve, preserve and exclude non-members of the tribe and to bequeath it in a good state to future generations (Kipuri, 2009).

Evidently, land ownership and accessibility significantly affected the collective sense of belonging. A sense of community belonging, then and now, develops where access to such a vital resource is guaranteed. This argument finds support in SIRC (2007) which notes that a sense of belonging depends, largely, on how the individual feels and experiences group membership. Where access to natural resources occurs, membership to the collective within a rural context develops together with a shared identity and sense of place (SIRC, 2007; Ujanga and Zakariya, 2015). The meaning one ascribes to place in part emanates from relating to land, and the kinds of activities one engages in, be they economic, religious, political or otherwise. Put aptly, the meaning

one ascribes to place “relates to the perceptual and the psychological aspects of environmental experience” one has, and this determines place attachment or lack thereof (Ujanga and Zakariya, 2015: 373).

Equally emphasising the centrality of social and environmental relations to the development and perpetuation of a sense of place, Low and Altman (1992: 7) argue that “social relations that a place signifies may be equally or more important to the attachment process than the place qua place”. A sense of place therefore depends more on relations that occur in that place and not mere attachment to the physical environment. Even though in some instances one feels attached to a place due to prevailing weather, rainfall patterns and terrain, in many instances individuals identify with places more because of the social relations they carve out in them (Kyle and Chick, 2007). Evidently, it is not only access to land and land ownership itself, but cultural arrangements through which land is accessed (and the certainty of land access built in cultural practices) that form partially the bedrock upon which a sense of belonging, individual and group identity, and community membership take root.

2.2.2 Land, water and early civilisation: power, change and innovation shaping social life

As for the land of Sumer and Akkad, I collected the scattered people thereof, and I procured food and drink for them. In abundance and plenty I pastured them, and I caused them to dwell in peaceful habitation (Hammurabi 1750 BC in Waller and Yitayew, 2016:1).

Good access to productive land and abundant water, coupled with other social factors such as supportive governments, appropriate agricultural and economic systems, enabling social structures and technologies promote positive social transformation (Butzer, 1976; Nair, 2004; Brown, 2014). The way society is organised, as in the above quote, is pivotal to how land is constructed, accessed and utilised. In addition, in the context of early civilisations, land access was strongly influenced by institutionalised and centralised power. On the one hand, centralised power informed an extractive relationship that society developed with land and, on the other, influenced intra-group relationships (Gilman, 1984). In this regard, this section strives to confirm the endemic view that water, the source of life (Waser, 1998), contemporary and primeval, was the “mainspring of civilisation” (Hassan, 2011: 2).

Centralised land ownership, especially under a strong ruler (regardless of it being autocratic, feudal or democratic) tends to result in social stability and thereby promotes socio-economic activities, regardless of possible violations of basic human conditions and marginalisation of weaker groups. For instance, during the era of early civilisations, land was largely owned by powerful kings and not by individuals or the collective (Butzer, 1976). These powerful kings provided stability necessary for agricultural and economic prosperity, which partly benefited the rise of early civilisations. In this respect, Gilman (1984) argues that kings were seen to personify the entire community, such that their ownership of land was equally a form of ownership by the community, (but personalised). Therefore, land was constructed as a personalised possession that one powerful person could assume ownership of, on behalf of the generality of the population. Land ownership and access were therefore characterised by aspects of power and domination despite claims to representing the common good.

Accessibility and utilisation to land coupled with political stability not only enhanced economic prosperity but positive social change in its entirety. For instance, access to fertile land and abundant water under periods of relative political stability played a major role in the rise of early civilisations (Nair, 2004). Early civilisations largely emerged along fertile valleys and water abundant rivers in Mesopotamia (now called Iraq) on the fertile crescent between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, along the Nile River Valley in Egypt and Nubia (Sudan now split into Sudan and South Sudan), and the Huang He (Yellow) River Valley in China (Brown, 2014). In India alone early civilisations occurred along the for instance the Indus River Valley (comprising of the rivers Narmada and Sindhu, and the Ganga or the Ganges). These early civilisations were largely dependent upon farming (hence they are referred to as agrarian civilisations), though they were accompanied by significant technological innovation and knowledge production.

Notwithstanding other intervening factors, the rise of early civilisations highlights the importance of abundant water and fertile land to human development. Abundant water allowed for both intensive and extensive crop production under irrigation. Thus, irrigation enabled the production of larger quantities of food for feeding increasing sedentary cultures and growing populations as towns and cities evolved (Butzer, 1976). Evidently, agricultural economics and the concomitant

rise in appropriate irrigation technology and other knowledge were equally pivotal to the rise of early civilisations and have equally remained central to human development.

In fact, the conjoined importance of land and water as well as political stability within societies have not waned ever since the rise of agrarian civilisations. In the contemporary world, land, water and political stability remain important in various facets of life ranging from tourism, domestic use, industrial production and agrarian purposes. Tourism, for instance, is said to thrive in a context where the three factors are present (Hall, 1994; Ioannides and Apostolopoulos, 1999). Similarly, studies show that, for contemporary land reforms to be fully beneficial, they should be accompanied by improvements in access to water (Adams et al., 1999; Manzungu, 2001; Greenberg, 2009). Thus water availability not only promotes a variety of livelihood strategies but land productivity as well, and reduces uncertainty in agriculture, in addition to its many other uses.

2.2.3 Land as property and its assumed implication on social relations: Platonic and Aristotelian ideas

The economic construction of land (as property) shaped views regarding accessibility and subsequent utilisation of land and water. During the time of Plato and Aristotle, land was constructed as property, endowed with an economic use value (SEP, 2004; Berry, 2006; Eyres, 2006). Both Plato and Aristotle viewed land as an economic resource whose major importance lay not in its materiality but in its exploitation. They saw land accessibility and exploitation as determinants of social relations. Thus, profitable utilisation was not envisaged as an end in itself but as a factor in the realisation of social cohesion, peace and stability as higher values. However, they disagreed on how land could best be accessed for the benefit of society (SEP, 2004; Eyres, 2006). While Aristotle advocated for private ownership, Plato objected in preference of collective ownership.

Arguing against the treatment of land as private property, Plato suggested that private ownership would “foster clannish self-interest” instead of promoting “common pursuit of the common interest” (Sen, 2013: 178). Plato’s supposition was that private ownership was potentially socially divisive in that it prioritised the pursuit of personal interests and did not advance common access; hence, it excluded vast numbers of people from land. Plato argued that exclusion from land would

negatively impact social cohesion and lead to the creation of an antagonistic group of excluded members of society who grieved “exceedingly”, pitted against an included other which enjoyed access to land and revelled in self-aggrandisement (SEP, 2004; Berry, 2006; Eyres, 2006). Plato’s ideas with regards land were shaped by his concern for justice (Sen, 2013). Envisaging that justice was threatened by the clash between reason (knowledge of what is right) and appetite (hankering for material acquisition and ownership of resources such as land), Plato strove for the construction of an ideal pluralistic upright society contrasted to the corrupt society of the day (Burnyeat, 1997; Sen, 2013). Plato was cognisant that ideas informed social action and thus pushed for the dominance of communal ideas with reference to land ownership. He was cognisant then, as we recognise now, that justice is a prerequisite for peace and harmony within society. His views on land were inclined towards the promotion of justice through social inclusion (Begum and Awan 2013).

During Plato’s time some views suggested that “[j]ustice is really the good of another, the advantage of the stronger and the ruler, and harmful to the one who obeys and serves” (Steinberger, 2000: 175). Plato refuted such a notion of justice, a form of justice historically underpinning the conquest and land dispossession during the late 1800s in now Zimbabwe and continued beyond 1980. As detailed in Chapter 3, practices that promote and protect interests of powerful groups have permeated land politics in Zimbabwe over an extended period. In this context, Aristotle (unlike Plato) advocated for private land ownership, suggesting that common ownership or equality in property ownership was not feasible in practice. This view, which could be viewed in the contemporary world as supportive of private tenure (or titling) as opposed to communal tenure, suggested that the implementation of private ownership was more plausible than common ownership and preferable because it potentially promoted virtues such as prudence and responsibility (SEP, 2004; Berry, 2006).

Concerned with what we would, in the contemporary world, regard as sustainable resource use, Aristotle suggested that where a resource is commonly accessed, least care is bestowed upon it because “[e]veryone thinks chiefly of his own, hardly at all of the common interest” (Aristotle, 2008). Aristotle argued that although interest in the common good was a noble value, its practical

implementation was difficult, as each person would be paying attention to his or her own interests. His view was that people “really love and care for what they own or have an intimately personal stake in” it (Eyres, 2006: 1). This view was echoed close to 2000 years later by Hardin (1968) who, in writings on the ‘Tragedy of the Commons’, argued that commons were condemned to over-exploitation and subsequent degradation due to open access. For Aristotle, freedom and citizenship were only realised by economically sound individuals. Therefore, he argued that accumulation from private land ownership would enable the individual to participate in socio-political life, thus enjoying citizenship. Through the linkage of private property ownership with political authority and realisation of citizenship, Aristotle frames private ownership of property including land as a “necessity rather than a luxury” (Berry, 2006: 4).

Concerns with finding the most societally beneficial regime of land access and ownership, as grappled with by Plato and Aristotle more than 2000 years ago, remain pertinent in the contemporary world as shown throughout the thesis.

2.2.4 Marx: individual, society and freedom

Marx’s views on society are broad and multidisciplinary and they do not warrant a detailed revisit here. They are merely discussed insofar as they help understand inequality, exclusion, poverty and political oppression in social relations within agrarian spaces (Fluxman, 2009). Marx’s insights into private property, the individual and society are important. Contemporary societies and communities, even at Mushandike, still grapple with questions around whether land and water should be individually or collectively owned, and whether individual property rights should be accorded primacy over collective interests.

Marx’s works on the individual, freedom and society were, as suggested by Crittenden (1992), significantly in response to both communitarian and liberal ideas of the day. Marx believed that the individual forms part of the social totality, as opposed to being an isolated unencumbered entity (Sayers, 2007). For him, social activities such as work were carried out by social individuals and not by self-serving atomised entities. His thoughts contradicted dominant views which constructed the individual as an atomised, totally ‘unencumbered self, unconstrained by relationships or group affiliations (Crittenden, 1992; Sayers, 2007).

The individual, according to liberal views, was an entity that strove to fulfil private ends, fundamentally treating relationships as instrumental while possessing and prioritising individual rights over those of society (Thomas, 2004). From such a perspective, society existed as a mere collection of individuals who interacted and related with each other in an instrumental and contingent manner. Consequently, and unsurprisingly, a social undertaking such as work was regarded as an individual activity performed or enacted to meet individual needs (Sayers, 2007). Marx, rejected this dominant dualistic construction of the individual as an isolated atom and “society as just arithmetic aggregate of parts” (Kim 2004: 5) and opined that human beings were social animals capable of achieving freedom through establishing positive social relations based on co-existence (Kim, 2004). For Marx, personal and collective freedom could be achieved through elimination of private property which included private land ownership and the state as the apparatus for oppression by the dominant class (Kim, 2004: 7). Private property would have to be replaced with communism which would entail “real appropriation of human nature through and for man” (Kim, 2004: 7). In the meantime, under capitalism, land and water are increasingly subject to processes of commodification.

2.3 Theorising land and water politics

In the context of the preceding discussion around conceptualisations of land and water, I now turn to consider land and water politics from a theoretical position. The foundational theoretical framing for the thesis is social constructionism. In detailing this theoretical framing, I first turn to how a theory of the politics of difference as well as post-colonial theory provide illuminating points which feed into social constructionism. In discussing and critically appraising social constructionism, I indicate how Marxism offers a structural counterweight to any pronounced subjectivist position within constructionism.

2.3.1 Politics of difference and social inclusion/exclusion

This section discusses analytical work around the politics of difference (Young, 2009). It is relevant to the thesis in that it focusses on issues of social inclusion and exclusion, which are very pertinent to explaining relations at Mushandike. Historically, difference has been used regularly as a basis for oppression and subordination including along racial lines, or for dominating the ‘other’ (Ranger, 1985; Lamming, 1995; Ashcroft, et al., 1996; Mamdani, 1996; Mbembe, 2001).

However, there is a trend within politics of difference theory which emphasises that recognising difference within and across groups in society unifies more than it divides (Sawicki, 1986). It unifies in that it allows for the recognition and promotion of diversity on the one hand, and social inclusion on the other (Knight, 2008; Kymlicka, 2012). Therefore, there needs to be recognition of differences and not blindness to difference let alone elimination of differences (integration) between and within for instance ethnic groups. Paying attention to difference helps to understand and, where possible, address the challenges faced in ensuring social cohesion (Young, 2009). Failure to recognise and address difference disadvantages weaker groups in society (Sawicki, 1986).

Democratic dispensations based on liberal constitutional arrangements in capitalism provide an environment suitable for this kind of politics of difference. Democratic ideals and practices typically appreciate and uphold heterogeneity and strive for the promotion of the inclusion of all social groups and individuals (Tebble, 2002). Therefore, democratic governance has the capacity to address the special concerns and needs of disadvantaged groups in relation to their peculiarity, history and contemporary realities (Young, 2009). Politics and policy within society would involve addressing group identity and difference, while also being sensitive to group-based domination and oppression (Tebble, 2002; Dhamoon, 2009). This is not to say that inter-group relationships are devoid of power relations but that relationships are not necessarily marked by power differentials. In other words, power relations do not necessarily involve relationships of domination of one group over the other. At the same time, these inter-group relationships may entail contestations marked by practices of exclusion, thus working against inclusionary processes. This is in the inherent danger in recognising and privileging group difference.

Standing alone, this theory is inadequate in explaining processes, relations and struggles within groups sharing similar circumstances, identities and histories as obtaining at Mushandike. For this reason, I subsume it within the social constructionist theory as the main theoretical framing for this thesis. It is significantly in understanding social groups as social constructs and not as ontological facts, therefore its usage is not discordant with certain facets of constructionist theory.

2.3.2 Postcolonial theory

I use postcolonial theory in this thesis, in addition to politics of difference and Marxian theory, to supplement social constructionism in illuminating land and water relations at Mushandike. Postcolonial theory is a broad and fluid area of inquiry and there are indeed many fundamental debates about what postcolonial means, what ‘post’ in the word postcolonial signifies, and which era is the postcolonial (Young, 1995; Childs and Williams, 2013; Slemon, 1995; Bhabha, 2001; Ivison, 2002). Postcolonial theory, like politics of difference theory, has not been used significantly in seeking to understand micro-level natural resource-related social relations. However, it is relevant because of its many focuses relevant to this thesis, including: identity and resistance (Ahmad, 1995; Bhabha, 1995; During, 1995; JanMohamed, 1995; Minh-Ha, 1995; Childs and Williams, 2013), centre/margin binarisms (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1995); marginality (Brydon, 1995; Hall, 1995; Hutcheon, 1995; Minh-Ha, 1995); the connectivity between past, present and future (Bhabha, 1995; Petersen and Rutherford, 1995; Bhabha, 2007); power (the state and law) (Roy, 2008; Parsons and Harding, 2011); and representation (Karagic, 2013). All these aspects play themselves out at the local level at the Mushandike irrigation scheme.

2.3.2.1 Anti-foundationalism and the recognition of particularisms

Post-colonial theory, like social constructionism, is anti-foundationalist in that it rejects the existence of the absolute (be it truth, knowledge or reality) as it upholds that knowledge, reality and truth are social creations that exist because they have been constructed by humanity as such at a particular time (Edwards, 1967; Ivison, 2002). This is part of a broader rejection of Eurocentric constructions of reality, which it accuses of perpetuating domination through hegemonic reality constructions (Ivison, 2002). Therefore, for postcolonial theory, what is real is dependent upon existing meanings, and thus is contingent and dependent upon the individual believing that it does exist (Petraglia-Bahri, 1995).

In rejecting universal truths in this way, space is opened up for the weak to write their own history and to add their own voice to truth construction. For a postcolonial perspective, reality should be viewed from different angles so that it is understood and experienced in multiple ways and not in a universalistic – read European – manner (Rukundwa and van Aarde, 2007). Voices of different individuals, groups and communities from the periphery of capitalism should be heard telling their

own stories, constructing their own reality and participating in the creation of their own knowledge (Petraglia-Bahri, 1995). These voices and stories are excluded by the grand theories emanating from Europe (Ashcroft et al., 2002), with these theories masquerading as universal thought. The idea of universalism is infused the power of control as it perpetuates intellectual and political domination both in the past and in the present, and on a global scale (Ashcroft et al., 1995).

Furthermore, Young (2001:1-11) argues that postcolonial theory is concerned with the history of colonialism “only to the extent that history has determined the configurations and power structures of the present.” Evidently, for postcolonial theory, the past is not over but is very much connected to the present and is influencing the future. Worldviews and practices created by past colonial power relations and inequalities influence life in the postcolonial. For instance, the land question that Zimbabwe is still grappling with is a product of the colonial that has lasted close to half a century in the postcolonial. The understanding of nearly all issues obtaining in the postcolonial draws from their juxtaposition with their colonial origins. For instance, identity, culture, the state, violence and marginalisation, for postcolonial theory, are best understood through tracing their colonial foundations (Fanon, 1967; Cabral, 1993; Mamdani, 1996; Neocosmos, 2003).

Postcolonial theory concurs with social constructionism pertaining to the social construction of reality, largely because of its strong focus on discourse analysis. For instance, the colonial was characterised by the “imaginary constructed by the colonialist” (JanMohamed, 1995: 20). Similarly, it recognises the power and effect of language. According to Ashcroft et al. (1995: 55), language represents a discourse of power, which provides the structures and terms “by which individuals have a world, a method by which the ‘real’ is determined”. Language embodies the way a people perceive the world, their history and various aspects about life. Because of this, cultural and racial identity as well as gender binarisms are all discursively- and socially-constructed with images of the world – as articulated through language – affecting social practices.

2.3.2.2 Domination and hybridity: cultural resistance and resilience

Postcolonial theory suggests that resistance to such injustices as domination, oppression and exclusion results in cultural hybridity. As people fight for survival under an oppressive system, their culture shifts or expands accordingly (Ashcroft et al., 1995; Cabral, 1993). Hybridity within

the colonial period partly developed “when settler-invaders dispossess indigenous peoples and force them to ‘assimilate’ to new social patterns” (Ashcroft et al., 1995: 183). The perspective of Ranger (1985) on self-peasantisation in relation to Zimbabwean indigenous farmers during the country’s early colonial days, discussed in Chapter 3, captures notions of hybridity together with cultural resilience and identity fluidity. Evidently, for postcolonial theory, cultures, especially those of the political dominated suffered “cross-fertilisation” in the colonial (Ashcroft et al., 1995: 184). Cultural purity is therefore considered problematic.

Achebe (1995) argues that cultural hybridity, even occurring under oppression, tends to be accompanied by some merit. The positives, for Achebe (1995), emerges because a culture and a people shift and change when constrained, sometimes without losing core values. He shows this through highlighting tremendous accomplishments by African-Americans who lost most of their cultural traditions and knowledge during slavery but still went on to weave a culture characterised by excellence in music, sport and other areas. He suggests that they blended cultural relics which they salvaged from their past with immediate realities, and created a ‘new people’ with a pragmatic worldview. Although lasting domination of a people is perpetrated through destruction of their culture, culture itself is resilient and adaptable to the extent that it creates and offers spaces within and through which individuals and groups express themselves and celebrate life even if that life is studded with oppression, failure and despondency. A people’s language, art, music, dance and economic activities allow for the expression of culture-specific realities.

Cognisant of the marginalising effect of universalising reality, this study, as in part informed by postcolonial theory, upholds that social reality, knowledge and experiences are locally-specific under particular temporal conditions, despite ‘universal’ similarities occurring across time and space. Postcolonial theory encourages understanding identities, culture, reality, knowledge and human relations contextually. Therefore, in this thesis, a people’s way of life is best understood through paying attention to their views, ideas, perceptions, constructions and practices within their contexts. What is real and fundamental in one context might be understood differently in another. Therefore, postcolonial theory is here embraced to supplement social constructionism in contextually illuminating land and water relations at Mushandike.

2.3.3 Social constructionism

The chapter has so far discussed various analytical standpoints from which land and water related social relations in particular and social relations in general are conceptualised and understood. Although these perspectives do not offer the basis for a full analysis of local level land and water related contestations as embedded in social relations, they do offer some key insights which complement and add value to the basic theoretical framework adopted for this thesis, namely social constructionism. Like these other standpoints, social constructionism is not a theory on land and water relations or on agrarian social relations per se. But its basic tenets can be drawn upon in examining water and land politics at Mushandike through the interrogation of reality, meaning and knowledge construction, and communication (language and symbols) and their implications for social relations.

Social constructionism is an anti-foundationalist theory, just like postcolonial theory, and it is underpinned by multiple theories (Gergen, 1994; Lynch, 1998; Velody and Williams, 1998; Gergen, 2001; Lock and Strong 2010, Elder-Vass, 2012, Burr, 2015). It constitutes ideas hued out of deconstruction, post-structuralism, discourse analysis and many others emanating from the disciplines of philosophy, psychology, linguistics and sociology (Gergen, 2009; Burr, 2015; Burningham and Cooper, 1999; Pouliot, 2007). It is probably best to speak of social constructionisms as there are different variants of it. Overall, though, social constructionism helps in developing insights into understanding contestations, conflicts and negotiations over resources. It sheds light on why and how in some “temporal and spatial contexts scarce land resources are contested” while in others this does not happen (Engels, 2014: 80).

2.3.3.1 Understanding society through its own constructions

Social constructionism postulates that, through relationships, people construct the world they live in (Berger and Luckmann, 1971; Gergen and Gergen, 2004). Social reality is therefore a social construct developed through interactive engagement (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Pouliot, 2007). Social reality does not just exist out there (as an external reality) waiting to be discovered or, as noted by Lindgren (2005), it is not pre-existing as it is created by people through social action/interaction, negotiation and communication. Social reality exists in and through meaning-laden human action.

For social constructionism, knowledge, reality and meaning are products of human engagement within society and history, such that their existence is contextual, time bound and culturally relative (Berger and Luckmann, 1971; Burr, 2015). Knowledge, van Niekerk (2005) argues, depends upon communities of common intelligibility. The world does not exist as a direct and unmediated perception of reality discovered by the mind but as a culturally-constructed artefact (Schwandt, 2003; Andrews, 2012; Burr, 2015). Continuous interaction and engagement creates new realities, which supersede or become embedded in those already in existence (Gergen 2009, Berger and Luckmann 1966). Therefore, from the perspective of social constructionism, people agree on what is real (Gergen and Gergen 2004). Similarly, what is discounted as fallacy or myth becomes such in the eyes of a particular grouping of people.

This means that there is no cultural knowledge or reality or way of knowing and understanding that is inherently right in terms of constructing truth in comparison to others (Berger and Luckmann, 1971; Burr, 2015). All culturally-shaped constructs of reality are valid as knowledge as there are numerous perspectives through which the world can be examined (Burr, 2015). Claims of superiority based on whatever factors, be it scientific, methodological or mere whim, are not acceptable to social constructionism as these claims are potential causes of impositions of systems of knowledge by one culture upon another (Berger and Luckmann, 1971; Gergen, 2001; Burr, 2015). Such impositions would result in the domination and silencing of one culture by another, involving discursive-based power differentials. Social constructionism, in concurrence with postcolonial theory, does not uphold notions of universal knowledge, reality or truth (Dickerson and Zimmerman, 1996; Rapmund, 2000). Such universalisation potentially legitimates the consignment of different ways of seeing and understanding, meaning making, knowledge production and reality construction to the realm of falsehoods, imperfections or hopeless subjectivity (Gergen, 2001). Thus, the social world is studded with multiple context and culture specific knowledge and realities.

To understand human action at any given time, social constructionism suggests that attention should be paid to context, events and their meanings to the actor. It argues that individuals think, feel and behave differently depending on where they are, who they are with, what they are doing

and why, all informed though by their cultural ideas, values and language (Burr, 2015; Owen, 1995). Any quest for understanding human action and practices therefore must focus on the context within which it occurs, events taking place, and the meaning and significance these occasions carry for the individual (Burr, 2015). Reality and ideas for one person or group in a particular context might be very different from that of the other, even when they share the same culture and live in the same locality (van Niekerk, 2005). This implies the significance of ‘local truths’ in seeking to understand individual actions and social relations (Gergen, 2001). It also means listening to every story to capture lived experiences, and to avoid the danger of prioritising the views of those who purport to know and whose narratives confirm certain worldviews, especially those that qualify on the basis of supposed expert knowledge (Rapmund, 2000).

Knowledge-claims often give social actors some form of power; for instance, knowing something, or how something is done, tends to enhance the power to manipulate or control others relationally (Rouse, 1987). Experts, politicians, administrators, rich and educated people and even contract farming entities seek to dominate farmers on the pretext that they are more knowledgeable. Therefore, knowledge and knowledge-claims become a means by which individuals leverage power contestations in their favour. When in the hands of the poor, knowledge can be emancipatory, freeing an individual or a grouping from domination by the privileged (Rouse, 1987).

Therefore, to understand land and water contestations and corresponding social relations at Mushandike through a social constructionist lens means paying attention to the views of all categories of ‘stakeholders’. Through interrogating reasons, explanations and conceptualisations, and the problematisation of issues by all groupings, insights are gained into why certain actions take place and relations are carved out at Mushandike. This is in recognition, as already noted, that people give meaning to whatever they engage in or encounter in their everyday life. Thus, the study acknowledges that people have subjective interpretations of their daily lives and that this subjectivity should be highlighted in unpacking social relationships at Mushandike (Berger and Luckmann, 1971).

2.3.3.2 Communication, reality and action

For social constructionism, processes through which meaning is created, negotiated, sustained, modified and communicated in society shape and influence relations (Schwandt, 2003; Andrews, 2012). Non-verbal communication, language (face-to-face), symbols and other forms of communication all play the role of conveying messages from which meaning is generated through interpretation by the recipients. In face to face communication, for instance, interpretation takes place not only through listening to the spoken word but by drawing on body language as well. Interpretation of meanings in the communication process is informed by culture, time and context (Andrews, 2012; Burr, 2015)

However, despite the constraining effect of language, signs, symbols and culture on meaning-making for the individual, different people still potentially interpret the meaning of the same (written or spoken) words and actions differently, depending upon personal background, language proficiency, interests and intent (Berger and Luckmann, 1971; Lock and Strong, 2010). This does not undermine the fact that meaning-making, as noted above, is inherently embedded in socio-cultural processes, specific to particular times and places (Dickerson and Zimmerman, 1996; Rapmund, 2000; Lock and Strong, 2010). Personalised interpretations are still informed by, for instance, culture, training, experiences and language. Meaning therefore is dialogical meaning as a result of joint-action, either relational, conversational or both.

Cultural traditions and language may constrain and structure the lives of individuals, but they also function as resources which aid communication and comprehension of the social world. A language contains “accumulated knowledge of prior generations” and therefore plays a significant role in the transmission of intergenerational knowledge (Stetsenko and Arieviditch, 1997: 161). In line with this, Ludwig Wittgenstein’s metaphor of the language game emphasises that the words people use are enmeshed within a culture, as a system of shared rules or conventions (Gergen and Gergen, 2004). Language provides the limits of what we can say, demonstrating that languages have constraining rules which set perimeters within which we use them. What we say and how we say it, is within these limits (Gergen and Gergen, 2004). In essence, language is constitutive of social life itself and is therefore a major component of the lifeworld of action (Gergen, 2009). It

embodies knowledge and allows for the development of a stock of knowledge overtime. As such for constructionists, “the phenomenal world cannot be known outside of our socially constructed representations of it - language most prominently” (Pouliot 2007: 363).

Biases, interests and values are factors which could easily be concealed behind words within a façade of neutrality while, at the same time, yet influencing the choice and use of words. Consequently, social constructionism suggests that words and expressions that appear as value neutral facts need to be analysed to unearth hidden meanings and prejudices. Administrators and politicians sometimes portray biased realities as natural facts though fomenting injustices or social exclusions in doing so. Within my case study at Mushandike, words are used for many purposes including masking or distorting reality, and to intimidate or threaten others in ways so subtle that – unless familiar with the context – the threat is not readily apparent or visible.

To emphasise, though, meaning does not lie strictly in the mind of the social actor, as it is embodied in the process of relating (i.e. it is relational). Therefore, meaning is not static but is dynamic, fluid and shifting (contextually) and sometimes in situations of contestation (Gergen, 2009). Meaning-based realities are thus not merely imposed from outside by power, historical processes, tradition or exploitative relationships. These are produced by members of society who play a role in their production, making the world in which they live, and this is done in accordance with their own creativity, imagination and possibilities.

2.3.3.3 Individuals, society, culture and action

Social constructionism suggests that social practice or action is imbued with the social construction of meaning (Owen, 1995; Burr, 2015; van Niekerk, 2005). Human (social) action helps in understanding the individual and society, because it is inherently meaningful and has intentionality (Schwandt, 2003; Burr, 2015). To understand social action, it is necessary to pay attention to the meaning ascribed to such action (Schwandt, 2003). To that effect, human action cannot not be taken for granted as it is laden with meanings. For instance, even such basic actions as a wink or a smile have meanings within a culture, and that is why a smile could be interpreted as wry or loving in different cultures (Owen, 1995; Schwandt, 2003).

Culture is not purely subjective as it lies beyond the individual in an interactive and shared manner (Elder-Vass, 2012). Culture as deeply infused with intersubjective meanings and refers to a set of beliefs, attitudes, values, orientations to life, actions and practices shared by a group of people (Matsumoto, 1996; Spencer-Oatey, 2008). Bloor (1974) thus argues that culture transcends and constraints the individual especially as an embodiment of knowledge and meanings. Cultural knowledge constitutes one of the most enduring forms of shared knowledge and this knowledge is collectively endorsed everyday through thought, communication and action and institutional arrangements. Successful endorsement is not inevitable though, because of shifting social circumstances, internal questioning and external interference, such that culture is a locus of continuous contestation and struggle (Elder-Vass, 2012). Cultures of societies are hence usually in constant interaction with one another, which leads to intercultural sharing, adaptation and conflict. Cultural boundaries cannot easily and clearly be drawn between close societies but they become more pronounced as one draws away from points of close proximity. Therefore, in many instances, cultures are characterised by intersectionality as they tend to overlap.

Furthermore, social action enables insights into an individual's experience, understanding and interpretation of the world as shaped culturally. Culture, as Owen (1995) argues, sets perimeters on what is appropriate, permissible, normal and expected, thus separating it from what is wrong, inappropriate and outright illegitimate. Therefore, in focusing on individual action, the analyst simultaneously peers into dimensions of a culture. Culture, from this perspective, refers to real-life occurrences and the lived reality of the social world (Owen, 1995).

In addition, what is socially and contextually acceptable or appropriate is not only space bound but also time bound. In this way, meanings, practices and actions become acceptable or obsolete over time (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Similarly, meaning ascribed to physical movements is closely related to context and intentionality (Owen, 1995; Schwandt, 2003). For instance, the raising of a hand by the roadside might signal hailing a taxi or someone, but the meaning changes when similar action occurs in a classroom or at a political rally. Making sense of, or ascribing meaning to, the action of others entails interpretations which are historically, culturally and situationally specific.

2.3.3.4 Narratives and relationships

Narratives comprise of coherent connections of the events of life (Bruner, 1991). They are an account of a person's past in relation to other people and events reflecting meanings about the present and future (Gergen, 1994). Within the social constructionist realm, narratives are known to be constructed in a manner that reflects that the self is always in relation to others. One's life-story can easily project a self-perception of one's own identity and how it is shaped by a relationship with others. Every narrative has a goal that it strives to fulfil. The production of a narrative, therefore, excludes other events that have no relevance to the story's goal (Bruner, 1991; Gergen, 1994; Somers, 1994). Only relevant events are selected, placed in an ordered arrangement sometimes based on interests and values. As moral evaluations, individuals also change their self-narratives as socio-historical events or personal circumstances change (Bruner, 1991; Gergen, 1994).

Narratives allow the outsider to peer into the life-story of the other (Bruner, 1991; Somers, 1994). Marginalised people are, therefore, encouraged to tell their story in their own words so that they project their own reality and this helps in building public understanding of these lives and an appreciation of the challenges they face (Bruner, 1991; Gergen, 2009). Narratives help bring out different ways in which individuals, the young or old, men or women, view life and what they place emphasis on or categorise as important or accomplishments (or lack thereof) in life. When giving self-narratives, individuals provide a portrayal of the self which is contextually-specific. The discursive construction of the self, according to social constructionist views, happens through the process of "social accounting" or "positioning" (Gergen, 2009: 69), and this positioning is done relationally. Through narratives, the individual reveals not only his or her life story but that of others too (from the perspective of the narrator). Listening to narratives performs a significant role in understanding how an individual places himself or herself within the multiplicity of relationships in which he or she is located (Bruner, 1991). This is because narratives accord individuals a chance to reflect upon and define themselves and their worlds from their own perspectives. At Mushandike, narratives offer significant constructions of reality, past and present and expectations going into the future.

2.3.3.5 Addressing concerns with constructionism

Some scholars suggest that social constructionism is insufficient for analysing society because it has many shortcomings. There are many criticisms levelled against social constructionism but this study considers only one key criticism, namely, that social constructionism does not pay adequate attention to questions of structure and power.

Some critics argue that constructionism does not adequately address issues of structure and power (Cromby and Nightingale, 1999). Others, such as Gergen (1994) and Blackwood (2000), argue to the contrary. In part, the issue revolves around the particular version of constructionism adopted. It may be true that certain versions of social constructionism are deeply subjectivist and that they reduce reality to meaning and focus exclusively on agency at the expense of structure. This is certainly not the version of constructionism used in this thesis. Further, there are different understandings of power. For Marxists, for instance, power often appears as centralised in certain sites and is enacted mainly by dominant groups as power-over others. The Foucauldian capillary theory of power (Jasper, 2012) is more inclined to see power dispersed and embodied in all social relationships, with all groups having the capacity to exercise power in the form of power-to. These two versions of power are not necessarily incompatible with each other, as power-to does not deny the existence of power differentials. Certainly in the case of studying localised relationships at Mushandike irrigation scheme, the manner in which power is displayed (discursively and structurally) on an everyday basis is critical to the analysis in the thesis.

I bring to for the importance of structure and power with reference to the work of Marxists. Broadly speaking, the state in capitalist society is seen as an instrument or institution of the bourgeoisie class (Marx and Engels, 1848; Manza and McCarthy, 2011) which preserves, protects and promotes the interests of the capitalist class or at least ensures the reproduction of the capitalist system. In this way, the state becomes a central institution in human life under capitalism (Hay, 1999), and shapes land and water ownership, access and utilisation. As noted by Ollman (1982), the state uses both ideas and violence (or consent and repression) to structure, manage and stabilise capitalist society. In this sense, the state functions as a factor of cohesion, as Engels (2000) puts it: “In order that classes with conflicting economic interests shall not consume themselves and

society in fruitless struggle it became necessary to have a power seemingly standing above society that would moderate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of ‘order’; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state.”

The state gains a measure of autonomy vis-à-vis the specific interests of the capitalist class so that the never-ending logic of capitalist accumulation does not go unrestrained and tear society asunder. In doing so, the state appears as acting in the public or national interest as a kind of neutral arbiter with reference to tensions and struggles within capitalist societies. The existence of the universal franchise tends to reinforce this state claim about neutrality and impartiality and, certainly, the state often seeks to accommodate the interests of subordinated classes. In contemporary capitalist societies, then, the state exists as the nodal point in a connectivity of multi-faceted power relations (Hay, 1999) which become internalised at times within the state itself. The state also has its own sets of interests, including maintaining social and political stability. Under certain conditions, the state may act against the combined interests of all sectors of the capitalist class as a basis for ensuring social order. In doing so, it may thus align itself with the subordinated classes of capitalism.

This the broad structural context of political economy which animates capitalist society. Of importance to Marxism is the presence of ideas (i.e. ideologies) circulating within capitalist society which tend to justify and legitimise the status quo, whether these are ideologies pertain to class inequality or patriarchal domination. These ideas offer the basis for social cohesion if indeed internalised by in particular subordinate groups. In this way, the world is often seen through the lens of these ideologies such that at times the meanings are infused with dominant ideas (Althusser, 1970; Leitch, 2001). Because of this, some ideas are universalised and, in the process, dominate, eclipse or silence localised ideas (Gergen and Gergen, 2004; Lindgren, 2005; Pouliot, 2007). It is often because of their conditions of existence, lived experience, historical memory and cultural repertoire that subordinate articulate alternative ideas and meanings contrary to universalising ideas. This leads to localised relations riddled with power relations and differentials.

2.4. Social constructionism, land, water and social relations

This section pays attention to the application of social constructionism in explaining local level social relationships around land and water politics. Taking seriously how individuals within a society problematise issues is a vital step in understanding and explaining their reality (Dietz et al., 1989; Bacchi, 1999). Their own meaning-based definitions show how they understand local and broader issues (Nettleton, 2006) and they think they could and should be addressed (Dietz et al., 1989). In some instances, they may even define the stakeholders they think are appropriate to legitimately participate in debating or seeking solutions to their challenges (Dietz et al., 1989). With regards to Mushandike, residents problematise land and water shortages and land invasions, highlighting what they think are the causes, effects and possible solutions. In this way, conceptualisations and definitions of social issues embody “presumptions about who or what caused the problem and who or what must change (or be changed) to solve it” (Dietz et al., 1989: 48). These conceptualisations, as noted by Dietz et al. (1989) can lure others to participate too, to simply pledge their support, or perhaps even to express disdain and resistance.

The way an issue or a challenge that causes conflict is framed and defined plays an important part in bringing out the roles of stakeholders and the effect of their involvement (Dietz et al., 1989). For example, during water contestations, there is a huge difference in defining water as a source of life, a social necessity or an economic commodity. Defining water as a source of life would help lobby and attract support for pushing for rights to clean, accessible and affordable water for domestic use. However, it would constrain those campaigning for placing high charges for water reticulation and delivery services. For instance, in the context of Mushandike land and water politics, the study captures for example how land and water are conceptualised, what causes and fuels resource related problems, how they could be resolved, and who should participate in the process.

Land conflicts or disputes reflect disagreements over access, ownership, control or distribution of invaluable scarce natural resources. Legitimizing this view, the ‘environmental scarcity’ hypothesis postulates that resource scarcity leads to contestations and conflicts in societies where “livelihoods are based on subsistence farming, pastoralism and the like” (Engels, 2014: 77-78).

Scarcity arises from various factors including local level social processes, politics, poor governance and administration, population growth, migration, climate variability, overuse and degradation (Le Meur et al., 2006). Although scarcity in this regard concerns inaccessibility of the material entity to which social relations are attached, it can also be socially constructed (Le Meur et al., 2006; Engels, 2014).

Social constructionism suggests that contestations and disputes may be caused by other factors outside the access issue (Le Meur et al., 2006). It proposes that causes of natural resource contestations or disputes are better understood by analysing existing social relations than the materiality of the natural resource (Engels, 2014: 76). These social relations occur at various levels of interaction, and are traceable and analysable from the local, regional, national to the global level (Engels, 2014: 76). They are usually embedded in history and political processes at different levels of social organisation although playing out at the local level. Getting to know historical issues as narrated by all stakeholders helps identify if contestations are embedded in various past socio-economic, political or cultural issues. Narratives as stories about the individual in relation to the lives of others reveal several issues related to all pertinent issues (such as land and water at Mushandike) that directly or otherwise affected the life of the individual (Gergen, 1994; Brubaker and Cooper, 2000).

The question of scarcity does not explain why at a particular moment contestations become conflictual or even violent (Le Meur et al., 2006). Understanding conflict for whatever purpose, even for social mediation, would not be possible if confined specifically to notions of scarcity. In support of this Engels (2014: 76) argues that land conflicts are caused by many factors and could involve, among other things, an enactment of “conflictive processes in the negotiation of collective identities, social group frontiers, membership in political communities (citizenship) and political authority”. Therefore, social relations evolving around and emanating from these aspects tend to generate conflictual tendencies as responses to scarcity.

Contestations for access to resources are in many instances constructed around identity issues. Identities vary and tend to change to suit contexts and circumstances. As Neocosmos (2007) notes, when competition or contestations arise, social identities tend to be a vital resource deployed to

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open or close entry into socio-spatial and economic realms. In many parts of rural southern Africa, access to land is closely related to questions of identity. Historically, many identity groups belong to or identify with a geographical territory to which they claim origin or indigeneity (Mamdani 1996). Contestation for access to land within such territories is usually located within discourses of identity. Members of an ethnicity stand a better chance of accessing land in their ethnic territory than elsewhere (Ranger, 1985; Mamdani, 1996). Territorialised identities, which usually legitimate claims of indigeneity or autochthony, thus authenticate land and water claims (Engels 2014: 79). Territory according to Engels (2014: 80) “refers to physical spaces where people live, functioning as a category of inclusion in and exclusion from, political communities”. Local tensions around land water can be even more pronounced where contestations for natural resources requires the creation of insiders and outsiders amongst members of the same ethnic group.

At Mushandike, there are numerous fluid, interpenetrating, conflicting and contradictory identity categories. These have been created by politics, economics, history and culture. They have either been ascribed to individuals and groups, or deliberately embraced and deployed in the process of contestation for access to resources.

2.5 Concluding remarks

Social constructionism provides the overall theoretical framework for the thesis, but a version of constructionism which is sensitive to questions of structure, power and politics. For the case study pursued in the thesis, social constructionism helps explore how social actors within Mushandike Smallholder Irrigation Scheme and the surrounding community problematise the challenges they face, construct their reality, and seek solutions to their problems. It recognises their agency and the significance of their participation in solution seeking. It does not designate the poor as mere victims of poverty and marginalisation but as active agents in seeking to address their social exclusion. Their views concerning their problems reflects a particular appreciation of local realities and creates a good understanding of how social exclusion has become a vital political tool of power for controlling and punishing local populations.

CHAPTER 3: HOW SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS AIDED LAND AND WATER INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION FROM 1890 – 2000 WITH A FOCUS ON ZIMBABWE

3.1 Introduction

“[T]here is no just way in which the past can be quarantined from the present. Past and present inform each other, each implies the other” (Said, 1994: 4).

The aim of this chapter is to show how ideas, interests and politics become involved in the construction of a world of practices characterised by conflictual inclusion to, and exclusion from, access to natural resources. It does so by examining water and land issues in Zimbabwe from 1890 to 2000. The chapter begins by tracing how and why colonial discourses construct the segmentation of populations into binary opposites (Fanon, 1968; Said, 1978; Frenkel and Shenhav, 2006; Ashcroft et al., 2007). It strives to interrogate how colonial discourse deployed binary distinctions (enmeshed racial and cultural ones) not only to describe differences between coloniser and colonised but to include and exclude groups from natural resources (land and water) on this basis (Frenkel and Shenhav, 2006; Ashcroft et al., 2007). By assuming this position, the thesis underplays without necessarily dismissing the fact that, to a certain extent, the colonial context also resulted in relational hybridity as hinted on in Chapter 2. It acknowledges therefore that the colonial encounter was to some degree characterised by fusion and mutual effects arising from the coloniser-colonised relationship (Bhabha, 1994). But it argues that due to power asymmetries, colonially-constructed binarism had dominance in defining relations within the colonial world (Bhabha, 1994; Mamdani, 1996).

The thesis recognises that through the process of ‘othering’ (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1985; Nederveen Pieterse, 1992; Fanon, 1995; Fuss, 1994; Young, 2014), the colonised and his/her culture were constructed not only as different but static and inferior, thus requiring acculturation and modernisation (Williams and Chrisman, 1994; Ashcroft et al., 1995). Difference supposedly justified colonisation, domination and the establishment of colonial rule premised on a purported need for civilisation. Such processes justified deliberate inclusion and exclusion from land, water and other material resources (Ranger, 1983; Chanock, 1985; Moore, 1986; Berry, 1993; Eklund,

2001) social space (Goldberg, 1993), knowledge production (Said, 1978; Taiwo, 1993) among numerous other dimensions of social life. Furthermore, the thesis unravels how difference and domination sustained colonial land and water relations for close to a century in Zimbabwe (Ranger, 1985). Thus, it pays attention to how constructions of cultural hierarchical differences justified, fixed and maintained the existence of superior and inferior races and allowed for exclusion and inclusion from material resources in the colonial context.

Similarly, this chapter analyses how post-colonial ideas and interests equally shaped land and water relations, at least until the year 2000 (Ranger, 1983, 1985; Palmer, 1990; Moyo, 1994). The chapter provides insights into how post-colonial national social constructions shaped natural resource relations in the country through fomenting, supporting and sustaining socio-economic, cultural and political processes of inclusion and exclusion. This brings questions about water and land conflicts closer temporally to the focus of the thesis, namely, Mushandike irrigation scheme in the post-1980 period. Overall, then, the chapter seeks to analyse both historical and more contemporary relationships between ideas, interests and practices which shaped land and water politics in the country and in which the social relations at Mushandike are ultimately rooted.

The chapter begins with a detailed examination of the background of European thinking in relation to foreign land and water, how this shaped relations between Europeans and indigenous populations and to what effect (Eklund, 2001; Cooper, 2005). This is important in so far as it demonstrates the power of ideas is shaping practices and relations. This section is followed by a discussion of the colonial context revealing how the Althusserian focus on the combined deployment of ideological and repressive state apparatuses takes place (Fanon, 1967, 1993; Althusser, 1970; Ranger, 1983, 1985; Bhabha, 1993; Cabral, 1993; Mamdani 1996). This section is vital in explaining the deep entrenchment of natural resource inclusion and exclusion in the entire history of Zimbabwe, which the post-colonial state is failing to address. The final section touches on the post-colonial as an ideational arena, one that was and to an extent remains bogged down by contestations in the area of ideas with little happening in the world of practice (Palmer, 1990). This resulted in the deferred resolution of historically and politically necessary social

justice, and to an extent that post-colonial Zimbabwean society was plunged into an ongoing systemic crisis.

3.2 Early hegemonic constructions of the self and the “Other” as bedrock of the colonial encounter

This section shows how culture informed ideas, interactions, relationships and communication which in the end defined the colonial encounter and permeated various facets of life. It also discusses how socio-economic and political realities affect a people’s culture, shaping their ideas, imaginations, aspirations, realities and attitude towards themselves and the different ‘other’.

Imperial interests in Europe contributed significantly to the construction of notions of the superior white and inferior other (Krishna, 1993). Colonisation of the inferior ‘other’ became acceptable, and was justified, within European cultures (Cooper, 2005). As such, colonial practices including “enslavement, land grabbing, the denigration of indigenous cultures, and coerced religious conversion” were culturally acceptable to Europeans in Europe (Cooper, 2005: 28). Thus, although colonisation was a practice enacted in distant places, it became an idea and a value at the heart of European culture that hinged on a sense of racial superiority which was shared across generations through various institutions (Said, 1978; Cooper, 2005). As Europe constructed itself as superior, it imagined the different ‘other’ as inferior and wretched. To Europe, non-Europeans were not merely the different ‘other’ but bearers of an inferior identity and culture (Lamming, 1995; Ashcroft et al., 1996). While superior people inhabited a superior continent, inferior ‘others’ dwelt in inferior parts of the world, some without history and some even yet to be discovered and named. Europe was therefore constructed as hierarchically superior to other continents (Mamdani, 1996).

Although Africa and its inhabitants were imagined as inferior, its construction as “Gold-land” inhabited by an inferior uncivilised race was appropriate for a colonising agenda (Lamming, 1995, Mbembe, 2001). The lure of gold and the need to civilise were regarded as significant justifications for conquest even to the exporting of European culture elsewhere. That a gold-land lacked development as Europeans understood it only served to confirm the inferiority of its inhabitants, as well as justifying conquest, expropriation and plunder of resources by a people (Europeans) who knew how to utilise them for (supposedly) development purposes. Whatever had been posted

as development in Africa was dismissed as inconsequential together with any significant history that Africans had. The history of Africa was frozen out, and so much so that Africa was projected as a dark continent characterised by savagery and primitivity and devoid of history. Denial of history was not only deployed in Africa but everywhere where Europeans conquered, as it legitimised expropriation of resources from an inferior people and their subsequent domination and exploitation for development.

To Europe, then, other parts of the world were ripe and ready for taking and, because they apparently needed civilisation, this beckoned Europeans to move in and colonise, conquer and brutalise people where such existed, and expropriate whatever resources were in abundance (Martinez, 1998; Gardiner, 2009). Other parts of the world needed colonisation to ‘enjoy the privilege’ of being brought into the “sphere of the influence of the enlightened centre” (Ashcroft et al., 2007). This was often based on the idea that there were no human inhabitants in the colonies. In Australia for instance, the aborigines were constructed as non-existent hence their country was out-rightly declared *terra nullius* (empty or unoccupied) (Eklund, 2001). Through such a claim, which suggests that there were no people in Australia by the time Europeans arrived, the aborigines were denied a presence in history and Australia as a whole was denied a past (Eklund, 2001).

Colonisation, therefore, was not always framed as an unbridled and exploitative quest for land, water, minerals and labour but as an act of magnanimity and philanthropy performed by self-abnegating benefactors who sought the best for the colonies and their local people. Masking the economic motive, Europe designated itself as merely focused on fulfilling a ‘civilising’ need motivated not by the pursuit of profit but by the quest for modernising the world.

In this context, the proponents and propagators of cultures conceive, shape and transmit primary ideas, concepts and values about the self, the other and the world, as embodied by the individual and shared by the collective (Cooper and Stoler, 1997). Institutions (regularly, education and family) drive the production and propagation of these cultural ideas, values and beliefs (Said, 1978). For example, as noted by Cooper and Stoler (1997:233), families tend to function as the “nation in microcosm” which turn “social processes into natural instinctive ones”. Certainly, this

is the case with race which, though socially-constructed, became transformed through the colonial encounter into a biological fact.

Difference was premised on, signified and marked by race, but this practice of ‘othering’ tended to enmesh culture with race (Loomba, 2015). Racial difference was partly constructed as biological/scientific and partly as cultural; however, this was done in equal measure so that biological aspects became foundational. For instance, claims of white supremacy sought justification in science and retained biological arguments throughout the colonial era, despite having failed to scientifically substantiate the claim (Gardiner, 2009). Europe’s positing of advanced civilisation and superior economic position were used as socially visible and tangible evidence of biological superiority.

Claims of white supremacy were not whimsical but fundamental weapons that justified and supported aggrandisement within the colony. Martinez’s (1998) definition of white supremacy is instructive in this regard. The word supremacy itself is important in that it suggests the existence of power and domination in relation to other races (Jacobson, 1998; Gardiner, 2009). White supremacy is a “historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and peoples of color by white peoples, and nations of the European continent, for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power and privilege” (Martinez, 1998: 51). As the bulwark of white supremacy, race is about organising power; it is about “power to oppress, control, disempower, and destroy people of color” and subsequently to protect and sustain power and privilege for bearers of white identity (Gardiner, 2009: 2). In the end, it is about identity based on inclusion and exclusion (about who does and does not belong) (Jacobson, 1998).

As a system, racism was and is still regarded as more than just about “personal prejudices and individual acts of discrimination” as it is a “web of interlocking, reinforcing ... political, economic, social, cultural, legal, military, educational ... institutions” (Martinez, 1998: 52). It thus permeates society through different avenues of social organisation. Located within the discourses of race and culture, colonial practices of domination, exploitation and expropriation were constructed as integral to a civilising process. These dominant European views about other lands and people

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played a part in shaping land politics at the interface of Europeans and Africans in Africa. As noted above, Colonial land politics could therefore be viewed as the dramatisation or enactment of a skeletal script authored in Europe but further developed on the ground in Africa in accordance with necessity. With this awareness, this chapter will show how systematic land and livestock expropriation, as well as exclusion from access to water, occurred historically in Zimbabwe and endures under post-colonial conditions.

3.3 Multipronged institutional contribution towards fulfilment of land and water expropriation

Colonisation of foreign lands sought to fulfil the “exploitative economic motive” amongst other needs and wants (Amuta, 1995; Gardiner, 2009). Violence, ideas and the law played a pivotal role in promoting colonisation and accumulation. These three factors in fact were mutually supportive in advancing settler interests. This section discusses the construction and deployment of these three aspects highlighting their purpose and implication with reference to both the colonising and colonised populations.

3.3.1 The pivotal role of violence in land contestations within the colonial context

According to Cèsaire (1994: 173I), Colonel de Montana, one of the conquerors of Algeria once remarked “in order to banish the thoughts that sometimes besiege me, I have some heads cut-off, not the heads of artichokes but the heads of men”. This remark suggests that conquest in Algeria, as in Zimbabwe (as shown in this chapter) and in other parts of Africa was characterised by violence. Such violence, which involved the expropriation of land and other natural resources and the subjugation and exploitation of the local population, gave character to land and natural resources politics in Africa.

Writing on other parts of colonial Africa, Mbembe (2001: 25) reveals that the use of violence permeated social life to such an extent that it nearly functioned as a ‘natural’ component of colonial culture. In many instances, violence functions as a political weapon through which group interests can be imposed on others (Broch-Due, 2005). It also shapes the emotion and the psyche of both its users and victims, as it builds fear, mistrust and animosity, as well as a sense of inferiority amongst its victims and superiority for perpetrators. Similarly, it reinforces identities by concretising the

difference between perpetrators and victims while reinforcing a sense of group belonging (Broch-Due, 2005). In essence, colonial sovereignty, according to Mbembe (2001:25), stood on three forms of violence: founding, legitimisation and maintenance violence.

Founding violence underpinned conquest and initial prerogatives flowing from it such as expropriation and access to forced labour among other human and natural resources. It was fundamentally repressive and murderous exemplified by the heinous genocidal annihilation of the Herero of Namibia (Cooper, 2009). Through brutality, lands and livestock were expropriated. In concurrence, Ashcroft et al. (2007) note that superior military power enabled conquest and allowed for exploitation and white prosperity. Resistance struggles which mutated into emancipatory struggles in the later years also formed part of this violence (Ranger, 1985; Cabral, 1993).

The second form of violence (Mbembe, 2001: 25) had to do with legitimisation. This form of violence helped the coloniser establish authority across the colonised lands (Fanon, 1967). It forcefully imposed and ‘endorsed’ the legitimacy of the presence of the coloniser, and his plunder, exploitation, rules and practices, so much that it often thwarted open expression of dissent. Legitimacy is ordinarily an attribute of just and proper laws and rules (Greenberg, 1987). Such laws and rules ensure social control through a solid measure of consensual compliance. But where a population does not deem it obligatory to comply with unjust and illegitimate laws, violence imposes legitimacy of governance through coercion.

The third form of violence was for ensuring the “maintenance, spread and permanence of the authority” (Mbembe, 2001: 25). It accompanied practices such as indirect rule, the purpose of which was the legitimisation of colonial authority (Ranger, 1997; Spear, 2003). This form of violence prevailed throughout the colonial period and “it ended up constituting the central cultural imagery that the state shared with society” (Mbembe, 2001:25). Largely, violence was synonymous with authority in the eyes of the coloniser. Through violence, the coloniser maintained authority through silencing the colonised (Loomba, 2015). The prevalence of violence made it difficult for the ruled to question rulers even when it was pertinent to do so, and hence the ruled and oppressed appeared to observe colonial authority (Loomba, 2015).

Colonial violence was considered justifiable as long as it was used on the different ‘other’. The African, for instance, was, constructed as the ‘other’ who only understood the language of “force or violence” (Fanon, 1967, 1995). For instance, flogging, death or punishment of an African were considered integral to the civilizing process and hence justified. Violence, therefore, was constructed as an indispensable act of benevolence aimed at achieving the nobler goal of civilising the African. Claims of benevolence clearly masked the pursuit of economic gains from the land and its people. Violence helped capture, establish and maintain control and to perpetuate domination though concealed behind a façade of benevolence. This prevalence of violence in the colonial context was aptly summed up by Césaire (cited in Mbembe, 2001: 26) who said “wherever there are colonizers and colonized face to face, I see force, brutality, cruelty, sadism, conflict”. To the colonised, violence functioned as a constant reminder of the power and freedom they had lost (Mbembe 2001). To the coloniser, it functioned as authority while allowing for a practical demonstration of the superior/inferior difference.

3.3.2 Legitimation and entrenchment of expropriation and exploitation through ‘lawfare’

Notwithstanding the other roles the law played in colonial Africa, literature shows that it notoriously facilitated and legitimated expropriation and exploitation. On the one hand, the law was pivotal in enabling the expropriation of land and mineral resources using exploited and sometimes forced labour (Shivji, 2000). On the other hand, it enabled colonisers to justify and legitimate expropriation and exploitation – “to themselves, to their rivals, to those they displaced – taking what they could keep and keeping what they had taken” (Mawani, 2015: 420).

Nevertheless, colonised people did not merely function as victims of well-orchestrated systematic marginalisation and oppression supported by the law. As further observed by Mawani (2015: 423), they, as “active agents”, “disputed, contested and transformed the legalities imposed upon them”. As a result of the agency of the colonised, colonial law as noted by Shivji (2000: 38) was partly “constructed in the course of social struggles and changing material and social relationships”. Although rooted in European law and ideas, colonial law was both a cause and consequence of colonial contestations. Much of this comes out clearly later (in this chapter) in the discussion on land in Zimbabwe.

Customary law formed part of the oppressive machinery deployed by colonial ‘citizens’ for the oppression and marginalisation of colonial ‘subjects’, to borrow from Mamdani (1996). Customary law and African custom itself were re-imagined for purposes of addressing colonial concerns of governing and utilising Africans for white benefit (Ranger, 1985; Boone 2012). Reconstructed customary law was meant to calm and contain the African in such a way that the coloniser would accumulate as much as possible in a conducive stable environment (Ranger 1993). This law was reimagined by colonial powers after early colonial attempts at the systematic dismantling of African tradition, and for both political and economic reasons. Even to date, despite post-colonial restructuring, dimensions of so-called customary law and practices as “structured by the colonial period” (Helliker, 2006: 156) continue to determine rural people’s lives in many southern African countries.

There were some attacks on customary practices by colonisers, which could not be included in any reconstructed customary law because of the colonising pre-occupation with accumulation or because of claims based on European (or Victorian) morals. For instance, polygamy was questioned for exacerbating labour shortage problems through allowing “the native male to live in sloth and idleness” spending too much time seeking and pleasing women instead of availing their labour for economic purposes (Mamdani 1996: 121). Polygamy was therefore mirrored more as philandering than a legitimate system of marriage acceptable to specific cultures. The coloniser though needed labour in many sectors of the economy including mining and agriculture. Africans tended to refrain from availing their labour for various reasons and using different approaches. In Zimbabwe, for instance, Ranger (1985) argues that Africans preferred self-peasantisation compared to working for the colonial system. They therefore engaged in small-scale production of crops for the market despite land shortages and discouraging crop prices. They did this to earn money (from market sales) with which they paid various government taxes imposed upon them. However, land laws supported by other legislation governing movement and pricing of produce were enacted to squeeze peasant farmers out of the market.

In the colonial context, customary law gave chiefs and other traditional leaders’ jurisdiction over territories designated as belonging to the tribe and over members of the tribe. Natives were

fragmented into tribes and “each tribe had its own customary law” enforced by its tribal leadership (Ranger, 1993; Mamdani, 1996). Natives were therefore compartmentalised tribally and territorially. Another role of chiefs was that of keeping large African populations in tribal territories subsisting on farming. Thus chiefs controlled both their mobility and livelihood strategies. Chiefs and other local rulers were invested with executive and judiciary powers to function as agents of the colonial state, thereby making indirect rule possible (Boone, 2012:40). Such social controls focused on tribalised territories were supposed to make labour easily accessible and render the African governable.

In chiefs, the colonial administrator had “trusted local intermediaries” and interlocutors “through whom they could govern the rural masses” despite nefarious activities such as land expropriation and labour exploitation (Boone, 2012:39). Chiefs and other customary leaders were invested by customary law with powers to do as they pleased with their people and the land, though being subservient to the white colonial administration. Chiefs could ‘legally’ allocate, cede, seize and charge taxes on land. They could also submit youths and men for conscription, compel widows and divorced women to surrender land, enforce colonial land-use policies (and so on), with ready support from the central state.

The law in general functioned conjointly with violence. It legitimated forced labour allowing whites as citizens to access black labour and possessions with impunity partly because blacks were legally constructed as subjects. Regulations such as those governing “forced labor, compulsory crop production” and other practices were imposed on the subject population under the guise of ruling and civilising them through making them productive (Mbembe, 2001). Laws additionally provided and allowed for practices that were disruptive to Native life such as surveillance carried out by chiefs and an array of punishments and fines they or white magistrate courts would impose. The colonised subject had no rights as he or she was being civilised, hence he/she was “like a slave to a master” (Mbembe, 2001: 31). Evidently, the law played a pivotal role in ensuring that colonial domination over African lands was stable, well defined and legitimated. It is not surprising therefore, that Comaroff (cited in Mawani, 2015: 420) finds justification in asserting that colonial conquest and domination in Africa took place in part through “lawfare”.

3.4 The victor's justice: similarities between colonial and post-colonial land politics in Zimbabwe

A close look at the colonial history of Zimbabwe reveals that conquest enabled and justified the way in which settlers expropriated land and livestock (and generally undermined African agriculture), monopolised access to agricultural water, and exploited, forcefully removed, brutalised and denigrated Africans (Chitiyo, 2004; Chaumba et al., 2004). In this way, conquerors in effect practiced victors' justice (Mamdani, 2001). Twenty years after independence, land hungry people invaded white owned farms (called *jambanja*) and, being more powerful than the landowners (given the support the invaders received from the ruling party and state), implemented victors' justice as well (Chitiyo, 2004; Alexander, 2007; Dawson, 2011; Moyo, 2011). The country seems to be moving in circles, with those who use violence better off than others when it comes to dominating land politics.

3.4.1 Conquest and the construction of the 'self' and the 'other' in relation to land

The British South Africa Company (BSAC) led the expropriation of land, cattle and other domestic animals during the initial colonial years of Zimbabwe (Ranger, 1985). As early as 1893, it had allocated a minimum of 1,284 hectares of land to each of the 196 pioneers, and large tracts of land to 500 police officers and an unspecified number of civilians, all acquired land through force (Chitiyo, 2004). Following the defeat of the Ndebele in the 1893 'war of dispossession', the British government, represented by the Order-in-Council it had instituted to administer land issues, established the Gwai and Shangani reserves (in 1894) for the defeated Ndebele people. In 1897, the British Deputy Commissioner commented that Gwai and Shangani were "badly watered, sandy and unfit for settlement" (Moyana, 1984: 18). The two reserves put together were approximately 2,480,000 acres in size representing a total reduction of about 7.5 million acres from the 10 million the Ndebele occupied before their defeat (Moyana, 1984). The Ndebele's prime and vast land had passed into the hands of their conquerors as loot by victors pursuing their own version of justice.

The Shona-speaking people resisted occupation in various ways and this eventually culminated in the 1896-97 war, the First *Chimurenga* (or war of liberation) which was also supported by the Ndebele (Chitiyo, 2004). The war led to a huge loss of life for both coloniser and colonised, with whites emerging victorious as they rapaciously expropriated vast tracts of arable land, forced

blacks into reserves and authoritatively imposed foreign rule (Moore, 1998). Africans continued to adopt various forms of resistance despite the fact that they were compelled to ‘embrace’ incorporation into the new economic order although on the fringes (Palmer, 1977; Phimister, 1993). One such form, which as indicated earlier had broader resonance, was ‘self-peasantisation’ – they turned themselves into peasant farmers despite land shortages, instead of becoming workers or tenants on white owned land. They were competently productive in this regard despite the challenging environment.

However, due to continued land expropriation, forced removals, forced labour, unfair taxes (such as a hut tax), land centralisation programmes and destocking, African agriculture suffered. Ranger (1985) notes that settlers as the political rulers did not construct discursively the Shona (who owned some of the land the colonisers expropriated) as a landholding people, but as a source of labour. Unsurprisingly, as late as 1949, a settler implored others not to “regard the country as a Black Man's country, where the white man is the intruder, an exploiter of Black labour” but to “look at it as an empty country” (Mlambo, 1998: 131). Such a view, as part of the broader claims about *terra nullius*, was, on the one hand, an attempt at justifying ownership claims, and on the other, a complete disregard for the competing claims of land ownership by indigenous people.

Advancing a similar view in 1927, Premier Coghlan argued that “the white man has come and desires to stay, and can only be certain of doing so if he has certain portions of the country made his exclusively” (Machingaidze, 1991: 559). This was a desire to construct exclusive white spaces within the country, which to an extent already existed by the 1920s as whites owned much of the prime land while they apportioned infertile parts of the country to blacks as Native Reserves. They had, according to Maravanyika and Huijzenveld (2010), already built a kind of a neo-Britain in Zimbabwe. Their focus on advancing their own racial interests as victors forced them to entertain the thought that the 1,750,000 black people in the country then did not exist, at least as full members of humanity.

As for descendants of the vanquished, the First *Chimurenga* was important partly because of the symbolic meaning it assumed. For Africans, it symbolised chivalry in struggles against deprivation, domination and oppression and, as such, it played a part in shaping the later struggle

for independence, or the Second *Chimurenga* (from 1966 to 1980) (Lan, 1985, Ranger, 1985), as well as the most recent push for land redistribution and indigenous ownership through land invasions known within ZANU-PF circles as the Third *Chimurenga* (Chitiyo, 2004; Dawson, 2011). For Ranger (1985), the First *Chimurenga* reflected African consciousness of the exploitative relationship that the settler system imposed and the resoluteness to resist it. Perhaps glorifying it, Beach (1979: 395) argued that Africans beguiled “the administration into the idea that they were content with the government of the country” while preparing for war, and thus only to surprise it by setting in “motion the whole of the machinery which they had been preparing”. Therefore, the war in the 1890s indirectly challenged the dominant view that Africans were hopeless, lazy and primitive, and it revealed immense agency and bravery bordering on a desire to be free. Some scholars however view this depiction of the war as mere romanticism, as a deliberate exaggeration and misrepresentation of African struggles for whatever reasons (Cobbing, 1977).

Whether constructions of the First *Chimurenga* are accurate historical presentations or mere romanticism is of relevance if one is trying to establish absolute truths. But, for this thesis, it suffices that this war is constructed as such. Social constructions (as discussed in Chapter 2) do not necessarily have to be the universal ‘truth’ to be meaningful to those who uphold them. Once they are constructed and commonly shared, they represent reality and therefore function as such. Historical accuracy of what really obtained during the war is not important in the construction of the view that:

The first Chimurenga demonstrated to the Africans that it was possible to attain freedom, and that armed struggle was the only way to achieve African liberation. The first Chimurenga also produced courageous, dynamic and gallant leaders whose heroism provided inspiration for the second and final phase of Zimbabwe's liberation [in the 1970s]. Leaders of the second phase often called on their cadres to reach the standards of courage, dedication and determination set by heroes like Sekuru Kaguvi, Mbuya Nehanda, Mkwati and Umlugulu. Finally, the first Chimurenga was part of the collective and spontaneous response of Africans throughout the continent to the imposition of colonial rule (Moyana and Sibanda, 1984: 48).

For many, the war shows, as Fanon (1994: 37) observes elsewhere, that the past of the Shona and Ndebele was not full of shame as claimed by dominant colonial views but is one of “dignity, glory and solemnity” as it was characterised by unity of purpose. It also helped Africans in the later years, especially during the Second *Chimurenga*, to define themselves in relation to the qualities of Africans of the First *Chimurenga* who were depicted as brave and selfless.

3.4.2 Social constructions of Jambanja and the FTLRP: reincarnation of victor’s justice in land politics

In 1999, close to twenty years after independence, land related violence returned to haunt Zimbabweans. Various groups of land hungry people resolved to end their land hunger through violent land invasions (*jambanja*) (Chaumba et al., 2003; Lahiff, 2003). They invaded much of white owned land and as, if to consolidate and legitimate the invasions, the government of Zimbabwe moved in about six months later by implementing the FTLRP which included issuing occupancy letters to land-invaders and other land-seekers.

Jambanja had varied interpretations. Some viewed it as a demonstration of impatience by those whose quest for land remained unaddressed twenty years after independence, while others dismiss it as a political gimmick initiated by the ruling party, ZANU-PF, to salvage political relevance after failing to meet the expectation of the electorate since 1980 which included accessing land. For instance, Lahiff (2003:3) suggests that *jambanja* and the subsequent FTLRP were masterminded by ZANU-PF's elites, consistent with the party’s history of realising its interests through “violence and authoritarianism”. Land invasions were therefore viewed as “Zanuised”; that is, designed by ZANU-PF to hoodwink people into voting for it in the 2002 election (Chaumba et al., 2003: 16). The suggestion in such an argument is that the rural poor were manipulated. In doing so, it strips the poor of agency and socio-political consciousness and awareness, which they exhibited from the beginning of colonisation until the attainment of independence (Ranger, 1985; Moore, 1999). The link between land hunger and land invasions is either trivialised or obliterated.

Others explain the land invasions as an act of collaboration for the realisation of interlinked group interests. In this respect Kriger (2003:1) argues that the war veterans (ex-guerrillas, who led the land invasions) and the ruling party “collaborated” as they “draw on war discourse and violence

to advance their agendas”. The two are therefore interdependent, bound together by a long history of shared interests and values that date back to the liberation war days. Kriger (2003:5) further claims that the two collaborators tended to exclude others through invoking “their war sacrifices and war goals” as and when the need arises. Thus, they invoked a specific nationalist identity to suggest purposes of inclusion and exclusion. Concomitantly, they constructed the invasions as the Third *Chimurenga*, that is, the third lap of the nationalist liberation struggle focused particularly on liberating the poor economically. Though Kriger is critical of the land occupations, I suggest that the land invasions were not in any way constructed by the ruling party and war veterans as an act of revenge upon the former oppressor but as the final accomplishment of all forms of liberation. As the political majority, Africans were constructed during the Third *Chimurenga*, and often constructed themselves, not as pursuers of the victor’s justice but as fighters for economic freedom. Those who “took back” the land regarded the opposition, including white farmers who “refused” to relinquish their land as well as farm labourers who defended their employers (either because of loyalty or in defence of their jobs) as ‘counter-revolutionaries’, as the colonial land question otherwise would be left unresolved. Their exclusion was therefore framed as self-inflicted, caused by their unwillingness to transform the agrarian structure of the country.

Other scholars focus more on the effect of land invasions and the FTLRP than on the morality of the act. Some of these scholars acknowledge that confiscatory land reforms were violent and advanced partisan political interests but they still produced the “the greatest property transfer in southern Africa since colonization” (Mamdani, 2008). The land invasion initiative did not only lead to the expropriation and distribution of land to over 150,000 families but partly resolved the country's historically unjust and unsustainable agrarian relations (Moyo and Yeros, 2009; Moyo, 2011). Indeed, participants in the invasions were pushed into such an act by the failure of post-colonial and neo-liberal policies to resolve the land question (Sadomba, 2008). Ordinarily, the poor and peasant populations are constructed as “simple, ignorant” and “respectful of authority” (Chatterjee, 2000: 9), as well as easily manipulated by others. But, according to Moyo (2011) and Sadomba (2008), the invasions entailed significant agency on the part of ordinary peasants and hence they are constructed as emancipatory by such scholars. Certainly, this is consistent with the reasoning that, if the poor do nothing or little about their own circumstances, they may be “doomed

to an ineffective habitus that reproduces the conditions of their own domination” (Knauf, 1996: 113).

Of course, the argument by these scholars has a moral dimension to it, which has been criticised by other Zimbabwean thinkers. For example, Chaumba et al. (2003: 2) argue that the land invasions and the FTLRP were tantamount to “normalizing the abnormal”. Others are convinced that the FTLRP was so flawed that it deserves outright condemnation. Thus Hellum and Derman (2004: 1788) propose that reforms such as “Zimbabwe's fast track program, produce a failed economy”. In doing so, they elect to look at the whole process in relation to its immediate impact on the economy isolated from all other aspects. Historical, political, and even long-term economic concerns are underplayed as concern is fixed on the present.

Indeed, successful confiscatory redistributive land reforms that took place in countries such as Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, China and Vietnam seem to provide evidence that compulsory land acquisition and distribution is the most workable pro-poor land reform approach (Griffin et al., 2002: 302). These monumental successes made through state-led agrarian reforms (SLAR) are known to dwarf those achieved through market-led agrarian reforms (MLAR) in countries such as Brazil, Columbia, South Africa and the Philippines (Borras, 2006: 112). In the end, land redistribution is about transferring wealth, assets, power and privilege from one group to another therefore it cannot easily be incident free. Confiscation and other “ways to defeat ... opposition” should always be sought with the understanding that there are no “reform models that will be unopposed by landlords” (Borras 2006: 115). Many who share these broader views, including Moyo, argue that the Zimbabwean land issue should now be shifting away from focusing on how land was acquired towards addressing the plight of casualties and rendering assistance to beneficiaries. They argue that these reforms are already improving lives of beneficiaries and that FTLRP farmers should be supported. Focusing particularly on Masvingo Province, Scoones (2008) thus posits that, contrary to many myths advanced by detractors of the land reforms, there is evidence that many positive gains have been registered.

Interestingly, there is very little academic discussion of the aspect of looting that accompanied the land invasions and the subsequent FTLRP, despite the devastating effect of this on the

infrastructure on the former white commercial farmers. In a discussion of looting elsewhere, Ginty (2004) notes that in, war and post-war situations, looting is usually given justification. This may be true for post-land invasion Zimbabwe. Even though the invasions cannot be categorised strictly speaking as conventional warfare, they impacted broader Zimbabwean society in a like manner. For instance, Geoff Hoon, the British Defence Minister in 2003 described the looting that took place after the fall of Saddam Hussein in Iraq as an undertaking of “liberating” and redistributing the items that were under the vanquished regime (Ginty 2004: 857). He went on to say, “I regard such behaviour as good practice” (Ginty 2004: 857); in other words, the looting by ‘victors’ is projected as “good practice”. In a similar manner, Fanon suggests that looting is a form of violence which should not be treated as an entity separated from other dominant forms of political violence. His view is that “violence is broader than bullets, knives and stones”, as it is a “form of taking that which has been or will not be willingly surrendered” (Gordon 1995: 79). Therefore, using this Fanonian view, the looting that took place in Zimbabwe could be understood as an integral part of the violence that characterised land invasions.

Violence and looting during the land invasions in Zimbabwe were directed at a – discursively-constructed – well-defined different ‘other’. Violent acts in fact are usually preceded by a conclusive definition of the targeted group. In a study of genocide, Mamdani (2001: 9) argues “before you can try and eliminate an enemy, you must first define that enemy”. This means that a group has to give an appropriate identity not only to the enemy but to itself as well (in relation to the enemy) before an act of violence. In the case of Zimbabwe, land invaders defined themselves as ‘liberators’ who were completing the war of liberation by taking part in the Third *Chimurenga*. White farmers who owned the land to be occupied and who opposed the land invasions were the enemy of the liberatory struggle and their black supporters (notably in the opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change) were considered as sell-outs.

In such a context, the invasions could be viewed as corrective “violence by yesterday's victims” (Mamdani 2001: 9). The violence enacted by the war veteran-led invasions was supposedly “life affirming” rather than “life denying” for the occupiers, and was perpetrated to correct the denial of post-colonial freedoms and access to resources rather than to oppress (Fanon in Mamdani, 2001:

13). Violence in this regard is perpetrated not by aggressors but by “yesterday's victims who have turned around and decided to cast aside their victimhood and become masters of their own lives” (Mamdani 2001: 13). Thus, “[h]e of whom they have never stopped saying that the only language he understands is that of force, decides to give utterances by force” (Fanon in Mamdani, 2001: 13).

This section (section 3.4) has simply highlighted contesting discursive constructions and ‘othering’ processes which took place during land invasions and the FTLRP. It has revealed that contestations for resources can be a vicious social process that pays little regard to the concerns of the vanquished. Land in Zimbabwe has changed hands partly through violence, such that it is defended and lost in the same manner. Both the weak and strong at times use violence to advance group interests. In colonial Zimbabwe, settlers used it to capture and defend land ownership while, in the post-colonial context, the land hungry used it as an alternative way of fighting exclusion. This view finds support in Gore (1993) who argues that, where the marginalised lack options, “unruly social practices” tend to challenge legal rules of land and resource entitlement.

3.5 Social construction of identity and land relations: from aristocracy of colour to protected species

This section pays attention to contrasting privileges and rights that colonial powers extended to and withheld from different groups based on identity. It examines how identities were constructed and ascribed to both whites and blacks and how attempts were made over time to cement them through systematic inclusion and exclusion from material and other resources. It thus analyses how whites enjoyed what John X Merriman, then Prime Minister of Cape Colony, termed “a position of aristocracy of colour” (Ranger 1983: 213). The section then examines similar themes around identity and land in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

Under colonial rule, whites, especially male, could easily access land, water and all necessary forms of support to enhance the productivity of their enterprises. They “wore the uniform of the white skin ... with inherent power, authority and privilege” (Mushonga, 2013: 1). All whites were superior to all blacks and had rights which qualified them automatically as citizens of the colony (Mamdani 1996). Whites were legally entitled to own property and to enjoyed massive privileges

and unrestricted freedoms (Ranger, 1985, 1967; Palmer, 1990, Moore, 1998). Their superiority and privileged position was recognised by the colonial state with which they worked closely.

Land functioned as an identity marker whose ownership symbolised racial superiority. According to Ranger (1983), a hierarchy of masters and servants was established through property ownership and economic privileges. As these identities were based on and maintained through inclusion and exclusion, they were characterised by conflict. Violence and the law were used to directly impose an identity (or identities) upon the colony's colonised population. In the post-colonial context in Zimbabwe, white identity quickly shifted from being characterised by racial superiority to symbolising high productivity. The post-colonial government protected them and met their demands in a way that they quickly functioned as a "protected species" (Palmer, 1990). Productivity and property ownership and not race gave whites a superior place in the post-colonial context and a special and revered relationship with the new state during the first ten years, and even into the 1990s.

3.5.1 Affirmation of superior and inferior race identities through systematic land alienation

Ranger (1985:29) suggests that land alienation and the subsequent creation of reserves impoverished Africans to the extent that the colonial system had at its disposal a pool of readily exploitable migrant labourers. Reserves symbolised containerisation, subjugation, exclusion, inferiority and deprivation of freedom (Chennells, 1996). However, to whites, all this was a tool for addressing the "native question", that is for "stabilizing alien rule" (Mamdani, 1996: 3). Reserves helped to containerise blacks in designated territories within which their activities were monitored through various mechanisms. They also helped reduce competition between settler farmers and black producers through reductions in the size and quality of land accessible to Africans and subsequently productivity.

In colonial Zimbabwe, land alienation was so rampant that it could be carried out at the whim of any white male. Individual white farmers and investment companies sometimes pushed the state "for mass movement of Natives" and evictions of "hundreds of thousands" to "resource-starved reserves" (Ranger, 1985; Palmer, 1990). In some instances, white landowners would make money by removing Africans from land before bringing them back to the same piece of land as rent-

payers. Ranger (1985: 107) notes that many landowners in Matabeleland “preferred to raise rent from African “squatters” than to sell farms to whites”. All these acts, Haas (1995) suggests, were consistent with the dominant view that colonial people, land, water and all natural endowments were commodities existing for the benefit of the conqueror. Nevertheless, Africans did not just embrace victimhood in the face of deepening poverty and desperation. Instead of merely becoming a source of cheap labour for white enterprises, they also turned themselves into peasant farmers, as already discussed. The peasant identity, therefore, was a struggle identity by a people who had witnessed and experienced systematic exclusion (Ranger, 1985). Self-peasantisation helped them retain a measure of autonomy and self-determination.

However, the colonial Rhodesian system did not explain African poverty in terms of land alienation, deprivation and exclusion. Instead, it projected the African predicament as a confirmation of the dominant view that Africans (and particularly African men) were lazy and understood nothing about frugality, to the extent that whenever they earned any substantive amount of money they married another wife. Therefore, instead of being viewed as survivalist (and even market-focused at times), peasant production was projected as the negative opposite of commercial farming. The inferiority of Africans as agricultural producers was, to a significant extent, systematically constructed through land alienation and deprivation of support. Concomitantly, the superiority of whites in colonial Rhodesia as astute producers was confirmed through high productivity, which anchored on access to productive land and enabling structures supported and subsidised by the colonial state.

It becomes clear, then, that the racialised colonial space was characterised by systematically induced inclusion and exclusion. It racially constructed and sustained what Kymlicka (1994) calls competing and somewhat antagonistic forms of identities. Land ownership was central to these definitions and contestations were partly resolved through the relentless deployment of force, coercion and the law. Identity became a significant political mechanism in pre-1980 Zimbabwe around which land contestations played out. Whether racialised or ethnicised (or otherwise), its deployment (as suggested already) continues in post-1980 Zimbabwe to allow for the exclusion of the different ‘other’ from land, material resources and social spaces.

3.5.2 Centrality of policy in exclusion, inclusion and domination

Policy aided the colonial state in Rhodesia to exclude blacks from accessing land and from benefiting from agricultural activities. Policy, according to Pincus (2000), allows for individual, institutional and structural discrimination of the targeted 'other'. Here, the focus is specifically on the analysis of institutional discrimination, which involves "policies of the dominant race/ethnic/gender institutions and the behavior of individuals who control these institutions and implement policies that are intended to have a differential and/or harmful effect on minority race/ethnic/gender groups" (Pincus, 2000:1). This locates discrimination within practices of key "social institutions" (including the state) which conceive and defend privileges and rights of powerful or dominant groups within society.

Policies such as the Land Apportionment Act (LAA) (1930), the Maize Control Act (MCA) of 1931 and the Native Land Husbandry Act (1951) are suffice to note in showing how policy promoted inclusion and exclusion on racial grounds. The LAA (1930) and the MCA (1931) were put in place specifically to cripple African agriculture: the LAA confined Africans to arid marginal reserves, and the MCA instituted commodity market discrimination against African maize growers. These pieces of legislation were enacted to ensure, broadly speaking, that the rural economy and social order worked in favour of the white population. They were designed to ensure that Europeans conclusively won "the struggle between the European farmer seeking to reduce the African to a proletarian and the African seeking to retain the maximum amount of economic independence" (Ranger, 1985: 54-55). A few years later, the Native Land Husbandry Act (1951) was introduced to further entrench the exclusion of the African population. Hiding behind the discourse of conservation, it affected African livelihoods by severely depriving Africans of access to "critical environmental resources" (Moore, 1998:381).

Through the LAA, the colonial territory was segmented into spaces exclusively for white occupation, Native reserves and Native Purchase Areas (NPAs). Africans could live on white rural land but only as employees or tenants. NPAs which comprised of large plots on marginal soils were for yeoman African farmers (Arrighi, 1966; Duggan, 1980). Thus, the spaces "set aside as NPA" and sold to blacks "consisted almost entirely of arid and useless land" (Ranger, 1985: 114), because they were established by a people who feared the emergence of an African bourgeoisie

(Arrighi, 1966). Reserve and other “juridically enforced space” were therefore integral to the promotion of social exclusion (Chennells 1996: 103). From reserves, Africans were expected to rise from “savage slumber” to the “dignity of farm or mine worker, house or garden boy” (Chennells, 1996: 103-4).

The MCA weighed in with exploitative pricing of maize which meant to discourage African production (Arrighi, 1966) while “providing extensive and crucial support to white agriculture” (Palmer, 1990: 167). Harry Margolis, a European buyer, noted in 1944 that the Native “received a price not only below that of the European” but also that “the high price which the European farmer receives is paid at the expense of the native grower” (Ranger, 1985: 85). African farmers were systematically excluded from markets as demanded by white farmers (Ncube, 2004). Such policies had inherent contradictions, which Africans found puzzling. At one time, Africans wanted to know why the administration imposed the MCA upon them while providing them with demonstrators to teach them more productive methods of producing maize. They received no coherent answer to such a question.

Limited access to land also translated into limited access to other resources such as water, pasture, firewood and wild animals. Manzungu (2001) suggests that there existed a strong link between land rights and rights to other resources such as water within the colonial context. For instance, water rights were only given on a first come first serve basis to those who had land titles. This was enshrined in “water and irrigation laws” that were passed in 1913, 1920 and 1922 by the “Legislative Council in the colony and the Water Act of 1927 and 1976” (Manzungu, 2001: 100). Under such laws, white settlers were allowed to allocate themselves as much water as they wanted. The Water Act of 1927, which remained the major law governing water until 1998, stipulated that only holders of land title could apply for water rights and these were granted in perpetuity, only revoked under special circumstances (Jaspers, 2001).

Therefore, whenever land was transferred to whites, so was access to other vital environmental resources. Similarly, land dispossession meant water deprivation. These exclusions from material resources had enduring effects on social relations across the racial divide to the extent that some post-colonial Zimbabwe natural resource conflicts emerge “out ... of historically sedimented

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resource struggles” although they might “unfold through ... micro-politics” (Moore 1998: 78). Although some of the contestations, especially those Moore encountered at Kaerezi (his area of study), are located within discourses of “custom”, “tradition” and “conservation”, he shows that they reflect deeply embedded “competing claims to benefit from the river” from which Africans were denied access for generations. This is evidenced by such local claims as ‘we are the owners of the river’ (Moore, 1998: 378).

Conservation policies also played a part in entrenching the marginalisation of the African farmer. For instance, environmental protection served as justification for destocking. However, destocking contributed towards “equalization of immiseration”, that is, the destruction of differentiation among Africans through state led destruction of the African herd. The destocking exercise supposedly imposed to arrest soil erosion resulted in Africans losing most of their cattle (Palmer, 1977; Steele, 1982). This made all Africans including hitherto prosperous farmer so that all became equal in poverty (Ranger, 1985: 121). Speaking to 320 men who had more than 20 cattle each in Rhodesdale (Matabeleland) in June 1950, the Assistant Native Commissioner argued that “we cannot allow you to continue destroying the grazing, and land itself and water supplies”. He then declared that “by end of next year you must all have reduced your stock to 10 head ... per man” (Ranger, 1985: 121). Clearly, instead of increasing land to meet the hunger and demand for land, the state opted for destocking as if to systematically create poverty and immiseration for Africans through land politics. Through racialised policies, the colonial administration managed to destroy an existing social order which arose historically (including forms of social differentiation) and to replace it with a manufactured or engineered one. Policy created conditions that would make African farmers fail as producers to authenticate the stereotype that they were poor producers who used unrewarding methods (Arrighi, 1966; Kramer, 1997). This would then continue to justify the importance of availing limited land to Africans who needed demonstrators to mentor them and stir them away from “imprudent and inefficient methods” of farming (Ranger 1985: 77).

3.5.3 Independence and the land question: inclusion deferred, privileges protected and land discourse technicised

“The most acute and difficult question confronting the first ... Government ... of Zimbabwe, whatever its ideological hue, will be that of land bedevilled by its past use as a political and

economic weapon by whites ... the problem will not be an easy one to resolve” (Palmer 1977: 246).

At independence in 1980, land ownership in Zimbabwe was heavily skewed in favour of white farmers (Moyo, 2000). The average white owned farm was about 2,000 hectares in size while a peasant household accessed about two acres of land for crop production in what now became known as communal areas (formerly the tribal trust lands) (Cheater, 1990). About 4,500 white farmers dominated commercial farming and monopolised water rights while close to 6.5 million blacks cultivated dry infertile soils in communal areas (Herbst, 1989; Hoogeveen and Kinsey, 2001). Such an anomaly, national leader Joshua Nkomo argued, was “morally unacceptable, economically unjustifiable and politically untenable” (Palmer, 1990: 176). This section shows how political ideas affected the resolution of post-colonial land issues. It pays attention to the effects of the Lancaster House Constitution (LHC) and the relationship between the post-colonial state and white farmers with reference to the land question.

The Zimbabwe government attempted to address the land question through redistributive land reforms framed in terms of resettlement schemes. Resettlement schemes were envisaged as having the potential to assist in reducing poverty, increasing productivity and bringing about “development of human resources” (Jacobs, 1991; Kinsey, 2004). The first phase (1980-1985) adopted an accelerated resettlement approach” (with minimal post-settlement support) focused on resettling land hungry people, internally displaced persons, refugees and ex-combatants among other poor people affected by the war. This was necessary because of hundreds of thousands who had moved to town during the rural-based guerrilla war, had fled the country (for instance to Mozambique) as refugees, or had been herded into so-called protected villages during the war (Palmer, 1990: 166). The economic significance of land, though not denied, was subsumed under the political necessities arising from the Second *Chimurenga*. Therefore, the focus was on availing land to those who desperately needed it on humanitarian grounds and not to those who had resources to use it productively.

In 1980, the government targeted resettling 18,000 households, then increased that figure to 54,000 in 1982 before changing it to 162,000 households two years later. These ambitious targets were

not met hence the country witnessed sporadic illegal land occupations by the land hungry during the 1980s and into the 1990s (Moyo, 2011). Resettlements were constructed discursively by the state as “self-contained islands of modernisation” (Drinkwater, 1991), distinct and separate from the ‘backward’ communal areas” (Chaumba et al 2003: 3). As such, the government desisted from placing resettlements under chiefs whose traditional administrative systems were generally considered conservative and anti-development. In 1983, a lead agency for rural development in Zimbabwe reported, according to Chaumba et al. (2003: 4), that “[t]he resettlement process ... fights against attempts at reversion back to traditional methods of agriculture”.

Tradition, as with the colonial government, was constructed as backward, anti-modernisation and retrogressive in post-colonial Zimbabwe. It was envisaged that, for progress and development to be realised, tradition – treated as static and unchanging – had to make way for modernity. This was a typical endorsement of modernisation theoretical views. For modernisation theorists, modernisation is incompatible with tradition. Because of this, tradition and not colonial land politics (as discussed earlier) were depicted as a major cause of poor African agricultural production. Problems within African agricultural production were, therefore, imagined as endogenous, caused by inherent weaknesses within traditional cultural ideas and practices.

The second phase of land redistribution in Zimbabwe followed between 1986 and 1999. The initial part of this phase where made difficult by the economic structural adjustment programme (ESAP) implemented in the early 1990s while the later part faced challenges from donor fatigue among other factors. The state, according to Moyo (2011), managed to acquire some land through expropriation and market mechanisms, but did not transfer enough to address growing land hunger. By 1989, 52,000 households had been resettled and the figure increased to 71,000 by 1996 (Moyo, 2000). As well, from the mid-1980s to the 1990s, Zimbabwe’s resettlement policy shifted towards a prioritisation of land-seekers with the potential of being highly productive farmers (Moyo et al., 2000: 181). This shift meant that the government had moved towards giving land to those who already had resources that would enable them to produce competently. As such, land reform had assumed a “productionist perspective” as it moved to a neoliberal position no doubt influenced by structural adjustment (Moyo, 2000: 188).

The rise of neo-liberal ideas during the implementation of the second phase dictated that the Zimbabwean state, as with states globally, was expected to reduce its involvement to allow land restructuring to be led by market forces. These pro-market discourse gained prominence in the early 1990s and were imposed on poor African countries, including Zimbabwe, by international finance institutions. The retreat of the state from mainstream economic activities was thought to be the panacea to poverty and related rural agitation, persistent landlessness and poor productivity (and other economic woes) in most developing countries (Borras, 2006: 99). Contrary to earlier views that smallholder farms could be more productive than large-scale farms, neo-liberalism argued, that if reformed, large farms could even be more efficient and productive since they allowed for mechanisation and the attainment of economies of scale (Borras, 2006:100). Therefore, only those large farms which proved to be economically inefficient and underproductive were supposed to be subjected to land reforms. Neo-liberalism was far from being pro poor and hence it was deeply inappropriate for responding to colonial land legacy inherited by the Zimbabwean government in 1980.

The FTLRP of 2000 constituted in effect the third phase of land reform in Zimbabwe. It managed to transfer more land within a few months than the two previous phases combined. However, the negative effects of land invasions, looting and other forms of violence (as already discussed) tended to mar it. That notwithstanding, many who were land hungry accessed land and these included poor urban dwellers, the unemployed and some former farm workers who joined the land invasions (Moyo, 2011: 496).

3.5.3.1 Reasons why land reforms did not meet intended targets

Two outstanding reasons why intended land reforms targets could not be realised are readily apparent. The first is that the government was constrained during the 1980s by the provisions of the Lancaster House Constitution (LHC) of 1979 and by structural adjustment – discussed above – throughout the 1990s. The second was that the government was constrained by the need to keep white farmers producing to feed the country at a time when communal agriculture, which had been decimated by war and colonial policies, was being resuscitated. Additionally, White commercial farmers were able to position themselves discursively vis-à-vis the Zimbabwean state as

fundamental to Zimbabwe's reputation as the bread-basket of southern Africa, and thus as absolutely indispensable to the agrarian and national economy.

First, in terms of the LHC, the mainstream view is that land reforms were largely hindered by unfavourable provisions within it (Lahiff, 2003). The LHC stipulated that land reform had to take place on a 'willing buyer, willing seller' basis, with the British providing the necessary funds (Mamdani, 2008). The land for redistribution had to be bought with hard currency, and at market value from a willing seller (Jacobs, 1991; Saruchera, 2002). This created two major problems for Zimbabwe. First, willing sellers were not available when needed and this meant that land for resettlement was not readily accessible. Second, willing sellers would choose to sell land in areas not seen as particularly suitable for resettlement by the government, thereby jeopardising the resettlement process. These constitutional provisions meant that the hands of the government "were to a large extent tied" (Palmer, 1990: 166).

More importantly, the LHC gave about 100,000 white Zimbabweans, who constituted about 2% of the population of the country, an "effective veto" power over any amendment to the constitution for the first seven years of independence by reserving twenty seats in the House of Assembly for them while about eight million blacks had only eighty seats (Herbst, 1989; Sylvester, 1991a). Using their representatives in parliament, whites successfully defended their constitutionally-guaranteed land property rights. In such instances, constitutional provisions, as observed by Hendricks (2003: 1) in relation to South Africa, entrench "material inequality ... through the protection of private property in land" in a manner that inhibits "the possibility for the realisation of social citizenship for the formerly disenfranchised masses".

Secondly, the Zimbabwe government's priority, from the moment the country attained independence, was "to ensure that the country remains adequately fed at all times" (Bratton, 1987). This necessitated maintaining the productive capacity of commercial farmers while striving to stimulate peasant agricultural production. At that time, "white commercial farmers were producing some 90% of the country's marketed food requirements" (Palmer 1990: 167). For this reason, white commercial farmers were able to move within a few months of independence from "a close proximity with the Rhodesian Front to an alliance with the Mugabe regime" (Selby, 2006: 1). In

support of this, Palmer (1990: 170) notes that white farmers found themselves being treated as a “protected species” by a new government that wanted them to produce enough food for the country at a time when black agriculture was being rejuvenated. Capitalising on this, they strategically positioned themselves to protect white economic hegemony (Mlambo, 2014) through retaining “privileged access to land and the decision-making process” (Selby, 2006: 1). This also provided them with the opportunity to work towards slowing down “the process of resettlement” (Palmer, 1990: 170), which they continued to do in the 1990s. Under structural adjustment in the 1990s, commercial farmers branched into high foreign-earning sectors such as flowers and citrus, further entrenching their self-image as the undisputed (and every-lasting) backbone of Zimbabwean agriculture.

Unsurprisingly, commercial farmers who were producing highly in the 1980s (de Villiers, 2003; Pulosof, 2012) argued that “Mugabe’s was the best government for farmers that this country has seen” (Palmer, 1990: 171). Concomitantly, their bargaining power increased. They argued against post-colonial political currents at the time that “any serious land reform would undermine white confidence ... and lead to a white urban exodus” (Palmer, 1990: 178). This position, Kinder and Sears (1981: 415) argue, exhibited “signs of white resistance to change” which on the one hand exploited constitutional protection (de Villiers, 2003) and on the other, the government’s hesitancy to tamper with the farmers’ productivity which formed the backbone of the national economy (Mlambo, 2014). Their indispensability at the time cushioned them from land loss worries. In concurrence, the government largely focused on redistributing abandoned or under-utilised land (de Villiers, 2003). Showing his hesitancy towards vigorously tackling the land question, Mugabe shifted from arguing for “a revolutionary land reform” entailing distributing “land without inhibitions” to saying that “land acquisition should not be vindictive, nor should it be a wanton land grabbing exercise” (Palmer 1990:176).

A post-independence boom in communal agricultural production in the early 1980s also helped to cement the unholy alliance between government and commercial farmers, as it implied that vigorous government attention to increasing production through restructuring within the confines of communal spaces would make redistribution and resettlement absolutely unnecessary. As in

colonial times, it seems that marginal spaces continued to be touted as the best for black farmers. Such efforts not only undermined the reform of the inherited dual agricultural pattern in Zimbabwe, but social transformation as a whole. Though the reorganisation of communal areas to enhance production became a key pillar of land reform for the Zimbabwean government, many doubts were expressed with regard to the factual basis of claims about the post-1980 peasant agricultural boom. At the same time, the pro-poor resettlement programme was being questioned on the grounds that “the beneficiaries of the land reform programme were the least productive farmers in the country” therefore “undeserving of the land they had been given” (Kinsey, 1999: 174). Such views contributed towards a (already-mentioned) shift in the early 1990s towards resettling potential entrepreneurial farmers. Again, this claim about agricultural deficiencies in the resettlement areas of the 1980s (and 1990s) was also subject to criticism.

In the late 1990s, the government began to feel increased pressure from the land hungry and responded by “toying with radical policy ideas ... such as expropriating white commercial farmland ... and paying the farmers in local currency” (Palmer 1990: 178). At the same time, it questioned the continued ownership of land by absentee landlords (Adams and Howell, 2001) with some suggestions being that only those absentee landlords who fully utilised their land would retain ownership (Palmer 1990: 178). To demonstrate a measure of seriousness, the government designated a significant number of commercial farms in the later 1990s for acquisition (Raftopoulos and Compagnon, 2003; Willems, 2004). However, these designations were challenged in court and defeated by the owners of the farms on several occasions. In some quarters, farm designation was perceived as a mere political gimmick by ZANU-PF leaders to retain political power through enlisting the support of landless and land-short rural people (Masilela and Rankin, 1998). That the government was prepared to be taken to court and accept losing many legal cases has been used as evidence that it was merely politicking. However, the land hungry continued to be restless as seen in the many localised land invasions across the countryside. The land occupations in the year 2000 on a coordinated and national scale were to dramatically shift the politics of agrarian spaces in the years to come.

3.6 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, it is clear that as a collective, Zimbabweans have failed to successfully implement land reforms. They lacked a shared vision for the country to the extent that decision-makers and privileged groups trivialised extending social justice to the marginalised. Although many embraced and revered the politics of reconciliation as an idea, they did not uphold the realities that went with implementation (De Waal, 1990). Many did not appreciate that social stability, as argued by Kymlicka (1994) in a democracy (which is what Zimbabwe intended to be, following the attainment of majority rule), grows out of both the structural provision of justice and the attitudes of individuals and groups within it. In support of this, Moyo and Yeros (2009:1) argue that in countries such as Zimbabwe, “the issue of democracy is intrinsic to both the agrarian and the national questions” and “one issue can only be enhanced by the other’s advance”. Therefore, inclusion, belonging and ownership of (or at least proper access to) land and natural resources at community level are crucial for agrarian justice (Hartsock, 1983). The overbearing emphasis on private land rights and market-led land reform and the unwillingness to fully address the fraught legacy of communal areas in post-colonial Zimbabwe (Kanyinga and Katumanga, 2003) set the stage for the nation-wide land occupations from the year 2000.

The chapter has revealed that people’s experiences and struggles draw from the context within which they live, and are shaped by their history and culture. Therefore, their struggles are best understood through paying detailed attention to their temporal and spatial context, such that localities are seen as producing in as much as they are produced by contestations (Moore, 1998). This then exposes the link between the “cultural politics of place” and a people’s “identity” and history (Moore, 1998: 347) and their struggles for space and material resources. Within spaces, meanings that shape struggles are produced and tend to vary across localities. However, local realities should not be regarded as unique and sealed off from the rest of the world. For instance, the Zimbabwean “land question” is a local problem that is intricately linked to global processes. Therefore, the factors that shape it are both local and global. Local processes, therefore, are part of wider global processes but this does not necessarily mean that they lose their uniqueness and specificities of place. For instance, responses to colonial domination were a universal occurrence

across colonised Africa; however different territories and sub-places had their own unique and intricate responses that set them apart from other places (Lan, 1985; Ranger).

Livelihood strategies which are intricately related to place also shape social relations and influence responses to inclusion, exclusion and domination (Ranger, 1985). Deprived of land, historically a key source of livelihoods for agrarian societies across Zimbabwe, the rural poor had to resort to alternative livelihood strategies or take the law into their own hands, as they did during the land occupations. Although there is a limit to how autonomous the weak can be from dominant power, that they retain agency is a paramount point. Domination and contestations are simultaneous and intertwined processes, as will be seen in the case of Mushandike.

CHAPTER 4: WATER, SOCIAL RELATIONS AND SMALLHOLDER IRRIGATION IN ZIMBABWE

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to throw light on how intra- and inter-community as well as state-community relations play out with particular reference to the evolution of smallholder irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe. It traces how ideas, practices and relations are carved out at different times with regard to water politics broadly speaking and smallholder irrigation schemes more specifically. The chapter shows how the state, both the colonial and post-colonial ones, sought to achieve their own agendas in rolling out water intervention programmes which are supposedly poised to benefit recipient communities. The state became an arena within which the interests of various social groups were pursued but, in the end, to the advantage of those with more capital who were better represented politically and could sway policy creation and implementation in their favour. This is the historical and social foundation upon which contemporary irrigation and water politics across the country in general and at Mushandike in particular are rooted.

The chapter begins with a discussion on global views on water focused mainly on accessibility. This is followed by an analysis of global and regional views on smallholder irrigation schemes and how they shape Zimbabwean debates on water and smallholder irrigation. In so doing, I highlight the connectedness of the Zimbabwean debate to global and regional discourses. The chapter then cascades into the intricacies of smallholder irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe before and after independence, stopping just before the commencement of the FTLRP. The period after the FTLRP, as the contemporary era, is discussed later within the empirical chapters. Taking a step back into the past to historicise water politics allows the drawing of lessons from history that help in understanding and explaining contemporary smallholder irrigation scheme politics. With respect to inter- and intra-community relations, the chapter pays attention to nuanced local relations which characterise water issues. This allows for an interrogation of how social identities tend to be a vital resource deployed to open or close entry into socio-spatial and economic realms during contestations.

To achieve all this, the chapter examines the evolution of smallholder irrigation schemes from their humble and uninterrupted conception, through subtle and controlled state entry, and then to the degenerative banal era of policy impositions transitioning into the post-colonial era of sophisticated state control. In this context, the chapter shows the influence of power in shaping interactions and negotiations, as well as the production of knowledge, discourse and meaning (Knorr-Cetina and Mulkay, 1983; Arce and Long, 1992; Long, 1996). The chapter ends with a conclusion that points to the intimate connections between past, present and future.

4.2 Dominant global water views and irrigation schemes

Water is an invaluable and finite resource that maintains life, is central to the stimulation and sustenance of economic growth and development and is vital for sustaining the environment, ecosystems and life in general (Walker, 2006; Rasul and Chowdhury, 2010). Studies indicate that global distribution, access and ownership of water is skewed and unequal because of the social competition surrounding it. For instance, within countries, the rich and the poor, households and industries, economic sectors (such as agriculture, industry and mining) and areas (rural and urban) all compete for water. As well, powerful countries (and global institutions and donor agencies) have in the recent past articulated ideas about water which are imposed on weaker countries, such that the water ideas and policies of these weaker countries are at least partly shaped by dominant global forces (Greenhill and Wekiya, 2004; Nastar, 2014). Consistent with these views, the Prince of Orange of The Netherlands suggests that “[t]he world water crisis is a crisis of governance – not one of scarcity” (Mollinga, 2008:9). Overall, water access, usage, ownership, control and distribution have historically been contentious issues.

Walker (2006) suggests that, since the 1980s, a number of water ideas in fact have been competing for global dominance, influencing thinking and shaping policy. One view is that water is a valuable scarce economic good that should be priced accordingly, mindful though that all people should have a right to a minimum amount of water to fulfil their basic needs (Rogers et al., 2002; Walker, 2006). This suggests that the water sector should manage water in a manner that promotes successful generation of its own funding (Hassan, 2011), and it would entail reducing reliance on national governments for funding and other forms of assistance. The water sector should therefore

create markets for water that reflect its “true” value as a scarce economic good (Rogers et al., 2002; Walker, 2006; Hassan, 2011).

The proponents of this idea do not regard water as a public good to be freely accessed as they lobby for the market to determine the pricing of water, reflective of its scarcity. Cognisant that water is indispensable and some amongst the poor might not afford it at market prices, this view also campaigns for government water subsidies for the poor to meet their basic water needs (Foster, Gómez-Lobo and Halpern, 2000; Walker et al., 2000, 2006). In so doing, it maintains the construction of water as an economic good and not a basic human right. Mehta (2014) suggests, as a second idea about water, that accepting water as a human right implies that it is a global public good and not a narrowly defined economic commodity. If treated as a right, governments would then be obliged to ensure that all citizens access water sufficient for their basic needs regardless of the cost (Walker, 2006). This though is not tenable in the contemporary (neo-liberal) world in which the state is not expected to play a major role as a provider of water resources. These ideas compete for dominance and influence policy and implementation. Ideas about water shape how it is made accessible, paid for and used and these factors impact social relations that develop within communities of users. The centrality of water to irrigation schemes made it imperative for this chapter to begin with a short and precise discussion on dominant water related ideas that shape social relations. These macro-ideas affect social relations at the local-level through activities of governments, NGOs, politics and other processes.

4.2.1 The importance of smallholder irrigation schemes

Smallholder irrigation schemes, wherever they are established, are thought to have the potential of provoking economic and social developmental and transformation (Mollinga, 2008). Similarly, they allow for the development of mutual social relationships (Ostrom and Gardner, 1993) through multi-stakeholder participation in water usage and governance and utilisation of other shared resources by irrigators and surrounding communities (van Koppen et al., 2009).

Academic literature suggests that smallholder schemes have significant potential for impacting positively on the agrarian economy, food security and rural employment (Inocencio et al., 2007; Turrall et al., 2010). This finds support for example in a study by Nugusse (2013) who claims that

small-scale irrigation schemes in Africa and Asia have positive effects on participants' consumption levels and this enabled them to no longer depend upon food handouts from government. Further, the study showed improved food security, income and wealth accumulation, employment levels and rural livelihood diversification in countries like Gambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, Nigeria, China, Vietnam and India.

Taking these positives into consideration, Mollinga (2008) suggests that the development of irrigation schemes is a kind of positive social engineering, as opposed to it being a manipulative stirring of change within societies through the use of methods, approaches or models that worked elsewhere. Social engineering in this context does not refer to using blueprints in a cut and paste manner or using objective scientific-technicist principles only in the construction of water infrastructure (Dessalegn and Merrey, 2014; Mollinga et al., 2007). Instead, social engineering here suggests intricate application of experiences garnered elsewhere to make them work appropriately in another physical, social, economic and political environment to change societies, while recognising and exploiting societies' existing knowledge, social relations and resources (Mollinga, 2008). Thus, social engineering implies the possibility of facilitating social change, cautious though of the dangers of using simplified prescriptions.

More importantly, with regards smallholder irrigation schemes, social engineering does not overlook inherent inclusion and exclusion around resource use and other social relations in these schemes and immediate surroundings (van Koppen et al., 2009). Further, it does not necessarily ignore the negative implications of rapid or badly managed social change, particularly its potential for triggering conflict as members of societies fail or struggle to develop appropriate social relations, institutional arrangements and other forms of governance consistent with a fast changing world (Merlet et al., 2014:3).

4.2.2 The importance of smallholder irrigation schemes in sub-Saharan African

In sub-Saharan Africa, a significant part of national economies and millions of people depend on agriculture. Therefore, improving agricultural production is widely regarded as an important strategy for assuaging the ramifications of poverty in the region, as enhanced agriculture is expected to lead to improved food security as well as reduced hunger and vulnerability for poor

agrarian societies (Owens et al., 2001). Smallholder irrigation schemes are seen as a vital contributor towards improved agricultural production especially for poor households in peripheral land-short arid areas of the region. These schemes also potentially bolster availability of water for multiple purposes for both irrigation and non-irrigation scheme members, and also contribute to employment creation and local level food availability (Rukuni, 1988; Mudima, 2002; Owens et al., 2001; Ferguson and Mulwafu, 2004).

The need for smallholder irrigation schemes among the marginalised is given impetus by the recognition that land pressure continues to rise in sub-Saharan Africa due to population growth while climate change continues to affect rainfall and temperature patterns. Hence, irrigation schemes are particularly important in countries where large rural populations face deepening water poverty due to poor annual rainfall and in the face of poor water harvesting competences. Water poverty involves the difficulties encountered by people in acquiring access to water for production and consumption that is both adequate and reliable (Shah and van Koppen, 2006: 3413). In this light, Mombeshora (2003) argues that livelihoods of rural dryland farmers in semi-arid regions can be improved by the provision of irrigation water.

4.2.3 Interrogating the need to for enhancing smallholder irrigation schemes

In recent times, given claims about their notable positive impacts or at least potential benefits, global debates on smallholder irrigation schemes have largely been focused on the aspect of viability. The stress has been on seeking innovative ways to improve the performance of smallholder schemes widely considered to be performing below expectations the world over (Manzungu and Machiridza, 2005). Of late, irrigation management transfers (IMTs) – as leading to an alternative form of scheme governance – have been touted as the illusive panacea to poor smallholder scheme performance. IMTs entail transferring management and in some rare cases ownership of irrigation systems either in full or partially from government to Water Users Associations (WUAs) or other nongovernmental agencies, or directly to farmers (Shah et al., 2002). This then enables governments to withdraw or reduce direct participation in the operation, maintenance and management of such schemes. In many countries, governments have been participating, one way or the other, in running smallholder irrigation schemes and are largely blamed for their poor performances. Governments are accused of lacking the necessary capability

to successfully run irrigation schemes and thus the schemes have not lived up to their design potential and “have failed to generate returns commensurate with expectations” (Shah et al., 2002: 1).

IMTs are widely regarded as a way of decentralising functions in a manner that would reduce public expenditure, and instil a sense of local ownership and responsibility in farmers (Ferguson and Mulwafu, 2004). Governments would save money or simply reduce expenses once management is transferred to farmers, and management transfer would motivate farmers to improve scheme performance because of increased responsibility. However, there also exists the view that management transfers should be accompanied by appropriate capacity building and the creation of an enabling environment for the desired results to be realised. Shah et al. (2002: 2) argue that, if this is not done, IMTs would simply succeed in getting “irrigation off the back of governments” but not in improving the lives of irrigators and their immediate communities. For Ferguson and Mulwafu (2004), IMTs would only be regarded as successful if they help improve the life situation of a significant number of scheme members through improving agricultural output.

Further, land and water reforms and increased farmer support would enhance the success of smallholder irrigation if they accompanied IMTs. Standard plots under irrigation are considered too small for full-time commercial production. For instance, in countries such as Niger, Senegal and South Africa, plot sizes range from 0.1 to 1.1 hectares while, in Zimbabwe, the range is from 0.3 to 1.55 hectares in ten smallholder schemes studied across the country (FAO, 2000). Empirical findings indicate that, at Mushandike, a plot holder has access to 1.5 hectares of irrigated land which is equally as small. As a result, farmers end up supplementing their earnings through multiple economic activities, a practice Chambers (1983) calls the “fox” strategy. Besides the issue of land size, sufficient accessible water is equally important. Manzungu (2001) argues that land is best utilised productively where adequate irrigation water is accessible and of course affordable. He emphasises that, beyond enhancing crop yields, water availability eases production related uncertainty. Irrigators therefore need secure access to water for them to organise and implement

their plans successfully. In fact, with reliable adequate water, the challenge of plot sizes could be mitigated.

In addition to enhancing the performance of small-scale irrigation schemes through access to natural resources (land and water), the human element is also regarded as an important factor that impacts upon smallholder irrigation scheme viability. For instance, land reforms that take gender issues into account are viewed as potentially capable of improving smallholder scheme productivity in cases where women participate directly in production. Gender sensitivity has to address both infrastructural and ownership issues to avert such setbacks as the setting up of irrigation methods that are not easy for women to use. As well, IMTs as suggested by Ferguson and Mulwafu (2004), should be accompanied by gender-sensitive tenurial reforms. This gender sensitivity would entail that transfer of landownership recognises, legitimises and prioritises women as rightful landowners. In matrilineal societies, as in some parts of Malawi for example, gender sensitivity could inform irrigation policy and/or practice to protect women's rights to land and water during processes of privatising customary land by ensuring that women's land and water assets are not transferred to men (Ferguson and Mulwafu, 2004). The enhancement or safeguarding of smallholder irrigation scheme performance should therefore protect women's concerns and particularly within patriarchal societies.

Finally, farmer support is considered vital for successful IMTs. Support should be extended to poor farmers who require assistance with accessing inputs, credit and markets as well as improving infrastructure. However, such assistance should be context specific, formulated by close consultation between farmers and support organisations to enhance appropriateness (Kebbeh et al., 2003). Generic and homogenising top-down interventions tend to be inappropriate if not outright irrelevant. For instance, in Nigeria, extension officers identified high input costs as a primary constraint affecting performance of smallholder irrigation schemes while smallholder farmers themselves attributed the decline in yields to the termination of government support (as part of structural adjustment policies) which reduced input subsidies (Kebbeh et al., 2003). In the case of Malawi, a country focused heavily on improving smallholder irrigation, a shift in the recognition of the importance of government support once led to a decline in crop production. Ferguson and

Mulwafu (2004) therefore note that, at some point, the government viewed availing government support to farmers negatively and opted to push for a rapid phase-out of its support to the sixteen smallholder irrigation schemes in existence then. The result was a significant decline in crop output across the schemes.

This section has highlighted wider global views on water broadly and smallholder irrigation schemes more specifically. With reference to IMTs, it has framed governance issues as a vital core determinant of scheme productivity. Poorly-informed decision-making from government also came out as potentially having negative implications on performance and the smooth running of schemes. The section reveals that although appropriate water provision remains a core factor in the promotion of irrigation viability, other issues such as gender sensitivity together with support mechanisms also have fundamental implications on productivity.

4.3 Narrowing focus: water law and exclusion in Zimbabwe

Access and ownership of water in colonial Zimbabwe was skewed in favour of those who had land titles. The Water Act of 1927 and 1976 linked water rights to land titles (Manzungu, 2001). Similarly, water and irrigation laws that were passed in 1913, 1920 and 1922 by the Legislative Council in Southern Rhodesia allowed land owners (who in this case were white settler farmers) to allocate themselves as much water as they wanted. The majority of black farmers who did not have and could not qualify for land title, did not and could not have water rights, according to Derman (2007). Actually, while white commercial farmers received individual water rights, black communal area farmers could not apply for water rights by virtue of not having land rights, and could only apply for water rights as a community or through government officials as provided for by the law (Derman et al., 2000).

Consequently, the majority of African farmers did not have water rights whether as individuals or as a collective. Individual water rights that white holders of land titles applied for were granted in perpetuity, that is, they were allocated for life and could only be revoked under special circumstances (Jaspers, 2001). Thus, the law did not only legitimise water grabbing but also legalised and protected “enclosure of the [water] commons” (Gasteyer et al., 2012: 451). Water grabbing, as Franco and Kay (2012) put it, refers to a situation in which powerful actors

(individuals, groups or governments) assume responsibility of water resources to their own advantage and at the expense of local communities also depending on the water resources. The Water Act in colonial Zimbabwe therefore legalised exclusion by allowing for the privatisation of a resource ordinarily supposed to entail open access because of its centrality to human and animal survival. Unrepentant on advancing and protecting white land owners' privileged access to water, the colonial state put it place, in the 1940s, significant irrigation subsidies which led to the construction of several dams across the country, mostly in white-owned areas for farmers, to support irrigation (Derman, et al., 2007). Following from this, much of the country's water was practically transferred to white ownership to support the scaling up of white-owned irrigation operations and commercial farming.

Skewed water ownership in Zimbabwe remained unchanged until 1998 when legislative reforms were instituted leading to the replacement of the 1976 Water Act with a new Water Act of 1998. In 1998, prior to the enactment of the new law, about 85% of the country's agricultural water was under the control of about 4,500 commercial farmers (Manzungu, 2001:100) as commercial agriculture consumed 75% of all water while 20% was consumed by urban, industrial and mining sectors with a mere 5% going to communal lands (Derman and Hellum, 2002: 34). Therefore, access to agricultural water is still relatively a new phenomenon for the country's black farmers. At the same time, most of those in communal areas remain as excluded as they were in 1927, if not worse, due to climate change which is causing rivers and natural water reservoirs to increasingly dry up much earlier than usual and ground water continues to recede. All this deepens the vulnerability of the communal farmer.

4.3.1 Interrogation water and land rights violations in Zimbabwe

The poor in Zimbabwe's communal areas continue to experience grave land and water marginalisation. Many who were allocated land outside these spaces (through land redistribution) have varied experiences but millions who were not so fortunate and remain in communal areas are still excluded from these invaluable natural resources. Subsequently, property rights of those with access to land and water in areas neighbouring communal areas are weakened by this denial because the poor encroach into territories with access due to need. Therefore, where

marginalisation is high, ownership rights are weak because the marginalised violate the rights of those who are trying to proclaim and maintain their own rights (Twining, 2009).

Gore (1993) stresses that, where the marginalised lack options, 'unruly' social practices tend to challenge legal rules of resource entitlement. The unruly behaviour is a result of prevailing power relations emanating from competing sets of rules that influence actual entitlement (Leach et al., 1997). Thus, property rights and rules easily become contested when many communities are deprived while a few are privileged (Cousins, 1997), or when rules of law are bended to serve a selected few. In the context of exclusion and dire need, formal rules governing ownership and utilisation of resources tend to become superseded by locally constructed informal codes of behaviour and this may cause conflict between 'owners' and 'intruders'. Sometimes, this results in contestations and negotiations that may lead to the production of socially accepted moral rules of engagement not enshrined in law but governing local interaction (Cousins, 1997). In this way, reduction of exclusion from important resources through land and water reforms would help build societies that observe property rights.

Failure by the post-colonial state in the African context to redress colonially produced marginalisation through redistributive reforms not only prejudices the poor but gives them the impression that it protects privileged property rights (Ahluwalia and Nursery-Bray, 1997; Peters et al., 2002; Hellum and Derman, 2004). Laws are very clear with regards to the protection of property rights but not equally explicit in addressing marginalisation which was created through systematic expropriation. Property rights therefore appear elitist and biased. The African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights, Article 14, states that the right to property "may only be encroached upon in the interest of public need or in the general interest of the community and in accordance with the provisions of appropriate laws" (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981). Such pronouncements, though legal, complicate the pursuit of social justice in the post-colonial context where states fail to resolve this historical problem.

Although laws are legal, they can be unjust, especially where they protect property ownership by a few where redistribution is supposed to be prioritised. Supporting this view, the then newly appointed Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs of Zimbabwe, Patrick Chinamasa,

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once argued that “the rule of law that is based on unjust laws is founded on quick sand and will not last” (*Herald*, 10 July 2000 cited in Ik Dahl et al., 2007). No wonder then that communities with privileged access to land and water experience intrusions from the marginalised. The property rights of these communities are violated by those whose rights were never addressed from the onset. This is one of the many reasons why land and water politics continues to bedevil Zimbabwe in particular and post-colonial African communities at large.

4.3.2 Righting past wrongs: water reforms in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe did not prioritise water reforms at independence in 1980 as it did with land. As indicated above, the first comprehensive reforms only came in 1998 with the enactment of the post-independence Water Act. Before then, instead of instituting significant legislative reforms (Manzungu, 2001; Kujinga and Manzungu, 2004), the government of Zimbabwe had confined itself to availing water to different communities through borehole sinking and dam construction; while the 1976 Water Act prevailed. The promulgation of the Water Act No. 31/98 was followed by that of the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) Act No. 11/98 (Hellum, 2001; Musingafi and Chadamoyo, 2013). These policy changes were supposedly motivated by the need to achieve an equitable distribution of water as the majority of the rural population especially in the communal lands continued to have insufficient access to water resources (Jaspers, 2001).

The 1976 Water Act was inflexible (Wekwete, 1989; Gumbo, 2006) and made it impossible to accommodate prospective water users who were applying, as nearly all available agricultural water had been committed already (Makurira and Mugumo, 2003). The new legislation removed the concept of private ownership of water as well as the ‘first come first serve’ principle which were enshrined in the Water Act of 1976; and it replaced them with water permits granted on a 20-year basis (Jaspers, 2001; Walker, 2006). Under the new policy, water was categorised as a critical national resource that could not be owned by individuals but only by the state with powers for water allocation invested in the President (Derman et al., 2007). The state could then supposedly allow all Zimbabweans equal access to water, and this access would be managed by stakeholders at various institutional levels (Derman and Hellum, 2002; Walker, 2006). Those intending to use

water for commercial purposes would have to obtain permits allowing them to do so, and such permits would be valid for a specific period of time subject to renewal after a review.

The Minister of Rural Resources and Water Development was given the mandate to establish catchment councils, in consultation with Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA), across the country's seven catchment areas to manage water (Jaspers, 2001; Gumbo, 2006; Derman et al., 2007). The idea behind setting up catchment councils, and sub-catchment councils (which are at a lower level and closer to communities), was to decentralise water management in order to improve its democratisation through multiple stakeholder participation. Sub-catchment councils are mandated with issuing permits to applicants and overseeing local level management and preservation of water and its sustainable use. The creation of stakeholder institutions in the water sector marked a significant shift away from centralised natural resources management regimes of “the colonial period and the immediate post-independence years” (Kujinga and Manzungu, 2004: 68) towards a more decentralised and democratised system (Gumbo, 2006). Indeed, for the first time since 1890 when the country was colonised, communal, resettlement and small-scale commercial farmers became stakeholders in the water sector. With water now belonging to the Zimbabwean state, the permits that individuals hold allow them to use water commercially (while there is no requirement for anyone to seek permission to use water for domestic purposes).

4.4 Revisiting the importance of irrigation in Zimbabwe

Many parts of Zimbabwe are arid or semi-arid and prone to recurrent droughts and subsequent crop failure, and irrigation development is recognised by the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) as one vital and sustainable drought and famine mitigation measure and a mechanism for promoting food sufficiency (Meinzen-Dick et al., 1993; Nhundu et al., 2010; Chazovachii, 2012; Jacobs et al., 2013; Moyo et al., 2017). As such, the government, working with other stakeholders such as the private sector and the donor community, has since 1980 significantly contributed towards irrigation development (Rukuni et al., 1984).

The establishment of smallholder irrigating schemes in Zimbabwe was and is still mitigatory. It is aimed at fighting rural poverty, improving agricultural production and diversifying rural livelihoods through water provision across all seasons (Dzingirai, 2003; Jacobs et al., 2013).

Furthermore, accessing good irrigation not only helps farmers to increase production and income, but to diversify livelihoods strategies to subsequently reduce vulnerability associated with the seasonality of production (Meinzen-Dick et al., 1993; Ruigu and Rukuni, 1990; FAO, 1997a; Mudima, 2002). Smallholder irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe supposedly enable scheme members to achieve food sufficiency (FAO, 1997a) and they become an easily reachable source of food and employment for surrounding communities (Dube, 2016). They also necessitate and promote the development of rural infrastructure (FAO, 1997b). Neighbouring non-irrigating communities reciprocally function as a ready market for irrigation producers (Nhundu et al., 2010). In many parts of the country, smallholder irrigation has improved incomes of irrigators making them better earners than non-irrigators (Chazovachii, 2012). As a result, smallholder irrigation sometimes proves to be a worthwhile investment in the development of marginal areas (Nhundu and Mushunje, 2012) especially if constraints highlighted below are addressed.

4.4.1 An insight into smallholder irrigation performance in Zimbabwe

Questions regarding the socio-economic significance of smallholder irrigation attract both negative and positive views. Negative views border around issues of viability while the positive emphasise contribution towards food security, employment creation and so on and suggest possibilities of good performances where constraints are addressed.

In Zimbabwe, the question of the viability of smallholder irrigation schemes gained prominence just four years after independence, at a time when many post-independence smallholder irrigation schemes were in their formative stages and many others, including Mushandike, had not yet been established. Mupawose (1984) suggested that smallholder irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe were not economically viable because a significant number of them had already either failed or were under-utilised. However, he did not perceive them as inherently unviable but attributed their poor performance to such resolvable factors as poor management, limited farmer support in a context of poverty and farmer inexperience with regards irrigation.

Interestingly, Mupawose (1984) recommended a reduction in irrigation farmer support indicating that smallholder irrigation development was too expensive for the country. Instead, he advocated for the introduction of some form of cost recovery measures to arrest increasing losses through

smallholder irrigation schemes. This negativity was echoed nearly a decade later not only at the national but regional level. In a report on smallholder irrigation, the Southern African Development Community (SADC, 1992) argued that, in the main, new smallholder irrigation schemes in its region were so uneconomic that they would fail to breakeven. In a further indictment, the report indicated that schemes' contribution towards food security at both the national and household level was negligible.

However, evidence suggesting that some well-run and water sufficient smallholder irrigation schemes performed remarkably well also emerged. For instance, at Chatora Irrigation Scheme in Zimbabwe in the 1987-88 agricultural season, groundnuts' yields from irrigated land were recorded to be 4 tonnes per hectare compared to between 0.7 and 1 tonne from rain-fed production during the same season (Mudima, 2001: 24). Therefore, potentially, smallholder irrigation was not only a vital and sustainable drought and famine mitigation measure but an avenue through which small producers could earn a much improved income (through market sales) compared to communal producers (Nhundu et al., 2010). Evidence also shows that, given significant support, smallholder producers can become highly productive and successful farmers in Zimbabwe. Ten cases studied by FAO (2000) reflect that nearly all schemes that received infrastructural, technical and other forms of support achieved food sufficiency and sold surplus – and, with the proceeds, farmers reinvested, built houses and sent children to school.

FAO (2000) further notes that the Zimbabwe government went beyond mere enhancement of water provision with support from other stakeholders such as aid organisations and the private sector. It did so through such activities as building dams in areas where water was not readily available, or simply by giving permission to farmers to use water commercially where dams or big rivers existed. As well, it availed various forms of training to scheme members. The Department of Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services (Agritex), as the state's agricultural extension service, is acknowledged as having timeously played a major role in this regard, again supported by other relevant stakeholders. This appears to indicate awareness on the part of government of the point raised earlier, namely, that smallholder irrigation success lies not only with the provision of accessible, reliable and affordable water but with various forms of support as well.

Mudima (2001) and Rukuni (1993) are convinced that if smallholder irrigation concerns are well addressed and appropriate support availed, this sector could be vibrant. However, Meinzen-Dick et al. (1996) argue that there are numerous other challenges that affect the performance and productivity of smallholder irrigation other than water provision and material support. They argue that the performance of smallholder irrigation schemes depends on factors such as plot size, level of education of plot holders, access to markets and management structure. Adding to this list, Manzungu and Machiridza (2005) suggest that soil quality, quality of roads, availability of transport services, crop prices, market demand, knowledge and access to appropriate technology also affect performance. Many of these challenges are interrelated while many others cannot be solved by the farmer alone; hence the importance of institutional preparedness on the part of the state to step-in (Dawes, et al., 2007). FAO (1997c) also points out some generic constraints affecting smallholder irrigation across Africa. It points out that irrigation performance would significantly improve if problems such as inadequate physical infrastructure and markets and poor availability and affordability of water were addressed. FAO (1997c) further suggests that the performance of irrigation farmers is also affected by their poor resource base and small pieces of productive land which in some instances have unsecure titles.

Evidence also suggests that resources such as water (and electricity) availed to irrigation schemes have other vital uses that significantly contribute towards improving the local economy and subsequently transforming the quality of life of scheme members, besides just irrigating crops and providing electrical energy for agriculture. For instance, irrigation water can be availed for livestock, vegetable gardens, fisheries and other micro-enterprises like mineral processing and brick-making; while electricity is used for welding purposes, cold rooms and refrigerators, besides its main function of powering water pumps (Svubure and Zawe, 2010). Therefore, smallholder irrigation schemes could function as centres for rural social transformation. Ian Smith's colonial government equally shared this idea of using small rural centres as drivers of promoting development. This prompted the development of growth points before 1980, meant for Africans that were located near irrigation schemes (Nyandoro, 2012).

Smallholder irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe can be productive, life transforming for beneficiaries and could also function as hubs for rural development. That is, besides being centres for all-year-round food production and sources of fresh healthy food, smallholder irrigation schemes can act as spaces allowing for and promoting diversified livelihood strategies, including off-farm strategies.

4.4.2 Humble beginnings: autonomy and voluntarism and the beginning of smallholder irrigation schemes

Formal state-driven smallholder irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe have their roots in colonial times (Rukuni, 1988; Manzungu, 1995). Prior to their emergence, there existed “traditional” informal smallholder irrigation schemes independently, voluntarily and autonomously established by community members (Roder, 1965; Reynolds, 1969), some even taking shape well before the establishment of the colonial state. But soon after the formation of the colonial state, they began to experience significant state intrusion especially following the 1926 appointment of Emory Alvord as the government’s Agriculturalist for the Instruction of Natives (Rukuni, 1998; Manzungu and Machiridza, 2005). Alvord introduced agricultural extension both in smallholder irrigation schemes and in the then Reserve Areas. Working with agricultural demonstrators he trained, he taught what he considered to be modern techniques of irrigation, animal husbandry, soil and environmental conservation, village planning and sanitation (Duignan and Gann, 1975; Hanyani-Mlambo, 2002). Since then, the state (working with the private sector and donor community) has been pivotal in influencing the establishment and trajectory of irrigation scheme development in the country (Rukuni, 1988; Manzungu, 1995; FAO, 2000; Mombeshora, 2003).

Literature thus suggests that indigenous people irrigated their crops prior to the colonisation of the country (Widgren, 2007). But due to the abundance of rich and productive rain-fed fertile lands, irrigation development in pre-colonial Zimbabwe was rather subdued (Gwanzura 1987). However, droughts necessitated the development of smallholder irrigation schemes by communities a few years after the colonisation of the country. Between 1912 (a drought year) and 1927, a number of voluntary schemes were established by African farmers (Reynolds, 1969; Gwanzura, 1987). They helped counter the effects of drought and to guard against possible famine in the future (Rukuni, 1988).

Evidence concerning the establishment of autonomous smallholder irrigation schemes suggests that farmers gradually developed their schemes, and without pressure (for example, from the colonial state) to invest huge amounts of resources into the schemes. Farmers simply had to have an interest in irrigation with only limited resources and the capacity to organise themselves in such a manner that they pooled their labour and resources together as and when the need arose. Such schemes were not situated in the most arid and marginal spaces of the country, as they were on productive land reasonably close to a reliable water source (Rukuni, 1988). During (and before) that period, farmers enjoyed autonomous decision-making over their schemes (Manzungu and Machiridza, 2005). Therefore, in Zimbabwe, the idea of small-scale irrigation emanated outside of the state. Communally-established irrigation schemes only began to suffer formalisation, that is, to experience state intrusion between 1912 and 1920.

In 1928, any previous autonomy had practically ended, with rural farmers involved in irrigation no longer independently deciding on what crops to grow, when and how to construct furrows and so on (Rukuni, 1988). The state therefore was pivotal in crystallising and transforming the idea of small-scale irrigation into formal smallholder irrigation schemes. The first voluntary and autonomous smallholder scheme to undergo formalisation, according to Rukuni (1988), was Mutambara, which was a gravity-fed furrow irrigated smallholder irrigation scheme in Manicaland. By the mid-1990s, Mutambara remained as the oldest operational irrigation scheme in the country with a membership of 220 plot holders, and irrigating about 145 hectares of land (Manzungu, 1995).

Government intervention in irrigation in 1928 arrived in the form of technical assistance spearheaded by Emery Alvord, in 1927. That year, the government started a programme to render support to existing schemes and to assist with the development of new ones. The intention of government, according to Rukuni (1988) and Manzungu and Machiridza (2005), was partly to control black smallholder scheme operators. From that time until now, smallholder irrigators have never regained their autonomy as successive governments (including the post-colonial government) have involved themselves in a multiplicity of roles in the schemes including decision-making, management, funding, and membership selection.

4.4.3 One foot in: politicisation and control of smallholder irrigation begins with technicisation of discourse

Between 1928 and 1934, the colonial government allowed itself six years of gentle entry into the world of smallholder irrigation. It refrained from discernible direct interference with the farmers' use of irrigated land, decision-making, land ownership and crop choice, as it merely confined itself to supporting local efforts. Scheme members tended to irrigate less than two acres of land as "insurance against bad harvest ... and as a source of cash for paying poll taxes", and they also grew rain fed crops in doubling as dryland farmers (Rukuni, 1988: 2).

Emery Alvord, who was appointed for "for the instruction of natives", hovered around the irrigation schemes for the first six years, intermittently helping them with what was claimed to be modern farming ideas, as his duties included "intellectualising" African agricultural practices (Manzungu, 1995: 118). Alvord, like many members of white colonial society, viewed African agriculture as one held back by "superstition, ignorance, witchcraft and worship of the unknown" (Manzungu, 1995: 118). They, therefore, claimed to want to transform African agriculture although their knowledge of African societies was not relevant enough to bring about such change; furthermore, macro-politics of the colonial state contradicted such modernising claims (Reynolds, 1969).

In earlier years, colonial state officials had been impressed by the capacity of African farmers to produce for the market, even in competition with the emerging white commercial farmers. Evidently, the state penetrated smallholder irrigation through a discursive dualism which posited whites as modern and Africans as traditional. It constructed African irrigators as experiencing knowledge deficiencies and itself as knowledgeable, thereby justifying the state's need to manage smallholder irrigation schemes. Claiming that it could use modern knowledge and technology to commoditise African smallholder irrigation schemes, the state trampled on the supposedly traditional African agricultural knowledge opting to use oppressive methods to force the indigenous population to do as it pleased (Roder, 1965). All these activities were of course part of a broader colonial discourse which served to legitimise land dispossession in the first place.

The entry of the colonial state into the world of African irrigators therefore entailed knowledge contestations characterised by power asymmetries. In the context of colonial Zimbabwean agriculture, Alvord symbolised superior, universal knowledge as revered by the state, which in effect was colonial ‘scientific’ knowledge masquerading as universal knowledge. African irrigators were conceptualised as merely embodying local knowledge. Pitted against universal knowledge, local knowledge was viewed with askance as nothing more than myth, superstition or ignorance – it was knowledge trapped in the past unworthy of consideration for the present. Alvord’s involvement gradually led to the technicisation of the irrigation discourse and the subsequent trivialisation of local knowledge. His contempt for local knowledge is encapsulated in the following comment which refers to the work local irrigators had carried out to draw water from Umvumvumu river: “This furrow was dug privately by a group of Natives with little or no outside help and survey methods used in the establishment of the line of furrow were very crude. In fact, no instruments were used. They told me that they did it with their eyes and head” (Bolding et al., 1996: 198). Though African agriculture was marginalised through the political and repressive acts of colonialism (notably land dispossession and the establishment of Native Reserves), the colonialists ended up arguing that this marginalisation required scientific and technical solutions that only colonialists could provide.

For Alvord, it was unthinkable that irrigation work could be carried out without scientific instruments which, from his ‘universal’ culture, were indispensable for such an undertaking. Alvord’s attitude was consistent with colonial mainstream thinking which had led in the first place to his deployment for the ‘instruction of Natives’. Ignorance was regarded as an inherent characteristic of one racial group, and not the other and that justified colonialists “civilising mission” (Munro, 1998). Ascription of ignorance to Africans served the purpose of silencing and marginalising them. Jarosz (1992) argues that the disempowerment of Africans began with the colonial categorisation of them as irrational and backward. From such categorisations, the white settler population found legitimate justification for dominating and excluding Africans (Neumann, 1997). Furthermore, as Ranger (1985) argues, the state used the knowledge discourse to justify deeper penetration into the lives of Africans, to gain control over their agriculture, smallholder irrigation schemes, other livelihood strategies and their lives in general.

Knowledge or knowledge claims functioned as a mechanism with which one group could dominate, control or oppress 'the other'. These discursive claims contributed towards shaping social action and relations consistent with the social constructionist view that such claims are never interest and value free (Knorr-Cetina and Mulkay, 1983). In this case, they assisted clearly in advancing particular interests, ideas, values and beliefs, while subsequently discounting and destroying counter-knowledge (Arce and Long, 1992). While counter-knowledge amongst indigenous populations is never completely erased under colonialism, certainly the discourse of Rhodesian colonialists sought to nullify other possible ways of framing and understanding social phenomena. Furthermore, due to existing power asymmetries (conqueror vs. conquered), negotiations and contestations were unbalanced from the onset. Eventually, the ideas and worldviews of those with power became hegemonic and, through these knowledge claims and other factors, groups controlling knowledge production easily claimed higher moral authority (Gould, 1997).

4.4.4 Loss of ownership and control to the state

The colonial government's involvement with African agriculture including smallholder irrigation schemes largely helped it to gain control over the majority of the population through controlling access to and usage of land and other natural resources (Rukuni, 1988).

The LAA of 1930 and the Amended Land Apportionment Act (ALAA) of 1950 which legalised land expropriations were the major legal instruments with which it pursued this objective. In this regard, dominant colonial ideas, perceptions and attitudes informed and influenced the content of colonial policy and legislation. In turn, these ideas and attitudes were protected, perpetuated and fulfilled through policy regardless of how wrong or right they might have been. From 1936, smallholder irrigation schemes (new and old) accommodated displaced people and in the process helped reduce migration especially to urban areas. After being allocated small pieces of irrigated land in smallholder irrigation schemes, victims of displacement or expropriation were framed as having moved upward from peasant to commercial agriculture (Roder, 1965; Reynolds, 1965).

The colonial state imposed many other policy changes in irrigation schemes going way back to the early 1930s. For instance, it declared that members of irrigation schemes were to become full-time

irrigators. This meant that irrigators had to relinquish pieces of land to which they had access for dryland cultivation (Reynolds, 1969). Furthermore, they were forbidden from engaging in any and all off-farm income generating activities (Manzungu and Machiridza, 2005). These crippling moves were accompanied by an increase in water rent. For instance, water rent, which in 1932 was 5 shillings per acre, went up by 100% in 1942 to 10 shillings per acre (Manzungu 1995: 119). As a general tendency, the state saw it necessary to closely monitor the funds and resources it was committing to the construction of irrigation schemes (Mombeshora, 2003: 7).

The period between the early 1930s and the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965 was thus very tough for smallholder irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe. Several unfavourable changes were imposed, decision-making was usurped by the state and community schemes such as Mutambara were taken over by the state without compensation (Mombeshora, 2003; Manzungu, 1995). As noted above, old smallholder irrigation schemes, together with those newly established, increasingly served the purpose of advancing state interests and not those of members/beneficiaries (Reynolds, 1969). Evidently, much of agriculturally-related colonial activities and policies supported racialised domination and extraction (Munro, 1998). Members of the politically weaker race were subjected to exclusion and humiliation. For instance, smallholder irrigation scheme members, including those who started their own schemes, were undermined as owners and constructed discursively as beneficiaries (Mombeshora, 2003). In 1970, the law was brought in to reinforce exclusion. The Control of Irrigable Area Regulations was introduced in 1970 to reaffirm African loss of ownership and control of irrigated land. This piece of legislation stipulated that an African landholder had to be issued with an annually renewable permit to reside on the land, to graze livestock and to cultivate crops (Shah et al., 2002). Authorities had power to either renew or withhold permits and this gave them power to secure farmer compliance (Shah et al., 2002). Farmers found themselves with insecure, temporary land tenure on land they previously owned.

During this same period, more and more Africans lost their land (which they had continued to occupy outside the Reserves), as the implementation of the LAA of 1930 and the ALAA of 1950 gathered momentum. Africans whose land was expropriated were pushed into the Native Reserves without compensation (Nyandoro 2012: 306). Furthermore, the dryland that irrigators were forced

to relinquish in the Reserves was allocated to some of those who lost land in areas designated as white areas. As dispossessions continued, so did the need to accommodate the dispossessed. The government responded by establishing new irrigation schemes to help absorb the rapidly expanding displaced black population (Mombeshora, 2003, Manzungu and Machiridza, 2005, Nyandoro, 2012). With a scheme member being allocated less than two hectares of land, irrigation schemes became most appropriate for absorbing and pacifying the dispossessed, as they were associated with prestige due to water availability among other factors. Therefore, as already noted, the purpose of establishing irrigation schemes further expanded from the pursuit of agricultural production to supporting dispossessions. But these changes eroded the attractiveness of irrigation schemes to the extent that the number of volunteers joining new schemes declined drastically.

To sufficiently destroy African agriculture (Ranger, 1985), the colonial state, as noted above, used policy to further stifle African production and accumulation in irrigation schemes. For instance, in 1936, it created a policy which made it compulsory that irrigators cultivated wheat and beans supposedly to promote cash cropping (Roder, 1965; Reynolds, 1969). These crops were disadvantageous in that they were hardly consumed by Africans and, more importantly, there were no ready markets for them in or around irrigation schemes. Yet irrigators were expected to buy their staple grains such as maize and sorghum with proceeds from these crops (Rukuni, 1988). Evidently, smallholder irrigation schemes had in a few years been converted from being spaces where voluntary members made and implemented favourable decisions aimed at improving their livelihoods to being retrogressive enclaves studded with draconian state power.

The dominant narrative justifying deep state involvement in African agriculture at the local level was that of modernising or “intellectualising” African agriculture. However, the state’s continued repressive presence and meddling with African lives at the local level, including with reference to irrigation schemes, strained its relationship with farmers even further.

4.4.5 The conflictual relationship between smallholder irrigators and the state in colonial Zimbabwe

The relationship between the colonial state and smallholder irrigators in colonial Zimbabwe was studded with conflict to the extent that, for years, they became so unattractive that new schemes

increasingly experienced difficulties attracting “beneficiaries” (Weinrich, 1975). Weinrich (1975) suggested that the unwelcome interventionist character of the schemes by government representatives (such as demonstrators) was considered by the authorities as justifiably necessary for directing change in a country experiencing capital constraints. Such change, according to Hughes (1974), included activities that were viewed as increasing the introduction of technical sophistication in smallholder irrigation schemes. However, such positivity was not shared by the recipient population evidenced by the fact that new schemes failed to fill-up vacant plots over long periods. The African population actually lamented the increasing loss of rights that accompanied the introduction of lease conditions discussed above (Weinrich, 1975).

Manzungu (1995) also notes that the relationship between scheme members and the colonial government significantly deteriorated from as early as the 1930s due to the latter’s growing intolerance and imposition of unfavourable conditions without consultation. For instance, the state hardly carried out consultations with the indigenous population before introducing changes with far-reaching implications on their lives (Munro, 1998). Such state insensitivity was also manifested through the imposition of hostile policy positions in the 1970s, and this is said to have worsened the conflictual relationship between the two parties (government and irrigators) at Mutambara and other schemes. For example, as noted, one-year renewable occupancy permits imposed by the government on both new and seasoned irrigators reflect the harsh policy positions at that time.

Such permits would be renewed annually, but only for disciplined farmers. Good discipline partly entailed abiding by an approved cropping programme including the use of specified types and amounts of seed and fertilisers (Manzungu, 1995). Such policy was aimed at seeking to legitimise the imposition of crops and methods that irrigators were resisting. Any form of dissent was therefore taken as ill-discipline which would lead to non-renewal of the permit and subsequent loss of scheme membership. Farmers resisted not only because the demands were unreasonable, but also because they were unhappy with being transformed (with impunity) from being owners to holders of permits of occupancy.

As a microcosm of the larger “African peasant” population, smallholder irrigators continued to be impacted by broader shifts in policy and practice that affected the generality of the African farmer

across colonial Zimbabwe. For instance, smallholder irrigation experienced the effects of predatory policies that affected the agrarian economy, land ownership, productivity and markets (Munro, 1998). As noted above, land politics and property regimes allowed for deeper state penetration and manipulation of peasant lives and livelihoods and this included the smallholder irrigation space. Legislation such as the Land Husbandry Act of the 1950s and the Land Apportionment Act (1930), just to reiterate, were mechanisms of social control and domination which had the unintended consequence of exacerbating state-peasant conflict. Unsurprisingly, the unpalatable Land Husbandry Act (requiring destocking) is credited with catalysing the quest for national liberation (Munro, 1998).

Logically, nationalist politics in the 1960s and 1970s, whose thrust was the eradication of various forms of oppression and deprivation, in colonial Zimbabwe pried on land marginalisation and exploitation to galvanise Africans' quest for self-rule. Consistent with the emancipatory currency of the day, smallholder irrigation farmers expressed dissent in a number of ways, including withholding cooperation with government officials. For instance, at Devuli smallholder irrigation scheme (now called Devure), farmers refused to plant a wheat variety provided by government which was vital, according to Manzungu (1995), for the prevention through crop rotation of the development of rust, a disease that affects wheat. The government responded to farmer defiance through evicting non-compliant irrigators (Manzungu, 1995) as a punitive measure for the misdeed and to intimidate would-be law-breakers.

Failed resolution of state-smallholder irrigator differences led to the closure of Mutambara irrigation scheme in October 1974 although the reasons given by the government were that it was simply time to convert it "into a dryland farming area" (Manzungu 1995:124). As relations between the state and irrigators had irrevocably broken down, land expropriation and intimidation (which played out through evictions and other punitive practices across irrigation schemes in the country) functioned as an alternative form of social control. Writing on Nyamaropa Irrigation Scheme in Manicaland Province, Magadlela and Hebinck (1995) give emphasis to this idea pointing out that white managers and African demonstrators (discussed in detail below) would

evict a farmer for felony such as deviating from set planting dates. Through eviction, the system attempted to intimidate African irrigators into submission.

This brief historical account showcases, in synopsis, the conflictual relations that grew as the state attempted to use smallholder irrigation schemes as tools for advancing its narrow interests while Africans expressed discontent. The naked pursuit of interests such as land expropriations and enhancing white commercial agriculture, which were hidden behind colonial discourses and policies, slowly turned irrigation schemes into sites of struggles (Wolmer, 2007). Non-consultation promoted confrontation rather than negotiation. The basis for such conflicts was rooted in local farmers' own conceptions of suitable agricultural practices and their quest for reasonable agrarian livelihoods, but this was of course embroiled in the broader racial conflict in the country. They were also rooted in issues of identity and belonging fomented not only by racialised domination and exploitation but by loss of land and livestock through expropriation and the subtle developmental discourses of modernisation through irrigation and centralisation (Robins, 1994; Munro, 1998; Wolmer, 2007). While the state constructed irrigation farmers seemingly as a bunch of recalcitrant autonomy-seeking poor producers partly on the basis of their stubborn behaviour, farmers constructed themselves as deserving respect as scheme owners (and not as subservient occupiers as the government constructed them).

4.5 Post-colonial socio-political change and questions of presumed inclusion in water

The majority government came into power in 1980 amid high expectations of tremendous social, political and economic transformation. It quickly moved in with various programmes aimed on the one hand at addressing “the severe inequalities in land ownership between blacks and whites” (Owens et al., 2001: 2) and, on the other, at improving smallholder agriculture. At that time, the post-colonial government rallied other stakeholders such as the private sector and the donor community to significantly contribute towards irrigation development (Rukuni et al., 1994). However, policy remained unclear on how the prioritisation of production intensification, modernisation of irrigation technology and reduction of overpopulation in communal areas would be carried out (Mupawose, 1984; Chabayanzara, 1994; Makadho, 1994; Zawe et al., 2015).

Despite the noted lack of operational policy clarity, work on the revitalisation of smallholder irrigation schemes damaged or closed down during the liberation war began in the early 1980s (Zawe et al., 2015). Soon afterwards, the establishment of new smallholder irrigation schemes also commenced (Mudima, 2001). The development of smallholder irrigation in the country was guided by what came to be known as the Department of Rural Development (DERUDE) policy document on smallholder irrigation schemes of April 1983, which despite being a significantly comprehensive policy instrument at that time, was not formally adopted as government policy (Meinzen-Dick, 1993; Zawe et al., 2015).

Many factors including the severe drought of 1982 to 1984 persuaded the government to quickly embrace smallholder irrigation as a way of reducing communal farmer dependency on rain-fed agriculture. Between the early 1980s and late 1990s about 180 new smallholder irrigation schemes were created in “communal, resettlement and smallscale purchase areas” with the government being the main funder (Mudima 2001: 22). Added to about 57 schemes covering 2,500 hectares already in existence (and that were rehabilitated in the 1980s), a total of about 12,000 hectares of land was placed under smallholder irrigation (Mudima 2001: 22). Each household in full-time smallholder irrigation schemes had access to between 0.5 and 2 hectares of irrigated land. However, due to poor policy and weak implementation, promises (largely electoral) of providing a dam and an irrigation scheme for each district could not be realised (Bolding, 2004).

At the time, smallholder irrigation schemes focused on promoting social inclusion, productivity, modernisation and other social issues and were, in principle, socially constructed as spaces for modern and technical agriculture. Therefore, they were supposed to be distanced, administratively and with regards ownership, from “less progressive” traditional authorities and only associated with non-traditional systems (Wolmer, 2007). Such spaces though were characterised by top-down externally planned and imposed development visions, which required that in practice smallholder irrigation schemes were run by Irrigation Management Committees (IMCs), supposedly owned by beneficiaries, established on state land and worked closely with councillors rather than chiefs; although in practice, the latter always found a way back in (Zawe et al., 2015). Thus, smallholder irrigation schemes ideally represented emergent modern claims to authority (Vijfhuizen, 1998) and

functioned as platforms for new players, especially local level political leaders (including councillors) to exercise and contest for power (Moore, 1998).

The Irrigation Management Committees (IMCs) which, as already noted, ran smallholder irrigation schemes, comprised of elected irrigation scheme members. Although the idea of IMCs was a state imposition, the IMCs tended to function democratically while enhancing user management (Samakande et al., 2002; Bolding, 2004). Scheme members were at liberty to choose their own committees which were obliged to find ways of working closely with Agritex and other government departments for the betterment of the scheme (Manzungu, 1995). In concurrence, Mombeshora (2003: 8) argues that IMCs were “decentralised institutions of governance ... dealing with water and cropping”, but also touching on a “whole range of other issues such as land renting, dispute settlement, and the operation and maintenance of irrigation equipment”.

However, at some schemes, IMCs began facing challenges due to several factors including greed and hunger for power. Mutambara Smallholder Irrigation Scheme is one good example. Manzungu (1995) suggests that at Mutambara, the IMC was undermined by the chief who connived with members of his family to usurp power through a secretly created “royal committee”. Although clandestine in its formative years, the group’s intended “royal takeover” of the scheme became more apparent in 1990 when the chief declared himself the IMC chairperson, stripped the community of the power to elect IMC members and began to wantonly appoint them himself. In some instances, his operations were so obscure that members of the community remained ignorant of who held which office on the committee. The chief ran the scheme as he pleased so much that he could even turn away donors whose presence he suspected would undermine his grip on power. But more importantly, the chief did not “stage a coup” just because he liked power or merely disliked democratic processes but is said to have been motivated by greed. For instance, Manzungu (1995) notes that the chief mysteriously used a sum of \$50,000 that was donated by a church organisation to the scheme at some point in the early 1990s.

The chief’s actions confirmed the view that traditional leaders were not focused on progress as they were held back by narrow selfish desires. The chief’s chicanery tended to lend credence to the scepticism some had and still have towards the role of customary authority in the post-colonial

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context. As discussed in Chapter 3, there is divided opinion about the post-colonial condition with regards the continued existence of the chief's office. Some suggest that it is a treasured part of the African tradition that should be preserved while others who base their views on history argue that chiefs' tainted past as agents of colonial oppression necessitates the removal of their office from the post-colonial era (see Ranger, 1993; Mamdani, 1996). Evidence from Mushandike Smallholder Irrigation Scheme also locates the chief's office at the centre of the land-invasion storm that has not only created chaos on the scheme but has also adversely affected productivity as discussed in detail in the ensuing chapters on Mushandike.

4.6 Postcolonial extension services, contract farming, mechanisation and smallholder irrigation performance in relation to smallholder irrigation schemes

Extension services, contract farming and mechanisation all have the potential of hampering or contributing towards improved smallholder production. Their impact on smallholder irrigation production is dependent though upon various factors that include the quality of the social relationships built between service providers and farmers on the ground.

4.6.1 Extension services

Agricultural extension services have, from their precursor, namely demonstration work, historically been at the centre of small-scale production including that of smallholder irrigation schemes. They, among other things, help in the transfer of information on improved agricultural practices, production, farm management, markets and technology to farmers (both irrigators and non-irrigators) and similarly transmission of information or concerns from farmers to administrators and researchers (Owens et al., 2001; Eicher, 2002). Thus, as conduits, extension agents transfer information, knowledge and ideas to farmers and their families in an advisory role and receive ideas, suggestions and problems from farmers which they either address or relay to appropriate state entities or appropriate stakeholders (Pazvakavambwa and Hakutangwi, 2006). In essence, extension services involve both formal and informal knowledge transmission.

Informal transmission occurs when an extension officer and farmer informally engage in a discussion on challenges faced by the farmer while formal transmission occurs during organised farmer training sessions. Extension officers also often function as the conduit that links farmers to

agribusinesses such as in the case of contract farming (Masakure and Henson, 2005). In this respect, they are expected to help both parties in negotiating good deals while also working closely with farmers assisting them to understand contract terms. To help reduce defaulting on the part of contracted farmers, extension officers work with farmers seeking to ensure that they produce crops whose quality satisfies contractual agreements. In so doing, extension services strengthen farmer-agribusiness working relations which, in turn, assists in addressing problems of access to markets, inputs, financing and other support services that smallholder farmers usually face (Coulter et al., 1999).

As discussed above, extension services were introduced to Zimbabwe around 1927 (Kramer, 1997) by Emory Alvord working with African agricultural demonstration workers (Hanyani-Mlambo, 2002). Demonstrators directly served a technical purpose while indirectly helping advance a political agenda; they had a paradoxical role (Punt, 1979). Their tasks included teaching African farmers intensive crop production on small pieces of land using a four course crop rotation system (Kramer, 1997). This technical objective served a political purpose of replacing the traditional extensive system of 'shifting' cultivation used by African farmers at the time, which required access to large land acreages and was considered the prime cause of soil erosion and environmental degradation (Punt, 1979).

Extensive agriculture was deemed politically untenable given the importance of colonial land expropriation, such that Africans continued to lose land to white farmers and the state under such legislation as the LAA, ALAA, and the LHA discussed above. Incidentally, in colonial Zimbabwe, extension services helped increase the carrying and production capacity of small pieces of land available to Africans through intensive production as many Africans continued to be channelled into Reserves and smallholder irrigation schemes as a result of land expropriations under repressive government land policy and segregationist practices (Kramer, 1997). Ironically, demonstrators strove to increase agricultural production under structural conditions that ensured that African agriculture would not thrive enough to compete with that of settlers. At that time, land and conservation practices and policies under which extension services fell ensured that white agriculture gained a position of dominance over that of Africans (Palmer, 1977).

Pazvakavambwa and Hakutangwi (2006) and Scoones (2014) suggest that during the early years of independence, Zimbabwe's extension services were pivotal in sustaining communal area agricultural productivity to the extent that communal farmers came to be viewed as the pride of African agriculture. But this began to change with waning support following the introduction of economic structural adjustments which were accompanied by reduced all-round government spending from the late 1980s (Scoones, 2014). More recently, extension services lost its lustre due to many factors, prominent among them being inadequate funding which results in poor discharge of duties, significant staff-turnover, loss of staff due to death and unfilled positions which all impact the ability to offer quality service (Scoones, 2014). The vacuum created in service provision is being filled, to an extent, by such service providers as "public-funded institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), commodity processors, farmers' associations, and private agrochemical input suppliers" (Hanyani-Mlambo, 2002: 1). These service providers work independently offering different services. That notwithstanding, extension services in Zimbabwe are still largely offered by Agritex formed in 1980 as an amalgamation of the Department of Conservation and Extension (Conex) which provided advisory services to white large-scale commercial farmers, and the Department of Agricultural Development (Devag) which served African smallholder farmers during the colonial era (Hanyani-Mlambo, 2002).

Extension services which are extended to both smallholder irrigators and rain-fed producers are offered across the country using various approaches which include master farmer training schemes, radio listening group approaches, training and visit systems, farming systems research and extension training and commodity-based approaches amongst others (Hanyani-Mlambo, 2002). The master farmer training scheme has been in existence since the 1930s (Chipika, 1985; Pazvakavambwa, 1994). It focuses on training, offering extension services and information to a few progressive farmers and through them knowledge and information are expected to trickle down to other farmers (Pazvakavambwa and Hakutangwi, 2006). Although this approach is credited with increased adoption of innovations by African farmers, it has not posted equal success with regards crop yields. The radio listening approach is commended for being participatory in that it involves gathering farmers together to listen to a radio broadcast on specific extension issues. Farmers then discuss the raised issues and implement what they embrace. Its weakness is that

sometimes the broadcast issues are irrelevant to a group or are made at a time inconvenient to farmers in a particular region of the country in relation to their production activities (Hanyani-Mlambo, 2002). Each of the noted approaches has strengths that outweigh weaknesses to warrant continued use.

Currently extension services are viewed with a measure of ambivalence in irrigation schemes just as demonstrators were regarded in colonial Zimbabwe. Colonial demonstrators were widely regarded as footsoldiers, collaborators and informers of the colonial system through whom the system manipulated African lives at the local level (imposing crops, dictating when to plant and to harvest, forcing irrigators to irrigate in specific ways and to abandon dry-land cultivation and land, and above all forcing Africans to be full-time farmers); they were to an extent also viewed as transmitters of invaluable knowledge (Pazvakavambwa and Hakutangwi, 2006). Current extension workers, as evidence from Mushandike discussed in this thesis suggests, are also revered by irrigators as invaluable reservoirs of knowledge whose effectiveness is hampered by lack of institutional support. Regardless, they are also mistrusted by some for, among other things, prioritising interests of other stakeholders such as contract farming companies at the expense of those of farmers. To a lesser extent, they are blamed for being ill-equipped to work in a politically polarised and volatile environment.

4.6.2 Contract farming

Contract farming provides supposedly mutually beneficial partnerships between smallholder farmers and private capital in Zimbabwe (Denison and Manona, 2007). It helps both rain-fed and smallholder irrigation scheme producers in accessing credit and agricultural inputs and, more importantly, connects them to available local and export markets (Woodend, 2003). In the 1990s, for instance, contract farming played a significant role in increased production of baby corn, mange tout, sweet corn, fine beans, butternut, ostrich and broilers for both the domestic and export markets by smallholder irrigation farmers and smallholder rain-fed producers in Zimbabwe (Woodend, 2003). In that regard, contract farming is regarded as a contributor towards reinforcing the commercialisation of agriculture through building and maintaining farmer (producer) and agribusiness linkages that result in coordinated agricultural production, processing (value addition) and exportation of produce.

Relations between producers and agribusiness are characterised by agreements (supposedly binding) that define obligations and subsequent legitimate expectations. Consistent with such thinking, contract farming is defined as “a contractual arrangement between farmers and a firm, whether oral or written, specifying one or more conditions of production and marketing of an agricultural product” (Stringfellow, 1995). Subsequently, it eliminates open-market exchanges by linking farmers with a purchasing entity that regulates production practices, and stipulates expected product quality and price (Little and Watts, 1994). Thus, contract farming entails a range of initiatives that private agribusiness companies undertake to secure access to smallholder producers (Coulter et al., 1999).

In principle, market linkages are supposed to potentially increase agricultural productivity and reduce rural poverty (Dawes et al., 2007). A study on Zimbabwe showed that agribusiness stipulates a minimum crop price prior to planting and provides farmers with a crop budget with costs of inputs and breakeven yields (Masakure and Henson, 2005). In some instances, especially when there are increases in export prices, the price that is finally paid to contracted farmers exceeds the agreed minimum. Therefore, contract farming in such instances is believed to guarantee timeous production, reasonable produce price and input and support supplies (Mutambara and Munodawafa, 2014). Some farmers (including from smallholder irrigation schemes) therefore embrace contract farming offers from agribusinesses as an opportunity to access inputs and, in some contexts, even transport for moving their inputs and produce (with payment for transport taking place after the market sales are concluded). Input packages vary and include among other things, livestock provision or support (for example, stock feed), tillage services or draught power, seed, fertilisers, chemicals, farm equipment and even the rehabilitation of the irrigation schemes and enhanced provision of technical services. Thus, farmers are sometimes pressured by poverty and market challenges to embrace contract farming even if it may be studded with unfavourable aspects.

According to Masakure and Henson (2005), farmers face the challenge of meeting the high standards demanded by agribusiness. Some agribusinesses set high quality (and even quantity) expectations difficult for the farmer to realise. They reject all the produce that fails to meet the

quality standards while continuing to pressure the farmer for payment. Unsurprisingly, Denison and Manona (2007) warn that farmers need to take substantial caution when considering to embrace contract farming since the actual financial gains that the farmer recoups tend to be commonly limited. In many instances, farmers recoup very little or nothing after paying the agribusiness and others carry forward debt to the next season after failing to service it fully.

Contractual agreements tend to favour the agribusiness industry. For instance, farmers are bound to quality and quantity agreements but the agribusiness is not obliged to buy more than contractually agreed upon. Contract farming agreements may merely involve the farmer being supplied with inputs to enable production. At harvest time, the agribusiness arrives to collect the agreed upon quantities of crop of the required quality as farmers' payment for the inputs. It does not concern itself with any unsold crop produce with which the farmer remains. There is very little in such agreements which compels the buyer to take the farmers' produce as the contract largely protects agribusinesses. Furthermore, agribusinesses, as argued by Coulter et al. (1999), tend to break contracts with farmers through failing to timeously supply inputs and services, increasing quality standards arbitrarily and so on. The farmer who is basically financially too weak to legally seek recourse, is disadvantaged. As such, Woodend (2003) suggests that farmers need adequate and supportive mechanisms and legal frameworks that address unfair dealing by buyers.

The idea is not to portray farmers as weak and innocent victims of ruthless agribusiness because they are not. Farmers also break contracts, whether intentionally or otherwise. For instance, sometimes crops fail resulting in insufficient or no deliveries of the expected quantities. In other instances, farmers practice side-selling, opting to sell their produce to more competitive buyers and avoiding those to whom they are contracted.

This is known as strategic defaulting, involving an intentional decision not to pay back a loan even when one is able to do so (Woodend, 2003), usually occurring with crops that have many competitive buyers (Coulter, et al., 1999). Both small-scale rain-fed and irrigation farmers may also fail to repay what they owe due to greed, financial challenges or other factors (Coulter et al., 1999; Woodend, 2003; Likulunga, 2005). Strategic defaulting prejudices contracting companies (Banda, 2013). The contracting company may end up losing due to challenges involved with

legally tackling defaulters and also because farmers will have used very little if anything as collateral when entering into the contract. Their pieces of land, especially in smallholder irrigation schemes and communal areas in Zimbabwe, cannot be used as collateral because they exist without proper land titling and are unrecognised by mainstream financial institutions as a form of secure tenure.

In principle, the intricacies of the agribusiness-farmer relationship have the potential for promoting a mutually-beneficial relationship but, to an extent, they tend to largely benefit agribusiness. Asymmetries of power coupled with astute business knowledge places the agribusiness in a position of advantage. But, more importantly, poverty and limited choices compel farmers to enter into unfavourable contracts for expediency.

4.6.3 Mechanisation and smallholder irrigation

The importance of mechanisation is usually overlooked when water provision and market access are discussed in relation to enhancing smallholder irrigation scheme productivity in Zimbabwe (Thebe and Koza, 2012). Agricultural mechanisation refers to the application of mechanical technology to agriculture using tools such as tractors, animal-powered implements, electric motors, combustion engines and solar energy in order to enhance human labour productivity (FAO and UNIDO, 2008). From the viewpoint of Bembridge (2000), inadequate mechanisation support is a key constraint on smallholder irrigation schemes which significantly contributes to low crop yields.

Thus, mechanisation is a very vital component of agricultural production which needs improvement if farmers are going to produce competently and on time, especially considering that smallholder irrigation farmers in Zimbabwe depend on hoe and animal draught power for tillage (Thebe and Koza, 2012). Such methods are not only time-consuming and painfully difficult but labour intensive too. Zimbabwe's Ministry of Agriculture (Ministry of Agriculture, 2012) recognises the importance of agricultural mechanisation for the realising of a sustainable agricultural sector in the country. With the country losing labour power due to high rural to urban migration and to international destinations, coupled with the vagaries of the HIV/AIDS pandemic,

mechanisation becomes more important for the improvement of farm production in the context of decreasing access to human labour.

4.7 Postcolonial social issues within smallholder irrigation schemes

There is only limited literature on social relations in smallholder irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe. Magadlela and Hebinck (1995), Manzungu (1995), FAO (2000), Pazvakawambwa and van der Zaag (2000), Samakande et al. (2004) and Madebwe and Madebwe (2005) are among the few who provide an insight into some of the relational challenges encountered at the local level within and across irrigation communities and their neighbours.

Magadlela and Hebinck (1995) point to strained relations between resettled irrigation farmers and surrounding (indigenous) communities over land ‘ownership’. Their analysis finds support in FAO (2000) which also points out the existence of contestations over sustainable use of resources within and around smallholder irrigation schemes. FAO (2000) records that at Murara (Mutoko district) irrigation scheme, scheme members and other locals entered into conflict over the ownership and utilisation of the local dam that supplies water to the irrigation scheme and the immediate communal area. Furthermore, these communities engaged in contestations over conservation of the entire catchment area with irrigators accusing non-irrigators of unsustainable resource exploitation (FAO, 2000). Similarly, Nhodo et al. (2014) observe the existence of an insider-outsider dichotomy at Rusike Irrigation Scheme in Masvingo, where a group of smallholder irrigation farmers (with historical roots in the area) saw themselves as the *bona fide* owners of the scheme such that they did not understand why they should pay water user fees on their ancestral land. In their opinion, farmers who came from other areas to join the scheme should pay for water not themselves (Nhodo et al., 2014).

FAO also highlights that gender issues affect social relations within and between scheme members and those from nearby communal areas. Women are known to be discriminated against and to experience ill-treatment at the hands of men, especially those women who head households either because their husbands are deceased or are divorced. FAO (2000) notes that at Ngezi Mamina Irrigation Scheme, some older widows and young divorced women were denied plots by men from the surrounding communities on the grounds that they were not strong enough to engage in land

clearing. In this regard, contestation over access to a resource is locally framed by the powerful around issues of physical capability and not as discrimination against the supposedly weaker gender. Also on the question of gender, Madebwe and Madebwe (2005) reveal – with reference to Ndongoma Irrigation Scheme – that some women farmers’ productivity was supposedly constrained by spousal interferences. For instance, husbands who either retired or were retrenched returned to usurp household decision-making powers. However, due to limited agricultural and irrigation knowledge, they ended up making wrong decisions that affected productivity.

Inheritance is also a major issue affecting social relations at irrigation schemes, and again relates to the insecure status of women. According to Mutambara et al. (2015), the issue of ownership and security at schemes (which includes concerns about inheritance by wives and children) not only affect social relations but also motivation to work hard and reinvest in schemes over time. Irrigation schemes often have by-laws stipulating that a wife or wives inherit a place in the irrigation project in the event of the death of the husband and that the eldest son inherits the project after the death of both parents. Members of extended families and even some greedy sons regard this as a distortion of the inheritance (*nhaka*) custom: according to many Shona traditions, inheritance rules allow sons to automatically inherit property after the death of their father instead of the wife being given priority.

For Samakande et al. (2004), the problem is not with these inheritance by-laws (which are actually a product of broad consultation and consensus) but lies with interference by the extended family. They argue for reduced external interference at the scheme level especially by relatives and community members who do not realise that not all departure from tradition is bad. In essence, new practices or slight innovations referred to here as departure from tradition simply reflect that emerging communities, in this case, smallholder irrigation schemes, have the capability of generating new know-how based on their collective appreciation of the new lived reality which enables them to deal with the challenges they encounter (Chambers, 1983; Arce and Long, 1992; Long, 1996). Through innovation and creativity, societies deal with challenges and in so doing “make their own history” (Said, 1995: 89).

FAO (2000) notes that some post-colonial scheme members also resist manipulation by external actors such as the state and other interventionists (as the older generation for instance at Mutambara did during colonial times). At Mambanjeni Irrigation Scheme, irrigators refused to grow horticultural crops, as suggested by interventionists, arguing that they would only do so after being satisfied that they had enough maize reserves (as maize was their main source of food). In so doing, farmers claim that they have their priorities right and stand by their convictions even in the face of formidable adversity (considering how the post-colonial state in Zimbabwe reacts to dissent). Evidently, farmers construct themselves as knowledgeable autonomous producers whose prime obligation is to produce food for their families before everything else.

This section illuminates some of the nuanced and intricately related social issues that characterise the smallholder irrigation scheme social milieu. Land ownership, gender concerns, inheritance and decision-making at the household level all affect production and social relations. Contestations around these issues are an inherent integral part of social reality in such spaces. However, the way they are negotiated determines whether they do or do not degenerate into conflict.

4.8 Concluding remarks

The chapter emphasises the centrality of water in human life (domestic and commercial), locating the challenges in its accessibility more in relation to its distribution than its sheer availability, notwithstanding divergent global views regarding access to water. In linking the importance of water to agricultural production in the context of the rural poor, the chapter indicates that smallholder irrigation schemes are viewed as having the potential to trigger economic and social developmental and transformation in the lives of smallholder producers. The chapter suggests that, in as much as access to water is vital for reinforcing the potential of smallholder irrigation schemes in transforming the lives of small-scale producers, smallholder irrigation schemes also need various forms of support (from inputs, adequate land, expertise, markets and supportive policy) for them to thrive. Water availability is therefore not a magic wand that does away with rural poverty but a pivotal factor necessary for rural socio-economic transformation.

Focusing on Zimbabwe, the chapter emphasised that the history of water politics since the formation of the modern state has been problematic, characterised by discrimination embedded in

national legislation and, to an extent, intertwined with land politics. Water related transformation has been slow in post-colonial Zimbabwe evidenced by the replacement of the 1976 Water Act with the 1998 Water Act. This largely means that availing commercial water to communal and other small-scale producers outside smallholder irrigation schemes was not a priority during the first twenty years of independence. Similarly, the chapter has shown how the state, both the colonial and post-colonial one, strove to drive state-centric agendas while in the process of developing smallholder irrigation schemes. This positioned the state as an arena within which contestations played out as interests of various social groups collided.

Thus, the chapter has shown the complexity of smallholder irrigation scheme politics. In this way, it projects smallholder irrigation schemes in general and those in Zimbabwe specifically as spaces of convergences of actors with multiple interests. Such convergences tend to create conflict, contestation, compromise and consensus depending on how various factors play themselves out. The schemes therefore are not only spaces within which poor irrigators seek out a living, but are local places which in many ways mirror what is taking place elsewhere in the country. They are a source of livelihoods which potentially contribute significantly towards rural development only if agricultural and developmental interests are given priority. The chapter suggests that these dynamics and dimensions form the foundation upon which contemporary irrigation and water politics in Zimbabwe in general and at Mushandike in particular are rooted.

CHAPTER 5: THE PROBLEMATISATION OF LAND AND WATER POLITICS AT MUSHANDIKE

5.1 Introduction

Mushandike Smallholder Irrigation Scheme, in Masvingo District, Masvingo Province of Zimbabwe, began to experience land-invasions at about the same time that nationwide invasions of white-owned farms occurred. Hundreds of households of land-seekers occupied much of the grazing land across the 37-kilometre-long smallholder irrigation scheme. Since then, many more land-seekers have continued to trickle in sporadically. The unceremonious arrival of so many in-migrants altered the social space and landscape of Mushandike. It imposed new relations and provoked a delicate and unavoidable negotiated coexistence between irrigators and land-seekers. On the one hand, it demanded intra-group re-imagining for irrigators whose social world was undergoing significant change and, on the other hand, it demanded the development of a shared identity amongst land-seekers who were thrust together by circumstances in a new social context. For both groups, the new reality was characterised by hostility, uncertainty, contestation, contradiction and conflict, whose impact on both groups and individuals varied as shown below. At the macro-level, both groups were part of a highly politically charged Zimbabwean society characterised by high political polarisation and intolerance.

This chapter, based on empirical case study findings obtained through interviews, observations, focus group discussions and transect walks, analyses how land owners and land-seekers negotiated co-existence at the local level. It examines the identification and problematisation of challenges across and within both social groups as well as by other stakeholders. Thus, it analyses meanings ascribed to and the framing of land invasions, land shortages, water access, land ownership and identity (among numerous other issues) and how they subsequently shape social relations. The chapter unravels nuanced inter- and intra-group differences of opinion and perspective characterised by intricate individual and group interests (economic and political) and the inter-penetration of different power relations (including the constraining and enabling role of political parties, traditional leadership and government administration). Findings suggest that the lives of many from both groups (land invaders and irrigators at Mushandike) have been negatively

impacted (albeit to a different extent) by the land invasions and their deferred resolution, with some lives in both groups either stable or progressing.

This chapter begins with a brief historicisation of land invasions and land politics in Zimbabwe. I follow this with a detailed discussion of the empirical study area of Mushandike, including its history and contemporary set-up. This leads to an examination of land shortages as well as to an interrogation of the land invasions at Mushandike by capturing and analysing how different stakeholders view the phenomenon of the local invasions, including controversies around the chieftainship system in the area.

5.2 Land occupations and land politics in Zimbabwe: a historical synopsis

Land occupations in Zimbabwe, ranging from those carried out by individual persons, small groups to those by large masses of people, have a long history. More than 60 years ago, individual Africans illegally occupied and cultivated agricultural land to the annoyance of the state. One classic example of such acts of defiance was by Kesiya Madzore who stood trial in 1955 for allocating himself 25 acres of land. This act was a precursor to similar acts code-named ‘freedom ploughing’ of the early 1960s, which occurred nationwide, carried out peacefully and only by a few (Chitiyo, 2000). In post-colonial Zimbabwe, piecemeal struggles for access to land continued assuming the form of sporadic occupations largely of derelict land and abandoned farms in the 1980s to early 1990s. These cascaded into the nationwide invasions of white owned land from the year 2000 that transformed the Zimbabwean rural landscape forever.

Evidently, land occupations of various magnitude have for a long-time been part of struggles for social inclusion in Zimbabwe. They have been integral to contestations for control of natural resources and pursuit of social justice. To a large extent, land occupations affirmed the agency of the marginalised functioning as an expression of discontentment with the status quo. Although both the colonial and post-colonial state condemned all forms of land occupations, in 2000, the state ended up accepting and expediting *jambanja* (violent occupations) through the FTLRP. *Jambanja* was different from all preceding land occupations in that it was a powerful nation-wide social tide. Although *jambanja* availed itself to varying interpretations (Ndlela, 2005), it embodied elements consistent with broader struggles for land and social inclusion largely located within

discourses of repossession of colonially-expropriated land. From a fundamentally ZANU-PF perspective, claims of reclamation qualified *jambanja* as liberatory hence it was christened the Third *Chimurenga*, (the third war of liberation (economic) coming twenty years after the end of the second war of liberation (political) and more than a century after the end of the first war of liberation (resistance to colonisation) (Ranger, 1985), as discussed earlier.

Zimbabwe's nation-wide land invasions from the year 2000 divided and still divide opinions to the extent that, nearly two decades after they occurred, there is no shared explanation of why and how they occurred and with what effect. Those deeply critical of the occupations claim that they were masterminded by the ZANU-PF leadership and carried out by its war veteran foot-soldiers; while others more sympathetic argue that they were spontaneous and were carried out by the land hungry on their own volition (with war veteran assistance). Certainly, the MDC and urban civil society organisations condemned the invasions of white-owned farms. Although still a young political party, the MDC (which initially seemed as a 'worker based' political party), formed in 1999, seemingly gained notoriety very quickly in the eyes of ZANU-PF, its supporters and sympathisers for forging a strong alliance with white farmers to oppose the occupation of farms. Through voicing disapproval of land occupations, the MDC was viewed by ruling party supporters as not only unnecessarily meddling with land politics, but as attempting to stifle struggles for social inclusion by those marginalised for more than a century. The ruling party accused the MDC of being a sell-out party and political party antagonisms became intertwined with land occupations and politics.

All the land occupations that occurred in Zimbabwe somehow reflected struggles for inclusion and could be considered an indictment on the state for failing to address marginalisation, inequality, injustice and poverty. Therefore, "informal resettlements" at Mushandike, regardless of how they played out and are interpreted, had many of the trappings of a search for social justice by the socially excluded.

5.3 Setting the Mushandike scene

Mushandike was established in the 1980s. The scheme comprises of 23 sections known as villages. Villages 1-9 and 17-20 are not part of the irrigation scheme as they practice rain-fed cultivation.

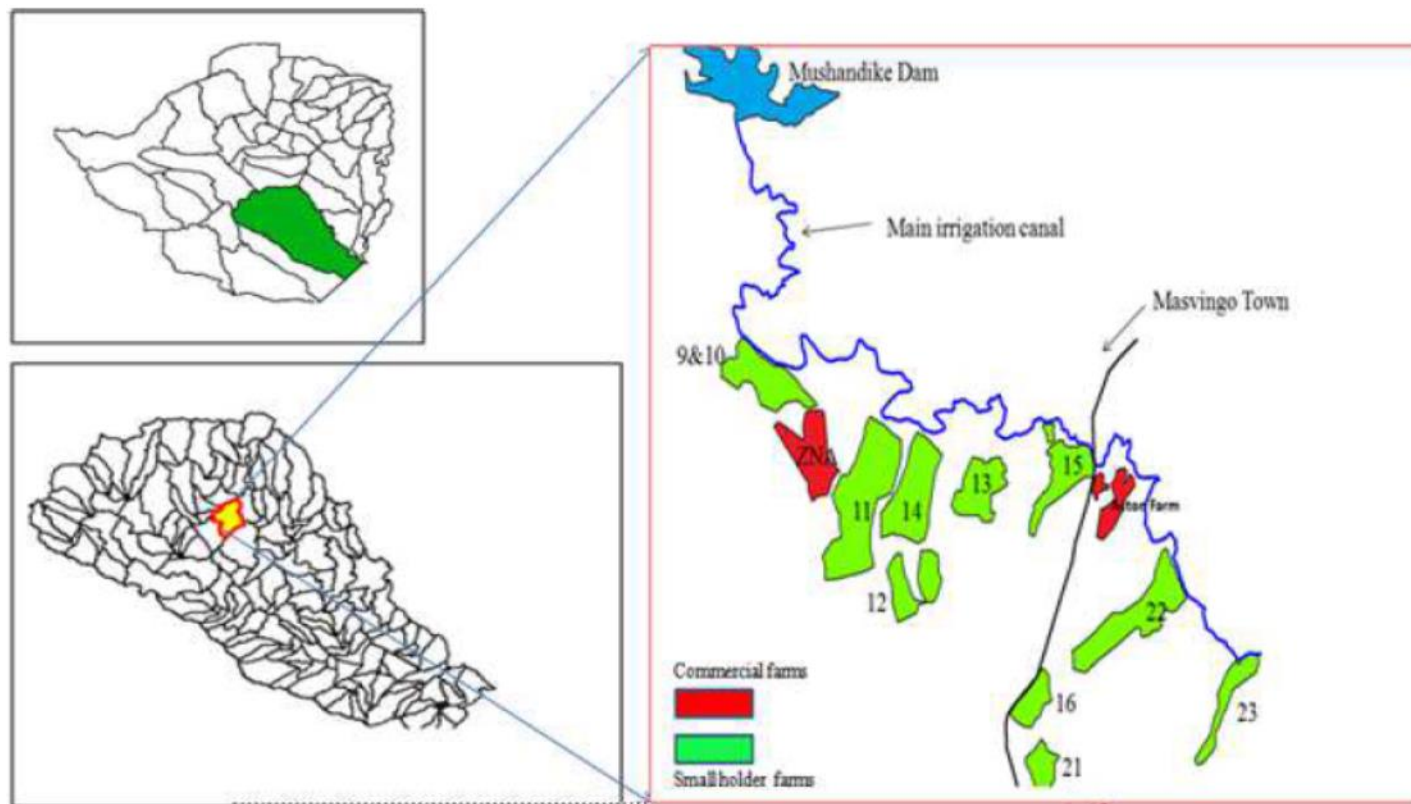
The irrigation scheme comprises of villages 10-16 and 21-23. Figure 2 shows the map of Mushandike. According to findings, Village 23B (which is part of Village 23A and borders Charumbira communal area) was created within the scheme at the behest of Chief Charumbira for people specifically from his Charumbira area, who had not initially joined the scheme due to scepticism and fear of exploitation (as discussed in chapter 1). Village 10 remained uninhabited many years after all other villages were fully operational. Again, findings suggest that it was allocated to people who were being evicted from privately owned land at Morgenster mission. Although the agricultural land for Village 10 had not been prepared for irrigation, beneficiaries who were allocated 3 to 4 hectares each were allowed to irrigate, after the intervention of Chief Charumbira. As such, Village 10 does not have well-prepared and levelled irrigation land, overnight dams, nor concrete secondary and tertiary canals.

When the scheme was ready to receive its first occupants, the word of mouth invitation to join was extended to all Zimbabweans through government structures such as Agritex, traditional leadership and so on. However, the most preferred were poor, landless farmers who were prepared to be full-time farmers. Thus, the government had decided to force beneficiaries of land allocation at Mushandike through such a demand to be fulltime farmers regardless of personal preferences. Academic literature suggests, as already discussed, that historically Africans in Zimbabwe were not full-time farmers as such but were coerced into being such by an oppressive colonial system of governance (Roder, 1965; Reynolds, 1969). Ironically, the post-colonial government continued to pursue the same approach. It is not clear why the government saw prudence in compelling beneficiaries of Mushandike not to supplement farm earnings with off-farm livelihood strategies.

Nevertheless, in selecting possible beneficiaries as the most suitable candidates, interviews were held by a team of government workers that included Agritex officials and a Resettlement Officer. Successful candidates were allocated land by lot for transparency purposes. Most scheme beneficiaries came from areas such as Chivi, Nyajena and Mapanzure, all in Masvingo Province. Others came from neighbouring Charumbira communal area and other parts of the country (as discussed more fully in chapter 7). Each farmer was allocated 1.5 hectares of irrigated land, a residential stand and had access to communally-controlled grazing land.

The scheme was designed to carry 417 smallholder farmers when fully functional. This carrying capacity was determined by the capability of the dam to supply sufficient irrigation water to all farmers. Agritex officials note that the initial idea was that the dam had to be able to supply sufficient water for a period of three years to all farmers without receiving a single raindrop. But this idea was not followed during implementation as, for undisclosed reasons, the scheme began with over 600 farmers and many more joined later.

Figure 2: Study Area



Source: Fitshane (2014: 12).

The first group of beneficiaries arrived at Mushandike in 1986 and were resettled in Village 13. Gradually many others arrived. Upon arrival, the new farmers accessed government support which included training, assistance with land preparation and appropriate inputs. Training covered sustainable land and water usage, environmental conservation, flood irrigation, crop and animal husbandry and marketing of produce among other things.

The government issued beneficiaries with occupancy cards and not title deeds to authenticate their occupancy of this stretch of irrigated land acquired by government from large-scale white commercial farmers (under the willing-seller willing-buyer arrangement which governed commercial land transfers in the 1980s) (Palmer, 1990). By the time government purchased the land, the main canal, Mushandike dam and farm houses were the key infrastructural developments that the former owners had put in place.

This government initiative was affected by the unceremonious involvement of those with institutional power, at least from the implementation stage. The Chief's two 'special requests' (noted above) negatively impacted the implementation of proper plans. This shows that narrow interests were unnecessarily entertained and allowed to derail legitimate plans, to the extent that land that was supposed to be allocated to qualifying land-seekers from across the country ended up being donated to an individual Chief to resettle his own people. Impliedly, this practice turned the irrigation scheme into a mere extension of Charumbira Communal Area.

Meanwhile, years later, the occupation of Mushandike's grazing land took place at about the same time that the large-scale nationwide invasions of white-owned farms were taking place. Unlike the nationwide land invasions, Mushandike occupations were neither publicly condemned nor administratively addressed and reasons for that remain varied and inconclusive. In fact, the invasions of Mushandike had their own local specificities which are not simply reducible to what was taking place nationally. Nevertheless, occupation-based antagonism characterised the land and water politics at Mushandike where it violently played itself out, affecting all facets of social life. A pertinent question arises in this context: How did so many people end up invading Mushandike at a time when there were so many white-owned farms that fellow land-seekers were occupying?

It is said that by 2000, there were two white-owned farms lying side by side between some of the Mushandike villages. At about that time, reports suggest that one farm was occupied by Chief Charumbira and the other by late Minister Stan Mudenge. Land-seekers had also allegedly occupied these two farms before these two political giants did, but they were chased away when these two politicians arrived. This provokes two important questions. First, if the two 'big men' could chase land-seekers away from these two farms, then presumably they could have done so as

well with regard to the invaders at Mushandike as a whole, but they did not: Why? This question, and all the issues it provokes, are addressed in detail below. Second, in 2000, land-seekers including those chased away from the two farms headed for Mushandike where land was scarce and where they ended up occupying grazing land. In doing so, they ignored the two farms: How can this be explained? This again raises issues pertaining to the causes and consequences of the land invasions, which I also engage with in greater detail later.

Prior to land invasions, every Mushandike irrigating village had marked out residential stands for adult children in the grazing paddocks. The children of irrigators were also going to open up new fields on these stands. For that reason, they called the residential area *Makombo*, meaning ‘new fields’. With the arrival and occupation of much of the grazing land (including some unoccupied stands earmarked for irrigators’ children) by land-seekers, both the homesteads of the children of scheme members and those of land-seekers assumed the *Makombo* label. The *Makombo* label was unwelcome to the children of irrigators because it seemingly differentiated them from their parents and conflated them with illegal land occupiers who together with them dwelt in *Makombo*.

5.4 Surrounded by dire land and water shortage: a look at districts sending migrants to Mushandike

Mushandike Smallholder Irrigation Scheme is located in the southern tip of Masvingo District, which borders five districts (Bikita, Chiredzi, Chivi, Gutu and Zaka), all lying in agro-ecological region IV or V except for small parts of Gutu, Zaka, Bikita and Masvingo district which are in agriculturally productive natural region III as shown in Figure 3 (Chikodzi et al., 2013: 107). This section focuses on land issues in Chivi and Chiredzi which sent very high numbers of land-seekers to Mushandike.

Chivi District has poor infertile soils and experiences drought in three out of every five seasons (Thonje and Ncube, 2014). This causes rain-fed agriculture to perform badly. Drought induced poor productivity is worsened by the shortage of draught power due to continuous loss of animals (cattle and donkeys) caused by recurrent droughts and depleted pastures. It is, therefore, difficult for a household to have a sustainable livelihood that revolves around rain-fed agriculture in Chivi. Chivi households, as noted by Thonje and Ncube (2014), often experience drought-caused food

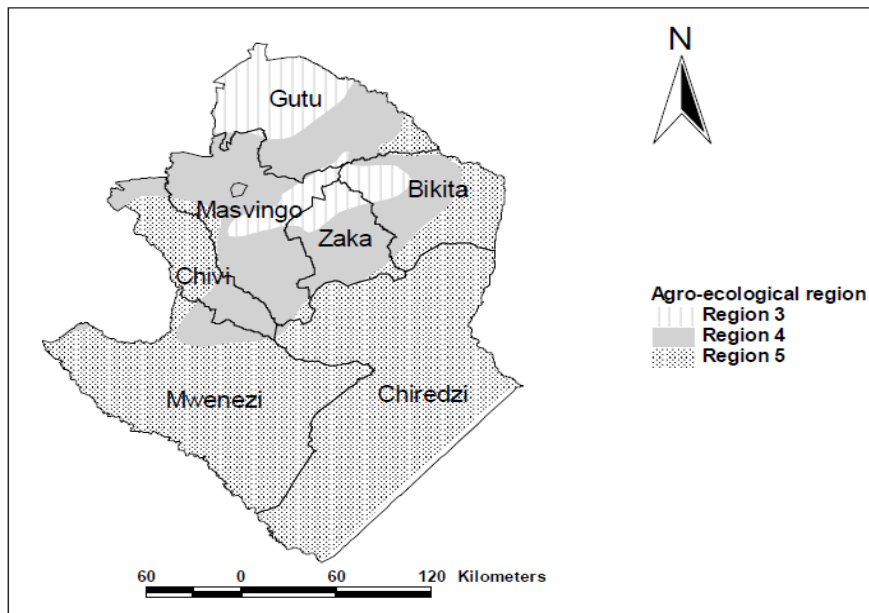
vulnerability and income-erosion which plunges them deeper into poverty and marginalisation. Logically, poverty is widespread across the district and this makes migration a popular survival strategy.

Migration is regarded as a vital survival strategy to which the young and able bodied persons in this district resort. Although migration has its own demands and challenges, many find it as the most beneficial way out of the food and income shortages faced in the district. Many depart for South Africa and other places within the country with the hope of earning a better living. Even those who arrived at Mushandike with the hope of accessing bigger pieces of land ‘closer to town’ (Masvingo) still continue to migrate to work or trade or simply travel to buy clothes and wares which they trade in different parts of the country. According to one respondent, “*we did not seek land for farming but for residence, closer to town where water and electricity are accessible*” (Interview with Kudzi, 16 June 2014). There are many people like this respondent whose migration to Mushandike was motivated by the quest for residential land much closer to an urban area. Expenses incurred by staying within the urban space itself, including rentals, were too exorbitant and were beyond their reach. To them, Mushandike is a place where water and electricity are accessible, such that the presence of an irrigation scheme is not strictly speaking seen as a key advantage. Their livelihoods are anchored on migration and off-farm activities which admittedly though includes buying goods from and selling to irrigators.

Chiredzi is a huge semi-arid drought prone district on the southern periphery of Masvingo Province, measuring about 17, 629 square kilometres in size and lying almost entirely in region V (Brown et al., 2012). It receives an unreliable rainfall of below 450 mm per season which is too low for any meaningful rain-fed crop production such that even drought tolerant crops such as millet and sorghum give poor yields (Brown et al., 2012). During drought seasons, crops fail absolutely and livestock nearly gets wiped out. Chiredzi’s summer temperatures usually rise above 39°C during the day (Unganai and Murwira, 2010). These high temperatures exacerbate losses of water of up to between 10-13 mm per day through evaporation, causing Chiredzi to experience shortages of surface water for domestic and livestock purposes.

Due to climate change, the temperatures continue to rise, increasing the vulnerability of residents to drought, floods, storms, disease outbreak and pests (Brown et al., 2012: 16). The little rain that falls is lost as run-off water because Chiredzi's heavy clay soils do not help in retaining water for plant use. These heavy sticky-slippery soils do not only let rainwater waste away as run-off but are also very difficult to work in when wet, further worsening the challenges of practising crop husbandry, let alone rain-fed agriculture in Chiredzi. As such the district is largely unsuitable for crop production, more so, rain-fed cultivation (Scoones et al., 2011). Therefore, many who get the chance to leave Chiredzi do so and some chose Mushandike as a destination.

Figure 3: Districts in Masvingo Province



Source: Chikodzi et al. (2013:109).

According to Scoones et al., (2011:4), land hunger for communal farmers in Masvingo Province was significantly alleviated by the FTLRP which transferred to the land hungry about 28% of the land that was previously commercial farms. But this land was largely used by white commercial farmers for ranching and irrigated crop production; therefore, as already noted, this now fast track land is equally unsuitable for rain-fed crop production which is the major livelihood strategy which most fast-track beneficiaries from communal areas understand.

This background reflects the harsh environment within which the poor live in rural Masvingo Province. It also gives an insight into why they migrated into Mushandike with the hope of transforming their lives either through off-farm activities (supported by irrigation and proximity to town) or through farming which largely remains an illusion for now, as adequate land remains inaccessible (as discussed later). This background also serves to demonstrate that many who migrated to Mushandike were responding to real life-threatening push factors. The harsh socio-economic reality left behind simply encourages Mushandike residents not to return despite the challenges faced at the destination site. This partially explains why many continue to hang-on at Mushandike fifteen or more years after their arrival, despite the fact that their future remains highly uncertain. One respondent, though a new arrival, aptly summed up their thinking saying, *“I will go anywhere where the government allocates me land, but I will not go back to Chiredzi, a death trap”* (Interview with Rapson, 7 September 2016).

5.5 Land shortages at Mushandike prior to land invasions

Farmers in 9 out of 10 irrigating Mushandike villages experienced significant land shortages from the inception of the scheme. The 1.5 hectares of irrigated land plus an extra 0.3 hectares for dryland cultivation were inherently too small for the households. But even the initial idea that land beneficiaries were going to be allocated land for dryland cultivation did not materialise, and for reasons which the Mushandike residents do not understand or even know. Plus, many were expecting to receive six hectares in total. One despondent farmer said: *“We were supposed to be allocated 6 hectares but upon arrival we were simply allocated 1.5 hectares and [again] no explanation was given”* (Interview with Garwe, 10 June 2014). This concern was echoed by another farmer, but he gave the size of the undelivered land as 3 hectares and not 6. This confirms (as elaborated upon in Chapter 7) that information did not flow correctly during this period. However, what is significant is that beneficiaries expected to be allocated more land than what they in fact received. Many concurred that 1.5 hectares becomes much smaller for one with adult children who also need to be allocated land. Additionally, the block system makes the land much smaller.

The way the block system works at Mushandike is that all farmers grow crops in one block (0.5 hectares) at a given time to allow for easy irrigation while the remaining two blocks lie fallow. After harvest, they shift to another block and continue rotating blocks in this manner. Effectively, the farmer only utilises 0.5 hectares per planting season. The farmer could just as well have only 0.5 hectares and practice crop rotation rather than block rotation. Water shortages were given as the reason for the block system. The farmers claim that they have the capacity and motivation to use all the land (1.5 hectares) in each season, including diversifying their crops, but the amount of water ZINWA allocates them would not support this preferred arrangement.

Findings suggest that Village 10 farmers (who are the Chief's people) with 3 or 4 hectares (which they were allowed to irrigate) are happy with the size of their land. Interestingly, their land is not in blocks and has no concrete canals because, as noted earlier, it was not set up properly for irrigation purposes; therefore, they can utilise all of their land during one season if they have access to irrigation water. All other villages (except Village 10) experience land shortages which were worsened by the land invasions. As indicated, land-invaders occupied grazing land and this effectively leaves irrigators with the 1.5 hectares of irrigated land and a residential stand. With no grazing land, their lives were changed in a significant way in terms of what to do with livestock production (as discussed in detail later).

Clearly, the solution adopted by government for alleviating land shortages did not adequately address the problem in the case of Mushandike. Notwithstanding that access to water significantly transformed the lives of beneficiaries (since 0.5 hectares of irrigated land gives better yields compared to a similar size under rain-fed agriculture), farmers still suggest that their lives would have been much better socially and economically had they accessed bigger pieces of land. On the social front, they suggest that they would have had enough productive land to allocate to their children now that they are adults. Economically, they argue that since they can only irrigate 0.5 hectares per season, dryland cultivation would help increase their harvests in a significant way although only once a year.

It is ironic that the post-colonial Zimbabwean government constructs all blacks as *vana vevhu* (children of the soil), consistent with the universal claim that they are at one with the land. But

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contradictions arise when the very same government allocates only 1.5 hectares to *vana vevhu*. The small pieces of allocated land seemingly confirm that the post-colonial government conceptualises the rural poor as incapable of utilising large pieces of land even when assistance is rendered. It also imposes the constraint that small-scale irrigators are not allowed to supplement their earnings with off-farm activities. Like the colonial government, which preferred impositions to negotiations, the post-colonial state thus conceives irrigation scheme beneficiaries as incapable of contributing towards informed discussions around land-use. It therefore uses draconian-like policies, including threats of eviction, so as to containerise or confine them within the scheme. It would seem that the post-colonial government seeks to define and imagine the world of irrigation for the scheme residents by telling them how to live and livelihood strategies to depend on.

5.6 The creation of Makombo as a response to land shortages at the local level

Confronted with increasing demand for land by their adult children, irrigators at Mushandike agreed to settle their children on part of the land used for grazing. They approached the government, Ministry of Lands, Agritex, the Chief, politicians and other stakeholders who endorsed their idea as pragmatic and progressive. Each village was assisted by Agritex and other government officials with identifying an appropriate site for residential purposes. Some adult children, largely those who had conflictual relations with their parents and were resident at Mushandike, quickly embraced the opportunity to move away from their parents, thereby taking up residency in *Makombo*. Empirical findings indicate that some villages prepared a feast and gave gifts to their children to help them set up new homes in *Makombo*. Similarly, some had an official opening of the *Makombo* residence, including at Village 23B occupied by Chief Charumbira's people:

Here in Village 23B we organised a big send-off party for our children. We allocated land to both male and female adult children, who moved in and built houses for themselves in their own time. We individually gave them assistance. We then organised a big send-off day, one in which we, as parents and relatives, gave them presents and constructive send-off speeches. We informed them that the new village they were starting was part of the old

village, that we were one and needed to continue as such for our mutual benefit (Interview with Mai Moyo, 15 June 2014).

However, in 2000 and thereafter, all vacant land was occupied by land-seekers from outside the irrigation scheme as already indicated. The question of whether they invaded this land as is generally suggested or were nefariously allocated land is dealt with in detail below, although noted in passing here. Two interesting views, one coming from a Village Head (*Sabhuku*) of one of the villages (every irrigation village has a *Sabhuku* as discussed in detail below) and another from an irrigator, shed light on the complexity of the issue. The *Sabhuku* argued that:

When we approached the chief with the idea of settling our adult children on part of the grazing land, he accepted our plan and also advised us that it would be beneficial to also resettle outsiders on the land. The chief's view was that if our children were to co-exist with others, differences they might have or their parents might have would not easily spill over to the children because they will be living in a bigger and more diverse society. We thought that was a brilliant idea and we embraced it. As a village we invited outsiders to co-exist with our children. The chief gave us some people too (Interview with Sabhuku Nhubu, 2 June 2014).

The view of the *Sabhuku* is that the hundreds of outside households existed as invited guests brought in to culturally enrich local society and to avert possible conflict and disintegration, whose cause was envisaged by the chief as homogeneity. However, the *Sabhuku* could not explain why the villages found it reasonable or necessary to enrich their community with hundreds of households when each village only had less than twenty sons and daughters who were prepared to take up residence in *Makombo*. Instead, he was simply comfortable with acknowledging that they in fact allocated so much land to land-seekers including stands that were earmarked for their children because “*our children were hesitant to move in. We had to give it to the land hungry* (Interview with Sabhuku Nhubu, 2 June 2014). Land hunger from outside the scheme, according to the *Sabhuku*, motivated the irrigators to allocate nearly all their grazing land to land-seekers. For him, no land invasions ever occurred as land allocations involved the pursuit of lasting peaceful co-existence and were pushed to unimaginable propositions by compassion.

The *Sabhuku*'s argument is refuted by many irrigators who argue that this is a concocted and imagined view by those who masterminded and orchestrated illegal land allocations on *Makombo* to outsiders. One respondent was of the view that:

Village leaders allocated our land to outsiders without consulting us. They used political power from the chief and provincial ZANU-PF leadership to intimidate us into silence. We never gave them permission to do that. Many who objected to that practice were labelled MDC supporters and were publicly humiliated and beaten up, while a lucky few were only threatened and ridiculed (Interview with Mai Chauke, 12 June 2014).

This issue is as complex as it is politically charged. At first sight, it appears that the *Sabhuku* acted in isolation but evidence suggests that he represented interests of various actors and interest groups who functioned as sources of power, and this allowed him to wantonly define the destiny of the scheme with impunity. Empowered by those behind the scenes and propelled by self-interest and greed as unravelled below, the *Sabhuku* played a significant role in unofficially allocating land at Mushandike. The *Sabhuku* here represents many but not all *Sabhukus*.

5.7 Did black on black land invasions really occur at Mushandike?

This section strives not only to portray the different perspectives and ways in which Mushandike land invasions are framed but also to make sense of the varied views and explanations. As with all social phenomena, the invasions are marked by differing on-the-ground and often commonly-shared interpretations (i.e., they are 'constructed' in a particular manner) and these inform and shape social practices. The overall consensus though is that land-seekers at Mushandike did not actually invade the scheme but were allocated land. However, there is fierce disagreement pertaining to how this occurred, who did it and why. Various explanations emerge, and some finger pointing as well.

Politics, power and greed feature prominently as the reasons why so many people were channelled into the scheme when they could more easily have been assisted to access land elsewhere. Furthermore, it is for the very same political reasons that the invaders have stayed for so long. In fact, a blind eye has been paid by government, civil society, media and by the generality of the

Zimbabwean population to the continued trickling in of people. More importantly, the problem was somewhat deliberately side-tracked by government during the implementation of the nationwide FTLRP. These land invasions ended up though having a negative impact on agricultural activities, social relations and any sense of identity for both social groups.

5.7.1 Black on black land invasions occurring due to ignorance

The perspective discussed here is that of the District Administrator (DA) who purported to be echoing the position of the state. The official succinctly gave ‘ignorance’ as the key factor which caused hundreds of land-seekers to occupy grazing land at a land-stressed, black-dominated smallholder irrigation scheme, at a time when other land hungry masses across the country were occupying white owned and supposedly fertile land, mostly located in agro-ecologically productive regions. He said that *“people were genuinely looking for land and thought all open land was free and habitable. They did not realise that it [Mushandike Irrigation Scheme] was earmarked for other activities; they [the invaders] were ignorant”* (Interview with DA, 10 June 2014). Furthermore, he argued that *“Sabhukus later on exploited the situation and were fraudulent; they collected money from some land-seekers and made them believe that they were being officially and genuinely allocated land legally”* (Interview with DA, 10 June 2014). For this official, most of the people who entered Mushandike during the initial years were genuine land-seekers who invaded the scheme unknowingly and on their own volition, basically thinking that the land was open and unoccupied land (*terra nullius*). Therefore, the invasion of Mushandike was unintentional and regrettably accidental. Interestingly, during the many study visits I had to Mushandike over three years, I did not come across confirmation of this ignorance perspective on the part of anyone else, including those who entered the scheme. Simply put, nobody indicated or implied coming to Mushandike accidentally.

It was equally surprising that the government official remarks that land already occupied by people (to whom it was allocated by government for irrigation) was land ‘earmarked for other activities’, as if it was still unallocated. This is an odd observation considering that he was talking about a well-known irrigation scheme which was established by government and allocated to individuals who had been part of the scheme since 1986, thus close to three decades before the day of the interview. It was simply neither open nor earmarked for anything else. Throughout the interview,

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he in fact avoided acknowledging that this was land occupied by irrigators. Furthermore, he could not explain how hundreds of people would blindly invade black-occupied grazing land instead of the above-mentioned two farms lying between Mushandike villages or any other white farms in the area. Asked what he thought about the claim that land-seekers were deliberately channelled into Mushandike because Chief Charumbira, late Minister Mudenge and other senior politicians were planning to occupy the farms in the vicinity, he merely said: *“I am a civil servant and not a politician; politicians can give you answers to that. All I know is that people went into the grazing land thinking it was empty land”* (Interview with DA, 10 June 2014).

The ignorance thesis was so naïve that it seemed to be a rehearsed response prepared perhaps for visitors and not for a person who had already spent many weeks visiting the scheme every day. The following reasons significantly undermine the ignorance claim. Firstly, many amongst the initial land occupiers were from Charumbira communal area; therefore, they knew Mushandike extremely well as the two communities are simply separated by the old Beitbridge road. Second, some of the land-seekers already had relations in Village 23 and 10 which were allocated to people from Charumbira as already discussed. Third, there were no land invaders on private farms within the Mushandike area. Actually, the route through which land-seekers from Charumbira accessed northern villages of Mushandike, lying close to 17 kilometres away, was through these private farms. Why then did these ignorant land-seekers by-pass these farm only to end-up occupying barren grazing land?

The sweeping categorisation of such a large population of rural dwellers as ignorant was misplaced. It is also reminiscent of colonial times when an entire racial group was categorised as such by the state to justify colonisation, expropriation, exploitation and domination under the pretext of pursuing a civilising agenda (Lamming, 1995; Mamdani, 1996; Fanon, 1967). This positing of ignorance in the colonial context represented the displaying of a form of power and it served to justify the silencing of the different ‘other’ in terms of rights of citizenship. It symbolised contempt by the white colonisers for indigenous people, which the post-colonial government official was reproducing with reference to Mushandike land invaders.

The rationale for the government official's narrative is ambiguous, as is the purpose if any it is meant to serve. His suggestion of incidental error of judgment in the invasions meant that they were not aimed at jeopardising the lives of irrigators (whose presence the invaders were supposedly unaware of). But he sought not to clarify his rationale. Of course, assertions of ignorance tend to frame the land invasions in a manner which could easily have helped the official to deliberately influence thinking with regards to such invasions, and project issues to his advantage. His tactic could easily have been to be deliberately unanalytical so as to omit fundamental aspects of an issue while constructing some artificial but seemingly plausible explanation (Chari, 2013).

The lack of analysis on the part of the official was alarming considering his supposed level of education, allegedly a former lecturer at a teachers' training college. Framing land invasions as an act of ignorance allowed him to bend the truth and to frame the invasions in a highly depoliticised form (and thus to draw attention away from any behind-the-scenes state machinations). Once constructed as an act of ignorance, all the nuanced causes of the invasions become obscured. In this sense, the ignorance argument is a political framing which simplifies the unfolding of events and reduces these events to just one big regrettable accident. His practical solution was to assert that the situation would likely be reversed, as the problem was based on a communication error (though fuelled by the *Sabhukus*): *"All we want now is stability; those [ignorant] people will surely be removed and allocated land elsewhere. I don't know where and when but for now we want peace"* (Interview with DA, 10 June 2014). His solution was as simplistic as his causal analysis.

5.7.2 Land invasions and political agendas

An alternative framing of the invasions is that land-seekers were deliberately allocated land at Mushandike for political reasons, and this speaks to the idea that politics is to be blamed for the invasions. This view does not have to be a true fact for it to be strongly believed by a section of the local population. To them, this is the reality as they understand and live it.

From the scheme's inception until the late 1990s, Chief Charumbira was not directly involved in providing leadership to the scheme. This is largely because state policy did not allow chiefs to meddle with the running of land resettlements including irrigation schemes, as they were

established in spaces declared independent of the jurisdiction of traditional authorities (Jacobs, 1991). Instead they were placed under Resettlement Officers (ROs) who were well trained and supposedly knowledgeable enough to provide leadership at least around administration of resettlement projects. But like demonstrators and scheme managers in colonial Zimbabwe, they were also empowered to punish and even to evict beneficiaries from schemes.

Through the ROs, the state sought to maintain a full presence at and within resettlement schemes, watching and controlling in a manner that transformed schemes into a Foucauldian-type panopticon. Through such surveillance, ROs (on behalf of the state) imposed state interests upon beneficiaries and wielded the real power to evict, thus garnering obedience through intimidation. The ROs represented the eye of power, violence and punishment in as much as they also symbolised superior and 'real' sophisticated knowledge. Like Emery Alvord in the colonial past, their role was to enact control through the supposed 'intellectualisation' and modernisation of communal agriculture and to eliminate indiscipline through eviction. However, findings at Mushandike suggest that, to beneficiaries, the RO's presence in the scheme was beneficial (as discussed in detail below).

The RO at Mushandike was assisted by elected officials at the village level. Each village was led by a Production Chairman and a Village Chairman who were assisted by other elected members. The Production Chairman was in charge of production while the Village Chairman took charge of domestic issues in the village. In the late 1990s the government decided, as part of its restructuring process, to withdraw ROs from smallholder irrigation schemes. The schemes were left to run on their own. However, the withdrawal of the RO is alleged to have created a power vacuum which many players, the Chief included, pounced on. Backed by politicians (for purposes discussed below), the chief gained entry and took charge of the scheme. To make himself relevant and to consolidate power, he converted elected Village Chairmen into his self-appointed Village Heads. In this context, developments at Mushandike fell outside the ambit of the implementation of the FTLRP.

The Chief through Village Heads allegedly drove ZANU-PF agendas in the scheme. One crucial act was to populate Mushandike with illegal settlers whose insecurity would compel them to align

with the ruling party for protection. This channelling in of informal settlers was in response to the rising popularity of the MDC in the scheme, which the ruling party needed to neutralise, with chiefly support. This deepening influence became evident during the 2000 referendum and the 2002 elections which were dominated by the MDC at the scheme. In 2000, scheme members reported the land invasions to state bureaucrats who would not help them, suggesting instead that they had to wait for a political decision since the invasions were a political problem which could only be addressed by politicians. Some members took the issue to the Chief who is reported to have said *“let them stay they will be removed very soon”* (Interview with Sengu, 10 April 2015).

The explanation I received from one government official as to why the FTLRP (which had officially allocated land to those who invaded white-owned farms) did nothing about Mushandike was that government merely *“overlooked it”* (Interview with John, 10 April 2015). This suggests that the government merely prioritised addressing the broader redistributive land issues pertinent to fast track reform while trivialising the highly-localised Mushandike issue. Ironically, many more people kept arriving and continue trickling in, to this day. In 2000, a prominent politician from the ruling party is said to have brought in a large group of people to be allocated land by the *Sabhuku* in Village 15 and subsequently boasted at a rally that *“where we come from, every metre of land has a person on it; don’t complain that we brought too many people here”* (Interview with Sengu, 10 April 2015). At the same rally another politician apparently said:

Kwatinobva munhu akaoma musoro tinogarisa vanhu mumba make, muri kuda kuchengetera ivhu mombe, dzinovhota here, tiri kuda kutanga tanyaradza muvengi tozotarisa nezvimwe zvese. (*Where we come from, if a person gets stubborn, we resettle people in his own house. You want to keep land for cattle. Do cattle vote? Let us neutralise the enemy [MDC] first then we will deal with the rest*) (Interview with Sengu, 10 April 2015).

There is no doubt that the people who were informally allowed to settle at Mushandike genuinely needed land. But politicians merely exploited their plight for their selfish gains, in part to undermine the influence of the main opposition party.

The evidence shows that the plight and marginalisation of both irrigation scheme members and those who moved into Mushandike were worsened by politics. Land-seekers are still without land while irrigation farmers lost grazing land, and this triggered a series of setbacks discussed in detail in Chapter 6. Such politics contradicts the views of Rejai (1967: 205) and Hendricks (2003: 1) that land redistribution and resettlement in a post-colonial democracy promotes participation in social, economic and political spaces. On the contrary, the preoccupation of politicians at Mushandike was on pursuing narrow political interests regardless of the long-term implications for the rural electorate. Instead of allocating land to redress historical resource-related inequalities (Peters et al., 2002), the focus was on retaining political power by any means necessary (Malcolm X, 1965). The ‘people’ were constructed as mere tools through which political goals had to be achieved.

5.7.3 From the horse’s mouth: we are not land-invaders

It is crucial to pay attention to the perspectives of the informal land-invaders themselves with regards how they accessed land. This brings to the fore the importance of listening to narratives of different groups in society particularly because it gives a voice even to the weak to tell their story, and to construct their own reality as it exists to and for them on a day-to-day basis in their lifeworld. It accords them an opportunity to use their own words from their own vocabulary to define and articulate issues as they understand them.

In this context, it appears that some immigrants (invaders) were allocated land by *Sabhukus*, while others bought stands from individual irrigators. But all of them were shown their stands in the presence of the *Sabhuku*. These land-seekers were not mere victims of various circumstances but were proactive: as conscious actors striving to better their own existence, they were well aware of their actions and the repercussions thereof. Their vulnerability is clear but they do not construct themselves or their relationship with the world as characterised by victimhood but by aspirations and hope for a positive change. According to one interviewee:

We did not invade any land. However, since we are staying on other people’s land without proper permission we could still be regarded as land invaders. However, I like many other people here, was allocated a residential land by the Sabhuku but I wanted a crop field too.

I went back to him and he allocated me another piece a bit far away from my residential stand. The Sabhuku told us that he was authorised by the Chief to allocate land. He also told us that to thank the chief we should go and cultivate his land on a yearly basis according to our Zunde raMambo tradition. We have been doing this ever since. It is considered a way of thanking him; he allows us to do this annually because he acknowledges our presence here. We have built huge and expensive permanent houses and other structures because the Chief of Chiefs gives us assurance that we will not be evicted (Interview with Mutsvaki, 11 April 2015).

This strong belief and trust in the power of the Chief's word is relatively ubiquitous among land invaders at Mushandike. He is referred to as *Mambo wemadzimambo*, (Chief of Chiefs) because he also heads Zimbabwe's Council of Chiefs. The *Sabhuku* emerges as directly involved in supposedly legitimate land allocations (a point also raised by the senior government official) and as authorised by the Chief. Although the Chief's actual involvement appears remote, he is dragged to the centre of the drama through *Zunde RaMambo*. He appears to acknowledge the presence of these land seekers in the scheme through allowing them to work on his land annually. The land invaders work on his land while he affords them recognition, which in practice translates to legitimisation and protection. As expressed in the above quotation, the land invaders and the Chief seemingly have built a mutually beneficial relationship over the years with the *Sabhuku* as the conduit.

Another land-seeker suggested there is no way people could have invaded Mushandike without political permission and support, considering how violent the ruling party was at the time. He argues that, with the levels of intimidation and violence that met those who opposed state power at the time, it is impossible to imagine how the supposed land invaders would have dared to evoke the wrath of Chief Charumbira through 'squatting' on this land, which is purported to fall under his jurisdiction, although this is contested as discussed above. He said:

If we had invaded this land I could be showing you a number of graves and narrating a few harrowing disappearances. People fear Charumbira because he is powerful; he has political power and is ruthless. The farms he and Mudenge took possession of are not being utilised

while hundreds are desperate here. It would be suicidal to try and occupy them (Interview with Mupomerwi, 11 June 2014).

He indicated that, in coming from Masvingo town, *“I approached the Village Head and he gave me land for free, in the presence of his police guy [Mupurisa waMambo]. I only paid US\$25 administrative fee”* (Interview with Mupomerwi, 11 June 2014). Though concurring with the earlier respondent that invasions as such did not take place, this respondent from Masvingo town does not emphasise a mutually beneficial relationship between the powerful and the marginalised, but one characterised by fear of the powerful other. For him, fear of the powerful is evidenced by the non-invasion of lands owned by those with political power (for example, Mudenge and Charumbira’s commercial farms) juxtaposed with the massive occupation of a scheme (Mushandike) occupied by the weak. More importantly, the respondent emphasises that political power strongly determined who got what, when and how. Whereas the powerful took possession of farms they did not really need, the weak only coalesced in large numbers on barren grazing land.

Individual irrigation farmers also availed land to the landless. Findings show that some scheme members and/or their children sold land (often just a stand) to land-seekers. According to one interviewee:

I bought a stand from a farmer in the original village. It was cheap, I only paid US\$190. The stand was supposed to be for his son but the son is not interested in staying here. Sometimes farmers sell stands meant for their children when they are in dire need of money or are at loggerheads with their children. A few others, like the one I bought from, agreed with their sons to sell. Sometimes children sell to raise money to either migrate or to start a business (Interview with Muwani, 11 June 2014).

She went on in a celebratory mood to suggest that:

I can only be evicted when everyone else is removed, I am not with the invaders in Makombo. I am here in the village with the irrigators. I only need a stand. I am not a farmer, and I run my own business in Masvingo. It is cheaper to buy a bigger piece of land here, way bigger

than I could ever afford in town and build your own dream house here than in town. We have electricity and water. We don't even experience load shedding here (Interview with Muwani, 11 June 2014).

She raises three important issues. First, there is the issue of the heterogeneity of the land-seekers. She shows that not all of them are farmers or intend to farm, but that some simply needed land for residential purposes. Second, individual irrigators also participated in selling land for various reasons. Third, not all informal settlers are in *Makombo* as others reside in the official villages. The price she paid for the land shows that these people were prepared to make huge financial sacrifices to obtain land outside town as long as they had the money. Highlighting concerns with uncertainty linked to the fear of eviction, she finds solace in where her land lies such that, for her, there is no absence of legality of occupancy. Being in the midst of those who were officially resettled and not under the Chief's or the *Sabhuku*'s protection is her singular source of hope for evading eviction, which she feels is most likely to come about for those on the *Makombo*. Her reasons for getting this land, like that of many others, was not to cultivate crops but to access cheaper residential land within 20 kilometres from Masvingo town.

A new arrival, one who received land at Mushandike in 2015, said he cannot claim that he bought land. According to him, he merely thanked the Village Head with an undisclosed amount of money. He argued:

I gave him some money to thank him for allocating me land. Some might call it corruption but only those who are rescued from difficulty understand the importance of what transpired. I had been condemned to Masangura, in Chiredzi, by the government after it evicted me from Tokwe Mukosi. Masangura is one of the barren places where people who were removed to make way for Tokwe/Mukosi dam were resettled (Interview with Rapson, 9 September 2016).

The portrayal of the *Sabhuku* as someone who rescued a desperate man forsaken even by his own government constructs the *Sabhuku* not as corrupt but as a considerate person. The man's refusal to disclose the amount of money with which he expressed gratitude fortifies the idea that he is convinced that this transaction hinged more on responsiveness to need than on mere corruption or

avarice. However, the existence of need does not erase the fact that they both acted corruptly in advancing their own personal projects at the expense of the scheme members more broadly. Furthermore, his response indicates that the *Sabhuku* independently allocated land and resettled a land-seeker on land that belonged to the collective. In this way, it appears that the *Sabhuku* did not doubt the authority which informed his actions. The *Sabhuku* and all he helped benefitted in different ways, given the existing deep rooted land shortages, high costs of urban land and harsh exclusion of many in communal areas from land. Many were indeed rendered desperate by exclusion and victimisation through subtle and ruthless politics.

What is obtaining at Mushandike reflects that many people in Africa are attracted to the state because it is basically the only major source of livelihood-supporting resources (O'Brien, 1996). Evidently, the state – whether represented locally by a corrupt *Sabhuku* or invisible Chief – functions as the axis of socio-economic and political life regardless of its form (Neocosmos, 2003). It functions as the principal organ for the distribution of resources. Consequently, 'rogue' Village Heads and other local state functionaries control the lives of hundreds of families at Mushandike and elsewhere in rural Zimbabwe. Their power on the one hand flows from their handlers (i.e. the central state) and on the other from the vital natural resources they control locally as an arm of the state.

It is evident from what obtains at Mushandike that, in relation to the ordinary person, the state could either be prohibitive or enabling, depending upon the strength of one's representation in the struggle for access to resources. In the case of Mushandike, those who are well represented within the state may dole-out small parcels of barren land to the badly connected 'rural bumpkins'. In many instances, the state in Africa responds favourably to the concerns of the rich or powerful for 'predatory' accumulation as Neocosmos (2003) observes elsewhere. This is evidenced by the fact that Mudenge and Charumbira took possession, with the state's blessing, of farms that they do not seem to need (as they are hardly utilised) while hundreds of households desperately crowd on barren land owned or at least occupied by fellow 'peasants' who are equally striving to make a living from a depleted land resource base.

However, the poor (as shown above) strive to bring meaning to their own lives. In so doing, they even engage in informal, ‘people’ driven land struggles, categorised by Chaturvedi (2000: viii) in the discussion of the Indian peasantry as the “politics of the people”. Those land seekers at Mushandike are aware that their stay at the scheme may be deemed illegitimate and this could end sooner rather than later. However, they are also aware that their presence attracts attention which might result in them being allocated land elsewhere. Therefore, as social actors, they seek to maximise benefits from prevailing circumstances even though they appear as victims. They may not be land invaders but they remain as land-seekers vulnerable to further exploitation if more responsible arms of the state do not intervene.

5.8 Power pursued through territorial expansion concealed behind the discourse of re-traditionalisation

At Mushandike, Chief Charumbira from the neighbouring communal area is purported to have unofficially assumed leadership of the scheme after the departure of the RO as discussed above. However, he never became directly involved in the daily running of the scheme as did the RO. Rather, he oversaw the scheme with *Sabhukus*, his own representatives, functioning as his foot-soldiers on the ground. The Chief had a pivotal role in the land politics which played out at the scheme after his assumption of leadership. His personal interests in particular were pivotal although, in many instances (if not all), such interests were embedded in or concealed behind administrative or policy needs. In the case of Mushandike, this means that land contestations and conflicts are not always about land. The contestations at the scheme, at least to some stakeholders including the Chief, became largely about power rather than about land. The quest for consolidating power over the scheme was entangled in – and pursued through – discourses of re-traditionalisation which included territorial expansion. For the Chief, control over Mushandike gave him more power as a Chief over an expanded territory and, just as importantly, this entailed the restoration of the dominance of the ruling party ZANU-PF which he supported. The Chief in fact is known as an active ZANU-PF cadre who at one time was appointed as a Deputy Minister even though his office is considered to be above party politics.

Land resettlement discourses since the 1980s opposed any involvement of chiefs in the land redistribution programme (including with reference to irrigation schemes). But, from a government

perspective, the major reason for eventually placing an irrigation scheme under the leadership of the Chief entailed a shift in policy. According to a senior government official: *“The national President directed that all former white owned land should be returned to chiefs from whom it was initially expropriated by the colonial system. In principle, all land of Zimbabwe falls under some indigenous chief who should now own and control it”* (Interview with Witness, 11 April 2015). Thus, the government extended the authority of chiefs beyond the communal areas and into the resettlement areas, including on fast track farms. On what had necessitated such a policy shift, he said:

Everyone knows the country is currently under siege from western powers who want to introduce western culture such as gay and lesbian practices through the MDC. Chiefs as custodians of our culture and tradition are tasked with guarding against contamination through reintroducing our traditions to everyone everywhere. Therefore, the President and the ruling party saw it fit to return all rural land to chiefs so that they guard against the intrusion of such despicable cultural practices (Interview with Witness, 11 April 2015).

This might seem like an odd policy position, involving a shift in land governance policy simply for purposes of preserving the cultural status quo. This insinuates the return, in the hands of a post-colonial supposedly modernist democracy-pursuing government, of discourses of cultural difference (with indigenous people considered as steeped in tradition) peddled in the colonial world by proponents of white racism. This reintroduction or extension of tradition was essentially a political project which became localised at Mushandike. It commenced with the removal of elected Village Chairmen who were replaced by Village Heads (appointed and imposed by the chief), the re-introduction of *chisi* (a compulsory traditional rest day), and the re-introduction of the *zunde ramambo* practice (but still confined to ‘land-invaders’, as discussed above).

Findings indicate that the Mushandike population of irrigators and land seekers is largely divided into two groups, one known to be pro-Charumbira and another opposed to him on nearly every issue. Many amongst those categorised as pro-Charumbira find the traditional ideas and practices palatable. Expressing support one lady said: *“Here at Mushandike, we need a Chief for spiritual purposes. For instance, the dam dried up for four years; maybe the ancestors were angry with us*

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for doing as we please on their land. They are the owners of the land, and the Chief as their son will help us talk to them. As indigenous people our land is always connected to our ancestors” (Interview with Mai Moyo, 12 April 2014). Her argument is located within discourses of uncertainty, land, spirituality and material well-being, with drought and crop failure being linked to spiritual and religious practices. The chief, as a descendant or representative of the ancestors, is seen as an answer to uncertainty in agriculture such that, once his office is recognised and respected, uncertainty is removed and replaced by certainty. The Chief represents certainty in that he functions in such a way that the ancestors will either be pleased or angry with the local community and, either way, the community will act accordingly. When it rains, the ancestors are expressing their pleasure and, when it does not, the Chief will be in a position to rectify the situation. In the end, uncertainty is a major concern for agrarian societies especially those that depend on rain-fed agriculture. In a context such as Mushandike, limited rainfall and low agricultural productivity are possible uncertainties that disrupt the lives of local people. It is not surprising then that for people who have experienced the vagaries of drought, the return of the land to the Chief is a welcome development.

Others however are opposed to Chief Charumbira, and they are branded as pro-Bere (a label I discuss in detail below). The Bere chieftaincy was disbanded by the colonial government in 1924 partly as punishment for disobeying the state and his land was turned into commercial farms. Both Bere and Charumbira’s people in Mushandike concur that part of Mushandike land historically belonged to both chiefs. One respondent, an irrigator supportive of the lost Bere chieftainship, argued that:

If tradition is important, let the first act of embracing it be the restoration of the Bere chieftaincy. Then that should be accompanied by the apportionment of territory to rightful leaders. When territorial disputes are resolved, then the rest follows. It is then that we establish who is indigenous where and what role one is eligible to perform (Interview with Mai Chauke, 14 April 2015).

For those whose views are represented by this respondent, the idea of embracing tradition has no legitimacy until such time as the contentious issue of chieftaincy (which has existed for decades)

is addressed. To them, accepting that Charumbira should play a central role across the whole of Mushandike would be akin to embracing him as the rightful Chief when in essence they think he is not. These local contestations steeped within the traditionalist discourse run very deep, and they contribute to the conflictual land politics which exist at the irrigation scheme.

This return to so-called tradition (as an interpretation of the pre-colonial past) is not uncommon in the post-colonial world in Africa, as can be witnessed in the case of post-apartheid South Africa. The endeavour to place all land under chiefs is reminiscent of what Chabal (1996: 32) refers to elsewhere as “backward civilization” or “re-traditionalisation”. This is also a reminder of the invention of tradition discussed by Ranger (1983, 1993) on Zimbabwe and by Mamdani (1996) pertaining to Africa in general, with the underlying motive to control Africans through indirect rule. In this respect, it appears that history is threatening to repeat itself, presumably because the colonial state has not been undermined (and remains in large part untransformed). In this sense, the state evidently “has a formidable capacity for its own reproduction across time” (Young, 1994: 2). In drawing upon discourses and practices of tradition, the post-colonial state continues to use tradition as an instrument of power (Neocosmos, 2002).

Such a function though created ambivalent attitudes towards tradition in the post-colonial context. With independence, post-colonial leaders in Africa thus tended to have a contradictory relationship to tradition, as Mamdani (1996) argues, because of the way it was politically used during colonialism under indirect rule. For some post-colonial leaders, tradition (including chiefly rule) is irrevocably linked to decentralised despotism inherited from the colonial period, and hence it has no place in the new democratic dispensation. This ‘radical’ position though is challenged by the more ‘conservative’ post-colonial stance, which argues for the maintenance of the chieftainship system and its possible compatibility with modern forms of democracy. An ultra-conservative stance would go so far as to claim that chiefly rule is deeply democratic and that Western notions of democracy are unsuitable for conditions in Africa.

In the case of Zimbabwe, after first questioning the significance of chiefs under post-colonial democracy, the Zimbabwean state has increasingly stressed their relevance including, as indicated, in fast track resettlement areas. This exists in rural spaces only in Zimbabwe, with urban

populations (as under colonialism) not experiencing this enforcement of traditional forms of governance. The chieftainships in rural Zimbabwe generally sit uneasily with the rural councils which are democratically elected but it seems that the placement of Chief Charumbira over the Mushandike scheme does not complement already-existing democratically-elected representatives but replaces them altogether. This is exemplified by the replacement of democratically elected Village heads with *Sabhukus* as the Chief's appointees.

The articulation of indigeneity (or tradition) as linked to land, governance and religious practices thus can become a vital component of land politics in the post-colony. At Mushandike for instance, Chief Charumbira legitimates his dominion over the scheme on the basis that the scheme is on land that is his, traditionally and historically. Similarly, the imposition of a Charumbira *chisi*-day (rest day) on a people who purported to have different *chisi* days (according to traditions of their places of origin) although they do not observe them at Mushandike, connects issues of indigeneity, tradition and culture to governance. Evidently, articulations of indigeneity-tradition are about power, and land ownership thus can be used for purposes of inclusion and exclusion from material and other resources. This is particularly the case when a chief and/or *Sabhukus* can evoke customary mandates to expel or deny "recalcitrant" individuals' access to resources (Li, 2000). For instance, the claim that indigenous ownership of land should dictate whose *chisi* days should be observed shows how indigeneity privileges insiders over outsiders. To remove the element of inclusion and exclusion in land relations, some African governments, according to Lutz (2007) oppose claims of indigeneity by any group of individuals, in relation to a particular piece of land; rather, they prefer to treat all Africans as indigenous to their country.

Despite any merit in the conservative (pro-re-traditionalisation) argument noted above, trying to understand how and why people in an irrigation scheme in contemporary Zimbabwe would need a chief to defend them against for example the penetration of Western culture is unclear. My opinion is that identity in the form of indigeneity (or traditional practices/customs) is often deployed, as observed by Mbembe elsewhere, for "maximum instrumentality" in the pursuit of power and domination (Webner, 1996: 1). Through discourses of re-traditionalisation, chiefs in effect are given dominion over a possibly rebellious population to effect social change aimed

towards the realisation of hidden goals. At Mushandike, for instance, Chief Charumbira wantonly imposed *Sabhukus* upon an unwilling population which had, until then, working local leadership structures; and this was done simply to ensure that the state and the ruling party had control at the micro-level. The apparent nostalgic yearning for an imaginary and supposedly distant past appears as but a façade masking political intentions such as restoration of power and control.

However, Bourdillon's observations in the book, *The Shona People*, does provide some sort of corrective to seeing re-traditionalism in terms of conspiracies, as a means to enact domination. He thus claims that, for Shona people, there is some legitimacy in placing land under a chief. Bourdillon (1987: 67) suggests that, culturally, "[t]he land is intimately associated with the history of a chiefdom, with the ruling chief, and with the ancestral spirits who lived on it". Therefore, laying claim to land through chiefs is an affirmation of place-linked identity and a return of land to its rightful rulers (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992: 7). How political rulers in the post-colony view the functionality of chiefs and how people on the ground interpret chiefly rule hence are not necessarily the same.

5.9 Immiseration for control

Some, amongst irrigators and invaders at Mushandike, suggest that the informal and illegal allocation of land to hundreds of land seekers was consistent with the desire by the authorities to control through immiseration. They argue that scheme members had been empowered by prosperity to a point where they made important decisions for themselves. But the state, desirous of controlling them, was displeased with this burgeoning autonomy at local level, especially because it was linked to the embrace of opposition politics evidenced by the rising support for the MDC. To thwart this unwelcome un-governability, the state (according to this view) saw it fit to regain control through impoverishment, that is, through scuttling irrigation-based production. The state's argument according to one respondent was "*regai vatambure vagotinzwa* (Let them suffer that they listen to us)" (Interview with Mai Chauke, 17 June 2014).

In this way, illegal land allocation was deployed by the state for the purpose of controlling the community through immiseration. Research findings suggest that this land allocation led to a loss of draught power and increased daily labour demands because of the need to herd cattle which

followed the loss of grazing land. These aspects subsequently negatively impacted productivity. Loss of grazing land due to land allocations meant loss of draught power since many farmers had to sell their cattle. The demand for draught power became even higher when the dam filled up in 2014 after having dried-up for a number of years. This is because the land had been subjected to rain-fed cultivation for close to four agricultural seasons and had to be levelled-up, preferably with draught power, to allow for flood irrigation. Loss of grazing land also meant that livestock had to be herded. This entailed a new demand for labour that negatively affected productivity as it reduced the number of hands that carried out work on the land. One respondent lamented: “*Whites came and took our land and pushed us into reserves. Chief Charumbira came and took our grazing land and resettled people on it, yet he took a whole farm for himself. These rulers continue to succeed in making us poorer*” (Interview with Mai Chauke, 17 June 2014).

Problems triggered by the drive towards re-traditionalisation thus included impoverishment which ensued from illegal land allocations supposedly carried out by *Sabhukus* on behalf of the Chief (whose decisions are supported and upheld by government). It is apparent that cultural interference (re-traditionalism) still functions as a weapon of the state deployed not only to divide and rule but to impoverish, dominate and control. Writing on the colonial situation, Cabral (1993: 53) points out that domination can best be maintained through “repression of the cultural life of the people concerned” occurring through discourses of an invented traditionalisation. Under post-colonial conditions in Zimbabwe, such repression in the Mushandike context involved the imposition of re-traditionalisation by the state through imposition of ideas, structures (Chief and *Sabhukus*) and practices (observation of *chisi*), all accompanied by victimisation and intimidation of dissenting voices. In the guise of re-introducing supposedly beneficial tradition, power appears to have succeeded in turning irrigation farmers and land-seekers into impoverished bodies. In a place such as Mushandike, “[b]ecoming somebody can no longer be taken for granted” (O’Brien’s, 1996: 58).

Mushandike is now one area in which failure is almost guaranteed. One concerned young mother, a land-seeker said: “*I came here as a newlywed, now I am a mother of a teenager. All I have done is take insults and name calling and wait for government to hear my cry for land. I have waited for all my active years for an opportunity to do something significant. Nobody values my time, I*

am nothing, just a poor woman is all I am. Do I matter to anybody?” (Interview with Nhambo, 10 April 2015). It appears that if, nothing constructive is done soon, Mushandike will produce multiple lost generations. What is refreshing about Mushandike though is that the poor do not seem to be giving up any time soon. They remain hopeful and are still fighting hard to achieve something meaningful in their lives despite all the frustrations. They continue to farm, and diversify by way of off-farm activities such as buying and selling, and gold panning (though illegal), as well as by sending some family members to work elsewhere to earn money with which they supplement their Mushandike-based earnings.

5.10 Concluding remarks

The study so far has shown that struggles for access to scarce natural resources in a rural context can be complex and studded with far reaching implications. Although it is evident that the poor negotiate and strive to get the best possible outcome, contestations tend to be complicated by external involvement. It is evident that, in a country such as Zimbabwe, where the majority of the indigenous population lives in communal areas located in marginal, infertile and dry regions, stressed for both land and water, serious land reforms are very necessary. Livelihoods in these contexts are precarious as they are largely dependent on land which is in short supply and water which is highly inaccessible. Evidently, the vulnerability of the poor is glaring and renders them easily exploited by privileged groups. Although poor households seem to plummet deeper into poverty when deprived of access to livelihood supporting resources, at Mushandike they exhibit a good measure of resilience which is evidenced by the fact that they have already endured 16 years of immense deprivation and immiseration.

Literature helps understand why land-seekers dubbed it worthwhile to end up on other people's land, and to remain there for 16 years. For example, Gore (1993) stresses that the marginalised lack options to the extent that 'unruly social practices' help them challenge legal rules of resource entitlement. In so doing, they may subject property rights and rules to contestation, particularly when the many are deprived while the few seem privileged (Cousins, 1997). Mushandike appeared as an island of hope and privilege juxtaposed with immense deprivation across the province. It therefore stood as a symbol of privilege easily attracting admiration and envy. Land invasions

could be viewed as a challenge to formal rules governing ownership and utilisation of resources which caused conflict between ‘owners’ and ‘intruder’. This does not take away the fact, already established, that the land invasions at Mushandike were caused by numerous factors – simply points to the inherent and integral agency of the landless or land-short.

CHAPTER 6: LAND OWNERSHIP AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING SOCIAL CONTEXT

6.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses how land ownership and tenure changes shape land and water politics, agricultural production and social relations at Mushandike. Based on empirical evidence, the chapter suggests that social changes which arise from externally-induced shifts within the social, political and economic environment impact individuals and households locally either negatively or positively, depending upon the character of such shifts, the ways in which they are managed, and the availability and accessibility (or absence thereof) of resources.

Resettlement of people, and all land reform programmes, are about change. They are about transforming lives through changes in resource access, policy, support mechanisms, practices, reality-construction and meaning-making concerning the sum totality of life. Relatively well-planned resettlement programmes of the early 1980s in Zimbabwe brought about, over time, positive social changes for the resettled farmers which included increased agricultural production (Kinsey, 1999, 2004; Juan, 2006; Magede and Mukono, 2014). This possibility is consistent with the view that well-managed externally-induced change yields positive social transformation. Conversely, this chapter puts forward evidence that substantiates the view that rapid social change accompanied by resource shortages negatively affects individuals in local communities. In support of this, Merlet et al. (2014:3) argue that badly-managed change potentially triggers conflict as society struggles with developing appropriate forms of governance among other aspects.

6.2 Explaining significant social change and conflict

Extensive change can cause and/or exacerbate social conflict. Ordinarily change is integral, and conducive, to enhancing social life. It involves and provokes (and is provoked by) for example emerging ideas, technology, development activities and innovations. In this respect, Lauer (1977: 6) claims that social change “is normal and continual, but in various directions, at various rates, and at multiple levels of social life” and is fundamentally integral to social transformation. However, social change potentially creates opportunities for conflict (Schmelzle and Bloomfield,

2006) because it requires adaptability which tends to be stressful due to demands on time, learning, material resources and social organisation. This seems to be the case at Mushandike.

In the late 1990s, Mushandike experienced a number of changes that had far-reaching implications on social life. These changes included the departure of the RO, the unceremonious assumption of scheme leadership by the Chief, the non-consultative conversion of Village Chairmen to *Sabhukus* by the Chief, land invasions and subsequent shifts in notions of land ownership, sense of community and identity. In fact, it appears that most of those who played a part in the land invasions (including politicians, *Sabhukus* and invaders among others) were ready for conflict judging from their behaviour, language and decisiveness to act without consultation. Narrating his view of how the land invasions occurred, one old man, an irrigator said:

The behaviour of land-invaders and ZANU PF-political leadership was a sign of the times. The country was angry and violence and intimidation defined social relations. No one was interested in us, in our opinions, views or feelings ...; we were too puny, too insignificant to warrant attention. To them, we were all not ZANU-PF supporters and they were the party's authentic supporters despite that some of us never wavered from supporting it. They wanted us to believe we were unjustifiably on the land and to recognise that those who were coming in were the land's rightful heirs who had come to reclaim it. They threatened us with possible eviction and violently attacked those who voiced or exhibited signs of dissent. It was a scary time of high uncertainty. It was sad (Interview with Garwe, April 15 2014).

This local interface of conflict was dominated by in-migrants who appeared more powerful than the recipient population. This was a reversal of the normal story about migrants, who are regularly understood as subordinate strangers in a new place. But it was reminiscent of colonisation which was characterised by the penetration of territories by groups of in-migrants (white settlers) who claimed superiority over local populations and eventually emerged more powerful than the indigenous population (because, in the case of colonialism, white invaders possessed superior weapons of war). The power of land invaders, as that of white colonisers, lay in support guaranteed by a superior source: a metropolitan country for colonialists and ZANU-PF for land invaders migrating to Mushandike. Intimidation and threats that punctuated the land invasion process at

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Mushandike served the purpose of soliciting submission. The wholesale exclusion of hosts (irrigators) from the ZANU-PF identity justified their construction as the opposite other, ideologically wrong and undeserving beneficiaries of resettlement programmes. This projection of hosts as the different and opposite other ended up legitimising the invasions. One female land-invader aptly summed up the founding thinking which has prevailed to this day:

Ivhu harisi ravo. Hapana kana mumwe chete wavo akauya nevhu muno. Hapana ane rukuvhute muno. Tese takarwira ivhu iri, rakafirwa ivhu iri. Kana pane anoti nderake ngaachitiudzawo chatakarwira. Anotirongedzera mabonzo evese vakafa muhondo, odira turopa otipa toenda zvedu. (*The land is not theirs. None of them came here with the land. None of them were born here. We all fought for this land and many died for it. If there is anyone who claims that the land is his/hers, then he/she should tell us what we fought for. Then he/she will gather and pack the bones of all who died during the liberation war, then pour a little blood and give us; we will [then] depart*) (Interview with Hondo, 16 June 2014).

Important issues arise from this. First, there is the clear denial of the hosts' ownership of the land at Mushandike. This serves the purpose of positioning hosts as a misguided even greedy group bent on denying fellow liberators access to land for which many selflessly sacrificed their lives by participating in the liberation war. This denial was widely shared amongst land-invaders and was echoed by some senior government officials (as already discussed). This justified the land invasions and legitimised the claim to the moral high-ground by land-invaders and their supporters who located their actions within an emancipatory discourse. The allusion to the liberation struggle was also an attempt at linking these black-on-black land invasions to the nationwide and broad-based invasions of white-owned land. Opposing the local invasions, thus, easily translates into a challenge against a mass-based land repossession movement, with this movement christened as the Third *Chimurenga* in drawing its connection to the anti-colonial struggle.

This conception of the reality and relevance of the Mushandike invasions remain to this day, a conception which leans more towards political correctness than policy consistency. In this context, a senior government official suggested that the land invasions at Mushandike were not unique and

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therefore do not warrant significant, urgent or undue attention. As he said: “*Invasions of grazing land are a national problem. They are not unique to Mushandike* (Interview with DA, 10 June 2014). For this official, universalising the problem served to justify its trivialisation in the case of Mushandike. Explaining them away as a universal problem served to diffuse the need for immediate action and in effect eliminated whatever difficulties (including localised conflicts) the land invasions has caused for close to two decades.

However, one important element which comes from this universalisation is the recognition that the Mushandike invasion, like other land occupations at the time, was both a political and an administrative issue. Politics emerge as a cause and consequence of the land invasions at Mushandike. Land-seekers who occupied Mushandike grazing land were a product of colonial politics which marginalised black people. However, their exclusion was perpetuated for 37 years after the country attained independence by insensitive and weak administrative policies conceived by the ruling party, ZANU-PF. The decision to invade Mushandike was also possibly conceived or exploited by senior politicians or both. The resolution of the land invasion-occupation problem requires bold political and administrative decision-making. For that reason, the multi-stakeholder approach to administering and resolving the difficulties at Mushandike, which was suggested by the government official quoted above, could have represented a reasonable and significant way forward had it been results-oriented.

This multi-stakeholder initiative was headed by the District Administrator (DA) and included politicians, officials from the Masvingo Rural District Council, Agritex and Ministry of Lands and representatives of irrigators and land-invaders. However, it failed to conjure up any solutions for two decades, such that it could be viewed justifiably as an inconsequential talk shop. Ironically, the national land invasions in the year 2000 and beyond were addressed both politically (the ruling party made a key decision on the way forward) and administratively under the FTLRP (appropriate state ministries and other role players became involved on fast track farms). The important question which arises then is what was so specific and special to the Mushandike invasions that the difficulties arising from them had to be strategised by a multi-stakeholder team for close to two decades, and might go on into a third decade. For the senior government official, the local

invasions were not that unique and only remain unresolved because “*akakanganikwa pakagadziriswa nyika yese* [they were forgotten during the FTLRP]” (Interview with DA, 10 June 2014). How such a visible, unique and imposing issue which occurred a mere 20 kilometres from the administrative capital, with five resident Agritex officials and three veterinary officials on the ground, could be forgotten is difficult to understand. This suggests that there is more to the invasions than what the government official has argued.

As noted above, there was no official acknowledgement that the invaded land was irrigators’ land. If anything, it was (or became) recognised as Chief Charumbira’s land and, as long as he did not raise any concerns or complaints, there was no problem to solve. *Sabhukus* were thus simply allocating land consistent with their traditional role of allocating land on behalf of the Chief. One irrigator noted:

Sabhuku and the Chief do not regard this land as ours; they say it is the Chief’s land. Therefore, they allocated it to all these people without any consultation [with us]. When we ask why, we are threatened with eviction. Divisions have been sown in our midst that, even we as irrigation farmers, are so divided along political lines. We threaten each other with eviction; we cannot share ideas, because of so much divisions. Whatever a ZANU-PF supporter suggests at a meeting, even when it has nothing to do with politics, is out rightly rejected by MDC supporters and the same occurs in reverse (Interview with Garwe, 11 April 2015).

This respondent is adamant that a *Sabhuku* would never independently illegally allocate land. His view is that someone with higher powers authorised it. He said:

Can you imagine a Sabhuku illegally allocating land within an irrigation scheme and getting away with it for two decades? How is that possible? These people were resettled here for two reasons. First, they needed large numbers to neutralise the MDC majority that had developed around here. Second, Charumbira wanted to populate the place with his people so that they outnumber Bere’s people who are claiming that this is Bere’s land. For these reasons, interested parties do not want these people [land-seekers] to be removed from here.

These are political cadres playing a political role. Politics keeps us divided. Political identities are the only identities that matter [here]. Asi pakapera mvura mudhamhu tese takazviona kuti tinogona kutambura tikafa pamwe [When the dam dried up we became aware of the possibility that we may suffer and die together without anybody worrying about us] (Interview with Garwe, 11 April 2015).

Two important issues emerge from this observation. First, the Mushandike land invasions serve political interests and that is why they remain unresolved nearly 20 years after they occurred. Second, the ownership of the land was unofficially withdrawn from scheme beneficiaries for two reasons: for supporting the Bere cause and/or for supporting the opposition MDC party.

Emphasising that the irrigators do not own Mushandike, one government official argued:

It is difficult for the irrigation farmers to evict or push for the eviction of squatters because they do not own the land; they were merely allocated permission to graze, reside and to farm. Similarly, the government can assign such rights to a thousand more beneficiaries. Their power is very limited but they can only hope that the government will decide in their favour (Interview with Mavhuto, 11 June 2014).

This view was echoed by another government official who simply noted:

Irrigation farmers were given land for free. Therefore, the land is not theirs, it is state land. They do not have title deeds. What power could they use [to claim the land]? Their cause is weakened by the fact that many of them now support the MDC. They made themselves vulnerable to the ruling party by opposing it when they do not have land title (Interview with Vhumukai, 11 June 2014).

It may be true that the farmers do not own the land, but it is equally true that they have a legitimate right to occupy (without disturbance) afforded to them by the government. It is this right which has been challenged by invasions. When I asked two government officials separately to explain why, in towns, people were at times allocated houses for free and nobody ever dared to invade or reclaim them, and yet the presence of the irrigation farmers at Mushandike was being challenged,

the responses were somewhat unclear if not ambiguous. One response was more fascinating. Thus one official recognised that rural land was very politicised such that rural people are supposed to fear and respect politicians (presumably ruling party politicians); but he went on to imply that such land was only allocated to (and occupied by) people who are expected to be apolitical (presumably not oppose the ruling party). Urban land is not politicised and is allocated to motivated, knowledgeable and organised people. Therefore, the government treats rural and urban land allocations differently.

The politicised character of rural land seems to outstrip the question of the form of tenure in existence. Thus, the view that irrigation farmers are weakened by the fact that they lack title deeds was dismissed by one irrigation farmer who saw little merit in that view. The farmer argued:

White commercial farmers had title deeds, they had money, they could afford to take the government to court but look at how they lost the land, and some were even killed. They were important to the country; one white farmer could produce more than all of us put together. We have nothing, to the government we are worth nothing, we produce nothing. What can a piece of paper called title deed do to stop them from doing what they want to do (Interview with Hohodza, 13 June 2014).

Hence, whether land is held under freehold title or in terms of a certificate of occupancy makes no difference if there are political dynamics at play which undercut the relevance of the form of tenure.

The importance of politics is brought out in relation to the presence of *Sabhukus* at Mushandike as part of a broader measure in rural Zimbabwe. Concerning the imposition of *Sabhukus* on irrigation schemes, which in part brought about so much unexpected change to the lives of people at Mushandike, one senior government official said:

Sabhukus are part of the government structure. They are what the government wants. Village Chairmen have no place in the future or past of the country. Government will soon gazette that all irrigation schemes should be under Sabhukus. Those who do not want Sabhukus are selfish; they don't want change. The Sabhuku is chosen by the Chief who represents the

wishes of all people. Therefore, the Sabhuku is as good as voted for by all people; unless you want to suggest that people no longer respect their Chief, that they no longer respect tradition (Interview with DA, 10 June 2014).

Irrigators are portrayed as anti-tradition yet they are also designated as not wanting change. ‘Tradition’ and ‘change’, which are often seen as opposing tendencies, are clearly being framed as in fact compatible by way of the ruling party’s position on the matter, i.e. the ruling party’s definition of the content of both tradition and change.

In this context, I asked this government official if respect for tradition did not require addressing the legitimacy of Charumbira’s chieftaincy over the scheme, as there were counterviews to the effect that the scheme was on Bere’s land. He started off by saying that the counterview is an MDC ploy, and that *“the Bere issue is out [irrelevant] until the [Bere] chieftainship is resuscitated. For now, the only chief we talk about is Charumbira. Those people who don’t like him support the MDC”* (Interview with DA, 10 June 2014). Then seemingly angry, he addressed me directly:

Why do you ask about such issues? You should focus on studying about the irrigation scheme instead of looking at such issues – remember stability is vital for a country under siege like ours. The issue you are playing with is highly sensitive and could cost lives. We know that the Bere chieftaincy was there but for now we do not recognise that since it is not functional. If Chief Charumbira hears that you are asking about Bere’s chieftaincy your stay at Mushandike will be short-lived. Define your objectives properly, refrain from asking about chieftainships or you will look like an instigator of trouble, unless you have an agenda. Do not underestimate those people in the scheme. They look primitive but they will be watching both your verbal and non-verbal conduct and could call people who will throw you out – you could lose your life (Interview with DA, 10 June 2014).

A member of parliament who was present during the interview kept on interjecting by reiterating that *“this is a very sensitive issue. It causes loss of lives. We do not want to compromise stability for expediency”* (interjection during interview by MP Shumba, 10 June 2014).

This interview clearly shows the extent to which the land invasions at Mushandike have been deeply politicised, such that even political leaders in the province seem disinclined to discuss them even in private with an outside researcher, perhaps in fear of saying something which goes contrary to the ruling party's political narrative. But, even more importantly, the interview demonstrates that intimidation is used to silence debate on Mushandike, and this becomes problematic not so much for an outsider but for those on the inside, living at Mushandike. The assertion that all who raise questions or have different opinions are not – according to the ruling party discourse – patriotic merely serves to categorise, silence and antagonise. Patriotism in this regard is synonymous with accepting everything one is told by power. Thus, even those on the inside are labelled as outsiders as they think and act contrary to the local regime of power at Mushandike. Further, threats and intimidation are at times accompanied by the use of physical violence. One young man revealed that *“in Village 11 and 12, Charumbira's people beat up villagers and left one man blind. But people are not afraid, they continue to talk* (Interview with Wobwo, 10 April 2015).

The close link between tradition and land politics has a long history (as discussed in Chapter 3). At Mushandike, the state is accused of trying to use tradition to justify Charumbira's 'annexation' of Mushandike. However, this has provoked stronger calls for the reinstatement of Bere whom some locals strongly believe to be the legitimate Chief at least for part of Mushandike. Some of those who call for Bere's reinstatement argue that the northern half of the scheme and other lands stretching towards Mashava are his. These locals argue that, if tradition is to be practiced, then all historical concerns should be addressed to avoid chopping and changing chieftainships for contemporary political expediency. Addressing local concerns would entail carrying out of broad-based consultation, research and promotion of open discussions by government about chieftainships. Without this matter being resolved, ongoing rampant intimidation and violence would only lead to further social disintegration at Mushandike. On this aspect, one respondent, a son of an irrigator highlighted:

The unresolved Charumbira versus Bere issue is fast destroying the scheme as scheme members are getting highly divided. Sabhukus in cahoots with the Chief are worsening the

situation creating alignments with their supporters while sidelining the rest of the population. Politicians have exploited this contestation turning it into a ZANU-PF versus MDC issue. Bere supporters are being labelled MDC supporters because they oppose the Chief of Chiefs. So the issue has been hijacked. It is no longer about tradition but politics. The problem is that we the people of Charumbira also don't recognise Fortune [Chief Charumbira] or should we call him by his real name Brandon Mumba, as we call him, because he is not a traditional Chief (Interview with Wobwo, 10 April 2015)

This interviewee recognises the Charumbira chieftainship but not the legitimacy of the incumbent. He goes on to say:

He is not qualified to talk about tradition because he is not a traditional Chief. We the people of Charumbira are waiting for a traditional chief. He is a good politician. That is why he was made a chief in Harare. If we want tradition, let us be traditional and that starts with correctly putting chiefs in office; this also entails correcting colonial wrongs by putting dethroned good chiefs back in office and allocating them their land. Then we can demarcate territories correctly. We then recognise each chief in his land. The current Charumbira and all the Sabhukus in Mushandike are political and not traditional office bearers. To give political appointees traditional titles such as chief and Sabhuku does not make them traditional. Let us be clear about issues to make the future clear to future generations (Interview with Wobwo, 10 April 2015).

This young interviewee, who was of the opinion that Bere's chieftainship should be reinstated, also suggested that chiefs should be chosen according to tradition to avoid putting illegitimate persons in office. Although he and many others suggested that the current Chief Charumbira was a political imposition hence illegitimate, I could not fully investigate such claims as they fell beyond the focus of this study. For this young respondent, tradition was being deployed as a tool through which those in power controlled and dominated the rest. For instance, he suggested that arguments that Chief Charumbira had traditional authority over the whole of Mushandike was a deliberate lie (as many knew that a portion of the land historically belonged to Bere). The chief was being touted as having a legitimate traditional claim to empower Charumbira to control

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scheme members for political ends. Developments that occurred after I had left the field suggest that the Bere chieftaincy is being reinstated. A report by Nkulumani Mlambo of *The Mirror*, from Saturday, 8 July 2017 (a daily newspaper in Zimbabwe) hinted that the government had set in motion processes to ensure that the Bere chieftaincy was reinstated and the legitimate candidate to be installed as chief was being identified.

According to the above interviewee, politics had completely taken over Mushandike irrigation scheme and no one could escape its clutches. He claimed that all public office bearers (including the Chief, *Sabhuku* and District Administrator) were indebted in totality to ZANU-PF, so that they act in such a way as to maintain their current political position; to act otherwise is to suffer the inevitable consequence of loss of status. He articulated this in the following way:

HuSabhuku uhu ndewe [Being Sabhuku is about] *politics. If there is any Sabhuku who disputes this claim, I challenge him to attend a single MDC meeting, be seen smiling at that meeting and see if he will still be a Sabhuku the next morning. They lie saying ndakafanana nedumbu – rinongotakura zvese* [I am like a belly I carry everything] (implying non-partisanship) *but we know what is happening* (Interview with Wobwo, 10 April 2015).

In a similar vein, another young farmer suggested that there is a desperation for relevance that comes with occupying an irrelevant office created for political expediency such as that of a *Sabhuku* at the Mushandike irrigation scheme. In effect, because of illegitimacy, no local Chief nor Sabhuku in fact existed for them:

Here we have no Chief or Sabhuku. We know the criminal acts they are carrying out which include resettling their supporters on our land to gain legitimacy. They are desperate to do something for the people as if their offices were relevant to this place. Here in the scheme we want support and freedom to be productive as farmers and not the imposition of irrelevant title bearers. We do not eat royalty (Interview with Rambai, 10 April 2015).

Some irrigation scheme members argue that only the Ministry of Lands has the capacity to solve the problem of land invasions at Mushandike, and that the Chief, *Sabhuku*s and politicians are simply too biased to do so. One respondent argued: “*Lands ndiyo yakatiisa muno inoziva kuti*

yogadzirisa sei dambudziko iri revauyi [*Ministry of Lands is the one that resettled us here, it knows how to address the problem of in-migrants*] (Interview with Garwe, 5 September 2016). But others are of the opinion that the Ministry is powerless to act, and that is why the issue has remained unresolved for so long. One young woman said: “*The Ministry of Lands is weaker than the [Rural District] Council. The council has elected people [councillors] who run back to their parties when they are threatened. Where do those educated guys [government officials] run to, who protects them? Imagine what happens to a government official [such as in the Ministry of Lands] who is accused of supporting the MDC. He is gone*” (Interview with Hondo, 5 September 2016). Anyone who is seen to act in a manner which goes contrary to ruling party politics is denigrated as MDC and hence even Ministry of Lands officials are wary of doing so. The quandary in which such officials find themselves is expressed by one government official as such:

As government workers, politics is our master – because government and politics cannot be dissociated – the politics of the day takes care of daily administrative issues. Politicians have their own interests in every matter, and ours is to fight for policy to prevail. I do not see how policy might be relaxed to a point where those in-migrants are legally settled there. That would be madness. But politics is a little insane (Interview with Mavhuto, 11 June 2014).

In the end, it would seem that insanity prevails, as politics rules.

Significant unsettling change has also occurred on the water front more specifically. Irrigators suggest that they should have stopped being charged for water when government withdrew all its workers from the scheme after the formation of Zinwa. The exit of the Ministry and its subsequent replacement by Zinwa is discussed in detail below. It is imperative though to note that Zinwa did not inherit the large workforce that the Ministry had in its employ, but opted for fewer employees who incidentally could only offer limited services. What aggrieved irrigators at Mushandike is that Zinwa could hardly render meaningful service compared to what the Ministry of Water did, yet it demanded disproportionately high water charges. At Mushandike, Zinwa simply deployed two water bailiffs; the jurisdiction of one was to control the quantities of water released daily from Mushandike dam into the main canal that feeds all the villages; the other bailiff basically collected meter-readings for domestic water. Therefore, Zinwa did not have operatives on the ground to

inspect, clean and repair the main canal. Scheme members are disturbed by the fact that they have become responsible for cleaning and maintaining the canal as much as they are unhappy with paying Zinwa for no service delivery. One farmer's views aptly capture this thinking: *"Zinwa renders no service to us yet charges for water every month. I wonder whether it is supposed to be selling water or a service to us"* (Interview with Hohodza, 16 April 2015). After raising their discontent with Zinwa concerning high cost of irrigation water (averaging US\$18 per month per irrigator), irrigators merely received a verbal acceptance by Zinwa in 2015 that it had not served them well over the years and that it needed to address the issue of water charges. Revealing this, the Sabhuku for Village X, who is also an irrigator said: *"Zinwa accepted last month that it has failed to perform. We pressed it to reduce charges since it is not rendering any service. We reminded it that we [currently] clean and maintain the main canal. It has promised to look into the matter"* (Interview with Sabhuku Mike, 16 June 2015).

The Zinwa issue reflects the connection between water politics at Mushandike with the broader social and political environment. For instance, macro-structural changes such as the formation of a Water Authority and the withdrawal of the Ministry of Water from service provision across the country affect water relations at the micro-level. Similarly, failure by the state (specifically the Grain Marketing Board or GMB) to pay farmers for farm produce and the subsequent failure by state bodies to conjure a workable plan to help farmers pay for water further compounded the water access problem for some irrigators. Evidence suggests that insensitivity or lack of a workable plan on the part of these two government creations (GMB and Zinwa) pushed Village 10 out of irrigation. The following words from a Village 10 irrigator portray the situation:

In 2008, Village 10 farmers sold maize to GMB and up to now, 2015, GMB has not paid us. In 2009, Zinwa stopped supplying us water because we owed it close to US\$5,000 in water arrears. We have not irrigated ever since then. We could not produce much from rain-fed farming because of the drought that set in between 2010 and 2013. In 2013, we had a meeting with Zinwa to ask it to allow us to irrigate then pay later. Zinwa asked us to make a little payment upfront. We pooled together some maize from our poor harvests and sold it to GMB and up to now GMB has not paid us arguing that it has no money. We

requested GMB to make an undertaking that it would transfer the money to Zinwa as soon as it got it with the hope that Zinwa would allow us to use water. GMB refused arguing that the law does not allow it to tamper with clients' money. We approached Zinwa with the story and Zinwa said it does not supply water to storytellers but to paying clients. We are now busy finding ways of servicing our debt so that we can irrigate again. Most of our younger farmers have since left for South Africa. We wonder what the future holds for this village (Interview with Joshua, 16 April 2015)

This section has attempted to show the negative implications of rapid and extensive change, which include uncertainty, contestations and conflict at local level. Changes such as the land invasions, the introduction of chiefly (customary) authority, politicisation of social space and even change from government management of water to Zinwa, all triggered contestation within land and water politics. The deferred resolution of the Bere chieftaincy after the unceremonious entry and assumption of control by Chief Charumbira exacerbated conflict in an already highly politicised and polarised community. Politics emerged as a consistent factor that promoted conflict perpetuation and impeded aspects which could possibly assuage and de-escalate conflict such as dialogue and consultation (instead of violence and intimidation). The changes escalated marginalisation rather than reduced it. Many amongst both in-migrants and the host population of irrigators have not benefitted socially and economically since the invasions, with the prevalence of poverty apparent throughout Mushandike. Although land-invaders appear as winners because they forcefully colonised land occupied by others, they have very little to celebrate as they have not realised the positive transformation of life they envisaged. The centrality of ruling party and state politics at Mushandike deeply affects and shapes the way Mushandike is organised, how daily lives are enacted and the way in which socio-political life unfolds.

The state's penetration of the social fabric at Mushandike through politics and policies makes it a central player in the lives of locals. Its continued presence is epitomised by the *Sabhuku* whose chicanery foments disintegration, conflict, impoverishment and uncertainty at the local level. The state's presence at Mushandike instigates change through various avenues but, at the same time, it attempts to keep the past alive for political reasons as in its re-traditionalisation drive. It maintains

social stasis or fixity in some areas of the lives of both irrigators and land seekers while also changing the community quite significantly. In doing so, the state purports to know what communities want, and how they should be organised socially and politically. Efforts by communities such as at Mushandike to show that they want to define their own destiny is regarded as dissent and is thwarted by intimidatory politics.

6.3 Whose land is it: policy and politics as determinant factors of ownership and tenure?

All the land belongs to the President (District Administrator Interview, 10 June 2014)

Findings suggest that the question of land ownership is core to defining relations at Mushandike. Various groups construct the notion of land ownership in a manner that advances or protects specific interests and values at the time. This section interrogates the notion of landownership in relation to Mushandike, including its implications for social relations. It pays attention to how land ownership and occupation was constructed by irrigators upon issuance of land to them, and proceeds to show how government officials and land-invaders also view or construct it.

6.3.1 The land is ours because it was allocated to us

Irrigators agree that they were legally offered land at Mushandike and therefore it is theirs. However, they differ on whether land rights of individuals as ascribed by policy would survive challenges from politics. Some argue that policy defines property ownership or occupation in perpetuity but others suggest that such ownership rights lasts for as long as politics observes and recognises them. One contributor to a Focus Group Discussion, who is convinced that permission to occupy transferred by government should be recognised as inalienable, argued: “*We were allocated this land. We followed procedures. We did not just find ourselves here. We were given blue cards which we use for paying annual tax to the Masvingo Rural District Council which also indicates occupancy. All this reflects that we were legally allocated land, therefore the land is ours* (Focus Group Discussion 13 April 2015).

For him, the manner through which the land was accessed (policies and procedures) determines whether ownership claims are legitimate or not. Where land is procedurally accessed and ownership is officially transferred through legal government processes and documents, ownership

cannot be contested on political grounds. In other words, such documented ownership can only be procedurally revoked and not rescinded at for example a political rally. The blue card symbolises officially-bestowed ownership, and does not specify any particular categories of ownership. Categories of ownership simply do not exist, such that what matters is that, once government allocates a piece of land to an individual, the land belongs to the beneficiary until an official process claims otherwise. The payment of a yearly land tax or *mutero* is a constant affirmation of a contractual agreement between the allocating authority and recipient. Ownership in this regard is substantiated by procedure, documentation and yearly affirmation and not by whim or political affiliation.

However, such intricate arguments about land security seem to be alluded to in retrospect only, as the question of ownership never featured apparently during initial land allocations at the scheme. Neither the allocating authority nor Mushandike beneficiaries thought ownership was an issue to dwell on as it was an obvious fact arising from the land allocations; therefore, it was a non-issue. This view is encapsulated in the following words:

We did not think about ownership of this land as something that someone was going to challenge one day. More importantly, we could not ever have imagined that government officials were going to one day question our legitimacy here since we were allocated the land by government and many stakeholders, including the then Chief Charumbira; politicians and government officials, were part of the launch. Furthermore, government gave us support upon our arrival: mategeso in the form of tillage, inputs, fertilisers, water all free for the first year plus free training. How then could we have doubted its sincerity? We felt and functioned as part of the government. We legitimately worked with the people's government (Interview with Gibson, 5 July 2015).

The irrigator implies that land ownership as a crucial contested issue, as it has become today, was not envisaged at the blissful moment of land allocation. The relationships forged then appeared mutually beneficial to both local people and government, and hence the mood was fundamentally celebratory and focused on maximising resource utilisation and not on addressing tenure security. The government appeared keen on giving support by extending natural resource access to the

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historically disadvantaged such that it was concerned less with issues about ownership. Notably, in the Shona culture, *mategeso* refers to initial support given to newlyweds or a married couple to enable them to start off a family, with this support coming from members of the immediate families and relatives as well as by the community at large. For the Mushandike beneficiaries, *mategeso* meant that government welcomed them into a community of highly productive land and water users and guaranteed to support them in the future. Their membership into ‘a new family’ of landowners whose benefactor was the state (a people’s government) was thus celebrated and ritualised via Shona customary practices.

More importantly, their primary reason for joining the scheme was not to own land per se but to access irrigated land. This view is widely shared by irrigators, and is articulated by one irrigator in the following manner:

We came here for irrigation. We desired to improve our lives. Some of us had seen irrigation beneficiaries prospering at Denge irrigation. In Masvingo province, land without irrigation amounts to poor if not no harvests. That is why poverty is very high in the province. For this reason, we came into this place which was a forest which the government helped us turn into a productive irrigation scheme. Can you imagine that I got all the grass with which I thatched my initial two huts from [what is now] my residential stand? (Interview with VaRugare, 7 September, 2016).

Prospects of prosperity through utilisation of irrigated land, not necessarily land ownership, had hence lured beneficiaries to Mushandike. Their key focus was on utilising both land and water to improve their lives. This was a rare opportunity in an arid province in which there were very few government-established smallholder irrigation schemes for poor black irrigators. For the Mushandike irrigators, as evidence supplied shows, the distinction between access and ownership was not seen as an important one (with access almost automatically implying ownership) especially given that all the formal procedures had been followed.

Non-economic benefits also ranked high on the lists of benefits recouped from joining Mushandike. They even rank higher than the aspect of land ownership or land security, which only

came out after I had clearly and explicitly questioned about them in the context of the land invasions. To them, peace of mind was one such non-material benefit that they realised prior to the land invasions. Of course, it has since been eroded by contestations, conflicts and contradictions. One woman argued: *“New life at Mushandike also gave us social benefits. Living at the place of birth is problematic. Living amongst people who are not your relatives [as at Mushandike] is great. The envy of those unrelated to you inspires progressive competition. Nothing is as good as living amongst such people”* (Interview with Mai Rutendo, 9 May 2015). The inclusion of inheritance in the irrigation policy also convinced beneficiaries of the permanence of their stay and gave them a sense of contentment. One man noted:

Arrangements concerning land inheritance are that in the event that the male household head dies, his wife inherits the land. If the wife also dies, the eldest child inherits and so on down to the youngest. The extended family does not inherit irrigation land as it does with communal land. This arrangement convinced us that this is exactly our land (Interview with VaRugare, 10 May 2015).

The fact that the irrigated land could be held within the immediate family was comforting, as otherwise relatives might claim the land after, for instance, the death of the husband.

However, socio-political change (particularly when highly politicised) shows that all this is not enough to guarantee land security and the economic and non-economic benefits arising from such security. Security exists at times of socio-political stability, but becomes ambiguous during turbulence and contestations. The basic characteristic of landownership/security is that it is rarely a concluded issue. Landownership and land access is always tentative, prone to counter-negotiations and contestations.

6.3.2 Can a recipient absolutely own a gift, does one pay land tax for one's land

Although some interviewees as indicated in the previous section suggest that they have inalienable rights to land because it was allocated to them by government, others (as noted in this section) suggest that their rights to land are actually limited by the fact that they were given the land free of charge. They suggest that if they had bought the land at market value, the state would have

transferred ownership rights to them. They further argue that since they were allocated the land at no cost, they have to pay a yearly land tax to the “owner” of the land (government at the offices of the Rural District Council).

Findings indicate that many beneficiaries believe that one cannot totally own something freely, that is, given or accessed free of charge. They are of the opinion that the annual land tax they pay to Masvingo Rural District Council (MRDC) reflects that a higher power (which is the state that charges tax) owns the land. Their views are based on the government’s reworking of the conditions under which the irrigators reside on the land at Mushandike. The following summarises these points:

We were allocated land for free. We did not even pay a cent. As a result, we were just given blue cards denoting occupancy and not ownership. We have no title deeds. We had an unspecified period of occupancy but were promised that we would get title deeds in our lifetime. After the land invasions, we are now being told verbally that we are going to be given 99 year leases. That means no more title deeds. Our children and their children are going to be tenants of the government like us. We cannot sell this land, even if we were to get a buyer, it is not ours (Interview with VaRugare, 7 September 2016).

The idea that land given for free cannot be entirely owned is endemic at Mushandike and equally voiced by land-invaders. The irrigating beneficiaries surmise that their claims to ownership are weakened by being recipients of freely transferred land, and they assume that land can be owned only if it is paid for in full. Those who hold this view surmise that land, like other commodities, changes hands legally when bought or bequeathed as inheritance accompanied by transfer of ownership rights in the title deeds. They further suggest that land transferred unaccompanied by transfer of ownership rights, remains the property of the giver. Therefore, as recipients of state allocated land that came with usufruct rights, some scheme beneficiaries suggest that they cannot claim to own the land on which they live.

The other issue, which also causes despondency amongst the irrigators, is that the impending long term 99-year leasehold arrangements designates generations of irrigators as mere tenants of the

state. Their understanding is that if they were to be given title deeds, then they would not only have autonomy in local decision-making at Mushandike but would also stop paying land tax which they equate to the payment of rent. Another concern is that they cannot profitably dispose of their land because they do not have title to the land. Profitability of land disposal hinges on its possibility of being bought and sold in the first place. In Zimbabwe land in communal areas cannot be sold, though it may be subject to informal sales at times. Therefore, irrigators at Mushandike are aggrieved because they cannot commercially dispose of the land. To many this is a major indication that they do not own the land; for, if they did, many irrigators would sell it now as they believe that they are too old to continue farming. They would have taken an opportunity to profitably dispose of the land and invest in less labour-intensive economic sectors and activities.

6.3.3 Mushandike land issues in relation to constitutional provisions

In this context, I consider ownership in relation to assumed constitutional provisions, the presumed relationship between power and land ownership as well as arguments about whether free transfer leads to ownership, all from the perspective of (three) government officials.

The District Administrator (DA) clearly argued that “*all land belongs to the President of the country; therefore, Mushandike farmers do not own land.*” (Interview with DA, 10 June 2014). The DA’s assertion is interesting for two reasons. First, it suggests that nobody in the country owns and can own land because all land belongs to, or at least is entrusted in, the President. It is however important to note that although all land is vested in the President or the state, individuals can still have ownership rights to pieces of land. The constitution suggests that the “...State may alienate for value any agricultural land vested in it, whether through the transfer of ownership to any other person or through the grant of a lease or other right of occupation or use ...” (Constitution of Zimbabwe, Chapter 16, section 293, (i) 2013: 124). Reinforcing recognition of ownership, section 294 notes that “... an owner or occupier of agricultural land has the right to transfer, hypothecate, lease or dispose of his or her right in agricultural land” (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013: 124). The constitution also suggests remedies following loss of land, stating in section 295 that “[a]ny indigenous Zimbabwean whose agricultural land was acquired by the State before the effective date is entitled to compensation from the State for the land and any improvements that were on the land when it was acquired”. However, the state retains the ultimate say over all land in Zimbabwe.

The DA suggests that “*irrigation scheme beneficiaries have been authorised to use the land. Those [land invaders] who came in informally shall surely be removed*” (Interview with DA, 10 June 2014). This is in itself an acknowledgement that these irrigators have some rights to the land, be they usufruct rights or otherwise. The possession of usufruct rights reflects formal authorised legitimate control over land and is incomparable to unauthorized/informal entry. The recognition of usufruct rights is vital in that it legitimates exclusionary access to, and use of land by, authorised actors endowed with the power presumably to exclude informal arrivals. Exclusionary use of land supposedly promotes beneficial sustainable utilisation and conservation of land by insiders enabled, in part, by keeping outsiders out. This is the ideal although, in practice as revealed by realities at Mushandike, outsiders can and do to an extent defy exclusion through a refusal to observe the insider/outsider binarism, as shown merely through their wanton entry into the scheme.

The DA also brings out another interesting angle, the connectivity between power and land ownership. He suggests that Chief Charumbira is at liberty to use violence to gain control of Mushandike as, historically in Zimbabwe, control over land comes about through violent means. He argued:

Ushe masimba [chieftaincy is power]. Chieftdoms are established through conquest, therefore, whatever Charumbira is doing to establish uncontested dominion over the scheme is typical of processes through which chieftdoms are established. The chief will have to own Mushandike through supreme and uncontested power, that is, through defeating Bere claims (Interview with DA, 10 June 2014).

Although his argument is rather anachronistic considering that chiefs can no longer acceptably conquer land in modern day Zimbabwe, it resonates with the violent manner through which land was regained by the majority of land-hungry Zimbabweans during the Third *Chimurenga*. Despite that, his observation could be interpreted as an unnecessary expression of support for unnecessarily divisive and counter-productive activities by a power monger. The observations of the DA in fact appear somewhat misplaced when one attends to his formal role in the district, which he gave as:

As the office of the DA we are in charge of coordination of government and NGOs working within the district. We also monitor all activities in the district for appropriateness with government policy. We intermittently monitor for progress. Through the RDC we spearhead development programmes. We also link the local authority with MRDC to see compliance. (Interview with DA, 10 June 2014).

His hero worshiping of felony, in terms of the need for Chief Charumbira to just take over land, is not provided for by his official (apparently unbiased, technocratic-developmental) role in the district and reflects a deliberate party-based politicisation of the contestation over control of land at Mushandike.

Other government officials had their own take on these matters. An official from the Ministry of Lands therefore argued:

In Zimbabwe at the moment politics owns the land. Every other idea or understanding does not count. If you belong to the correct political party you do not need authorisation or documentation to own land, probably just to confirm ownership. And if you belong to the wrong political party, you have no legitimate claim to land regardless of whether you possess title deeds or nothing. Nobody from the ruling party has interest in papers legitimating ownership, if anything they are all infuriated by documents denoting ownership (Interview with Matrix, 11 June 2014).

His thoughts accurately portray the reality on the ground in Mushandike, and speak more broadly to the turbulence around land and politics in contemporary rural Zimbabwe. Again, during periods of tranquillity and stability, politics plays a pivotal role in influencing the distribution of land-based resource ownership only through formal policies. Land invasions, in being provoked by politics and provoking it further, may be episodic, abnormal and transient but they have long-lasting implications for people at Mushandike. Even formal state procedures, and documentation arising through such procedures, may simply be ignored and thrown aside when politics takes over during times of contestation.

A provincial official of the Ministry of Agriculture suggested that:

Irrigation scheme beneficiaries cannot reasonably claim ownership of land given to them for free. If one wants to own land one should buy it. But in Zimbabwe, communal land is not for sale, therefore, no beneficiary can own it. Beneficiaries can only have the right to occupy and use but not to sell (Interview with Kurima, 10 June 2014).

This argument has already been raised by other interviewees. It is brought back for its allusion to the notions of land rights. It accentuates that recipients of land are assured of rights to use land and not to own. The aspect of land rights in relation to Mushandike, therefore, needs to be interrogated before moving to the implication of land politics on productivity (which is discussed later).

6.3.4 Land rights, tenure and social relations at Mushandike

The relationship between land tenure and land rights is important and this impacts on social relations in land with specific reference to Mushandike. Existing literature suggests that, although different forms of land tenure provide legal and administrative provisions which in-themselves are an expression of security, in practice security of tenure significantly draws from “open-ended, ongoing processes of negotiation, adjudication and political manoeuvre”. (Berry, 1994: 35). This relates to the argument already made that, at Mushandike, land ownership and occupation, and security of tenure for irrigators, have been subjected to changes riddled with many tensions, with any outcome invariably tentative and shaped by ongoing negotiations/contestations. At Mushandike, for instance, state land allocations clearly designated irrigation beneficiaries as initially having secure tenure and inalienable rights in land access, possession and utilisation. About a decade later, they found themselves having to re-negotiate their land rights with land-invaders, traditional authorities, the ruling party and local government bodies.

As already noted, allocation of land and land rights was provided by state policy yet the challenge came primarily from the political sphere. The politicised framing of land ownership and the purpose of allocating land to beneficiaries was very different from the framing and purpose as led by policy. Whereas policy-led land allocation aimed at improving productivity, food security and the quality of life of the rural poor through availing land and water, politically-charged land politics was merely partisan, and focused on extending access to land to ruling party supporters through dispossessing irrigation members (and non-members of ZANU-PF).

Mushandike farmers are not educated enough to argue about tenure or rights issues in relation to land. Instead of fighting for themselves as farmers, they tend to look-up to the state and/or political parties for support. For the first 10 years of the scheme, the state (through the office of the RO) gave the farmers a sense of security of tenure. Unfortunately, a few years after the withdrawal of the RO came unparalleled and devastating adversity in the form of land invasions. From 2000 onwards, the farmers had, on the one hand, to contend with land invasions and on the other, with the increasingly encroaching authority of the chief and his local representatives. The appointment of *Sabhukus* and increasing overcrowding resulting from in-migration tend to give credence to the rumour that the Chief intends to place their scheme under communal tenure, vis-à-vis other yet to be substantiated stories that the scheme will actually be placed under a 99 year leasehold arrangement (as with other resettlements).

Some among the Mushandike farmers remain hopeful that they will retain control of their scheme as long as they give primacy to negotiations over documented evidence of ownership. Seemingly drawing lessons from nationwide land invasions, these farmers suggest that they would not want to entirely legitimate their right to land through official evidence as such an attempt failed to serve white commercial farmers. They argue that white commercial farmers (with title deeds) lost their land to land hungry people because they (the farmers) under-estimated the importance and effect of negotiating with all interested parties including those who did not want to recognise legal documents. These problems of insecurity of tenure being experienced at Mushandike have resonance in other parts of Africa and other developing countries due to failure or unwillingness by states to expressly and conclusively address the issue (Feder and Onchan, 1987). Evidently, insufficient protection of the poor's resource rights makes it easier for outside parties to invade or contest to seize control of them (Merlet et al., 2014:3).

Ultimately, land tenure is supposed to function not as a mere "legal relation of access to land" but to reflect important "relations within rural areas as well as relations between the state and the people" (Helliker, 2006: 156). In contemporary Zimbabwe, tenure exists in a state of continuous negotiation largely reflecting the politics of the day. Land redistribution and resettlement (including at Mushandike), which by design is supposed to be empowering through availing access

to resources such as land, water, firewood, wild fruits and pasture, sometimes leads to tenure uncertainties and insecurities due to lack of clarity and recognition of tenurial rights by the state. In this way, not only legal but also political relations become embodied in actually-existing land tenure regimes.

6.3.5 Deepening social disintegration due to deferred resolution of issues

Prevailing contestations over land and water ownership, occupation and access at Mushandike have ‘robbed’ scheme members of an identity and sense of community belonging. For many years, scheme members identified themselves as smallholder irrigators and had built a community which stretched beyond Mushandike. They had connected with other smallholder irrigators from across the country, as well as with other groups such as suppliers, transporters and buyers. This identity gave them a sense of pride and belonging not only at local district level in Masvingo, but with reference to Zimbabwe more broadly. At the lowest level, they originally articulated their identity as that of irrigators, or in a socio-economic sense. But the arrival of antagonistic politics changed all this. Now they refer to one another politically as sell-outs, MDC or ZANU-PF supporters and so on.

Burgeoning political polarisation which characterised Zimbabwean politics from 2000 onwards equally impacted Mushandike irrigators. Politics divided scheme members into ZANU-PF and MDC supporters. These were antagonistic identities whose bearers regularly clashed for political reasons: *“Men and women who had co-existed amicably for decades [now] treated one another more than just like total strangers but as avowed enemies. It was surprising how easily we hated each other and were prepared to do harm to one another for political reasons”* (Interview with Hohodza, 28 August 2015). Political identities functioned as a significant identity from which individuals and groups became prepared to harm and be harmed. This was further complicated by the introduction of *Sabhukus* (discussed in detail above), which not only undermined democratic practices at scheme level but turned imposed leaders against many people they were expected to lead.

When some Mushandike scheme members resisted the imposition of the office of *Sabhuku*, they appeared not only to oppose that office but the appointing authority (the chief and the political

party) to which the *Sabhuku* paid allegiance. Consequently, the chief's appointees (*Sabhukus*) leaned more towards the appointing authority (the chief) and in opposition to some fellow irrigators. With the support of some scheme members, *Sabhukus* are said to have enlisted the support of the ruling party to thwart dissent. This hence split the irrigation community into those who opposed the change in local governance and those who embraced it. Those considered pro-change increased rapidly with the arrival of land-seekers who were allocated land by the *Sabhukus*. Logically, new arrivals supported the existence of the office of *Sabhuku* at Mushandike as it legitimates their stay on the scheme. In doing so, they went contrary to the democratic practices of voting for leadership (Village Chairperson) which, previously, a whole community had recognised.

Such a change was considered by some as a huge step backward to a dictatorial customary authority at a time (post-independence) when the community was supposed to enjoy leadership by democratically elected office bearers accountable to the electorate. Some amongst those (irrigators and non-irrigators who were supposed ZANU PF supporters) who accepted the conversion of the office of elected and rotational Village Chairperson to that of *Sabhuku* (whose imposed bearer was appointed by the chief on a permanent basis and whose progeny inherited the position) were of the view that it allowed for office bearers to accrue and use experience for the benefit of the community. They argued that elections sometimes replaced experienced officials with very inexperienced people merely liked by the electorate, and this leads to a loss of accumulated experience. More importantly, *Sabhukus* worked with the Chief, the present supposed owner of the land as recognised by government and purportedly by the ancestors as well (as the ultimate owners of the land). The importance of the *Sabhuku* was presumed to far outweigh that of an elected Village Chairperson who did not have direct links with the Chief not to mention with ancestral spirits.

As noted above, the question as to whether Mushandike should fall under Chief Charumbira or Chief Bere deepened the social divisions at Mushandike. The absence of political will on the part of the post-colonial government to resolve this matter is quite telling, given that its unresolved character further fuels local tensions and conflicts. When I asked the DA to give a comment on the

issue he said: *“Chieftdoms are about power and only strong chiefs prevail. Bere was a weak chief so he fell by the wayside and he belongs to the past. Charumbira remained standing and should be supported as he belongs to posterity”* (Interview with DA 10 June 2014). In this respect, the Charumbira chieftainship is presented as having been involved in the struggle against colonial rule and prevailed and this past endeavour justifies the present rule of Charumbira. His argument though is viewed as ironic by some members of the scheme. One irrigator thus argued: *“Colonialists removed pro-people chiefs from office, replaced then with or merely kept sell-outs in office. Now the people’s government is happy dining with sell-outs forgetting gallant chiefs who sacrificed their positions in defence of the ordinary person”* (Interview with Rusununguko, 11 May 2015). According to this argument, the Bere chieftainship rather than the Charumbira chieftainship was at the forefront of the anti-colonial struggle and thus there must be other reasons for why the ruling party today supports the latter chieftainship. Others at the scheme are only moderately either pro-Charumbira or pro-Bere people and, in adopting a more pragmatic and conciliatory stance, they suggest that the scheme should be split into two. They argue that the boundary between the two chiefly territories is known or can be established so that peace is restored. One woman who submitted her views as if they were the uncontested voice of those pro-Charumbira claimed:

We do not want war over an issue we can solve. Discussions have gone on for too long; we want Bere in office as of yesterday. [But] we are happy we have our own Charumbira here with us. Let them have their own chief, that’s how we can live together in peace. We should not ill-treat them now because we have power; what happens when they also get power one day (Interview with Dadiso, 10 May 2015).

These views about party politics, *Sabhukus* and the chieftainship help cast some light on the fact that land politics at Mushandike is complex. It also shows that the causes for the conflicts and social disintegration are in part externally-generated such that scheme members alone are not able to address them properly or fully. This situation perpetuates their vulnerability to divisive politics, as it allows for the continued invitation of outsiders (by for instance Chief Charumbira) into Mushandike’s social space. Currently, land politics has inhibited scheme members from

developing a scheme-wide sense of identity and belonging as well as a chance to effectively function and participate economically, socially and even politically. This has also undermined their social citizenship. Unlike legal citizenship which is legally bestowed, social citizenship as observed by Kymlicka and Norman (1994:369) is negotiated through social interaction at the local level. In essence, social citizenship refers to the “expression of one’s membership in a ... community through participation” within socio-economic and political spaces. Divisions and conflict around land have flourished at the scheme, thus jeopardising social citizenship at Mushandike.

Land-seekers also are deprived of social citizenship because they experience exclusion from access to life-supporting natural resources and also lack a sense of community membership within the scheme. Irrigators designate them as different and threatening, and hence worthy of exclusion. They are considered to have forced or conned their way onto other people’s land masquerading as the politically-correct (ZANU-PF supporters), but only to themselves experience an unimaginable entrenchment of poverty and material deprivation. Local irrigators and even government officials shun them as misguided political activists who embarked on an unexplained and exaggerated sojourn to an unknown land promised by faceless politicians. A concerned Ministry of Lands official:

Those land-seekers where used as pawns in political battles only to be dumped there for years now. They cannot arrive at their Promised Land because those who made promises to them cannot fulfil them for whatever reason. More importantly, they also cannot return to where they came from because their land must have long been allocated to other land-seekers. They were abandoned and cannot either move forward or backward (Interview with Taisireva, 12 June 2014).

6.4 Productivity, markets and contract farming at Mushandike

This section strives to show how the politics of change, as well as economic factors such as dwindling markets and contract farming, impacted productivity at the Mushandike smallholder irrigation scheme. Evidence suggests a close link between economic and political factors whose negative impact on productivity is readily discernible. Change in this case includes both macro-

level and micro-level shifts in politics, economic decline, and the politicisation of nearly all social relations.

I discuss six issues pertaining to change and production at the irrigation scheme, namely: the withdrawal of the Ministry of Water from the scheme, land invasions, the introduction of Village 10, drought and the subsequent drying up of the dam, markets and production, and finally contract farming. These issues bring out not only the implications of serious far-reaching change on agricultural production but on social life as well.

6.4.1 Enter Zinwa, exit Ministry of Water: the end of a pro-farmer relationship

The formation of Zinwa to oversee all national water issues (discussed in detail above) following constitutional provisions of 1998 negatively affected irrigators at Mushandike. As discussed above, Zinwa is accused of having moved in at Mushandike with a very small staff complement which was not big enough to allow it to continue rendering many of the services that the Ministry of Water offered, such as maintaining/repairing canals and cleaning them periodically. Poor service delivery on the part of Zinwa compelled irrigators to wonder whether Zinwa was selling water to them or charging for the cost of providing water to them (just as the ministry used to do). This sub-section discusses the challenges related to canal maintenance and cleaning, the implications on production and the fear of diseases which followed the departure of the ministry.

The Ministry of Water is said to have had personnel stationed five kilometres apart along the 37 kilometre canal. Their duties were to patrol, clean-up, repair and maintain the main canal to allow water to flow at the maximum possible speed without being slowed down by debris, seepage or spillage. Such services did not only curb unnecessary loss of water but enabled reasonable supply of water to all irrigating villages including Village 23, located at the furthest tip of the scheme from the dam. Following the departure of the Ministry of Water, debris accumulation which disturbs the speed of water flow in the main canal is said have become a yearly concern. Poor maintenance of the main canal also resulted in high levels of seepage which further slowed down the flow, while reducing the volumes of water received at the intended destinations. Figure 4 gives an insight into the level of seepage occurring throughout the scheme. Also, overnight, dams began taking more time than expected to fill-up to the extent that irrigation starting and ending times had

to change to allow for sufficient volumes of water to accumulate in the overnight dam. Where high-level dams were not in place, lower volumes of flowing water resulted and this still resulted in longer irrigation hours. To an extent, this has as well affected social relations amongst farmers within villages, where effects of stress from long watering hours along with sharing shrinking volumes of water became manifested in the frequent development of conflictual relations between farmers irrigating at the same time. Claims that some use more than the stipulated eight medium-sized siphons to prejudice those downstream of water became and are still rampant. Further, some accuse others of benefiting unfairly through irrigating outside agreed hours.

Figure 4: Seepage from Main Canal



Source: Field Photo

The following words sum up the watering challenges that arose as a result of change:

When the Ministry of Water maintained and cleaned the canal, our people irrigated with dignity. Now they quarrel a lot because sometimes the water flows slowly and in other cases

overnight dams fail to fill-up. In Village 12, for instance, they start irrigation at 11 am and end at 4 pm to allow overnight dams to fill-up. If one fails to finish watering that means crops will be adversely affected as it takes close to 9 days before one gets the chance to irrigate again. Each village has close to 55 members who irrigate. To be able to irrigate, each village divides farmers into groups of 7 or so. Each group of 7 irrigates on a single day. If the village has 9 groups, it means each group irrigates after 9 days. This requires each farmer to irrigate sufficiently every 9th day, then wait to do so again after more than a week. The challenge is that all 7 cannot water all at once. At most we water in pairs and it takes about 2 hours to irrigate 0.5 hectares. For all 7 to water their crops they need close to 8 hours. This is not a big issue if the flow is good but can be a challenge if it is slow (Interview with Jaure, Village 15 farmer, 16 May 2015).

Evidently, farmers who had benefited from support from the Ministry of Water since the inception of the scheme now found it difficult to cope on their own. Furthermore, they were finding it unbearably costly to maintain and repair the main canal at a time when the macro-economy is performing badly and cash liquidity on the market has almost dried up. Therefore, due to macro-economic decline, among other factors, the irrigators found it burdensome to shoulder the responsibility of cleaning and maintaining the main canal. Thus, rapid reforms filtering down from changes at the macro-level placed demands on this small community to alter and reorganise itself, and to redefine reality in relation to prevailing circumstances. Evidence shows that this has been a slow and painful adjustment, with irrigators hanging on to a lost (supposedly blissful and ordered) past prior to Zinwa. The *mategeso*-type arrangement, upon which the irrigators relied in terms of water availability, was broken unexpectedly and without irrigators being in a position to rely on their resources and ingenuity.

Many challenges exist in relation to cleaning the main canal and these continue to trouble the community after the withdrawal of the Ministry years ago. One key problem relates to loss of time for crop irrigation. Farmers now suspend irrigation activities for close to a month (between April and May) to clean-up the main canal and, in 2015, I witnessed them carrying out this physically and emotionally demanding undertaking. Since cleaning is only done once a year, the quantities

of dirt and debris that will have accumulated are vast and the stench that emanates from the canal is nauseating. Consequently, farmers lose a whole month of farming time doing main-canal cleaning and repair and this significantly affects the quantity and quality of output. Additionally, there are concerns about possible infection during the cleaning-up process. This activity requires wallowing in and scooping mud and dirt for hours from the main canal which is more than a metre deep and about three metres wide (and about 37 kilometres long). Many do not have protective clothing hence they fear infections. The following words encapsulate local thinking with regards to this issue:

We clean the main canal without protection, we get bitten by zvidhadhamuko [worms] and fall sick. The water borne worms penetrate the skin and pierce through, destroying the leg. The leg swells while the skin looks very ugly. The local clinic used to offer treatment but it has had no significant quantities of medicine since 2008. Aware of this problem I sacrifice to clean-up on behalf of my elderly parents I live with, for I would not want to expose them to zvidhadhamuko and hard labour, as they would die. I am young; if I fall sick, chances are that I might survive, considering that access to medical support is poor (Interview with Eriza, a Village 11 female farmer, 17 May 2015).

The fear of *zvidhadhamuko* is neither imaginary nor farfetched, but a real health concern that hinges on the realities of Mushandike. In fact, during the first year of the scheme's inception, a study was carried out and evidence showed the prevalence of such worms in Mushandike's water. As a result, irrigators were taken through some awareness training as noted below: *"We were trained when we arrived here about diseases that we can get from spending a lot of time in water. I don't remember the names but I have seen people falling sick from infections they get during irrigation; so imagine what is going to happen now that we spend a whole month in the dirty and muddy main canal (Interview with Rusununguko, 17 May 2015).*

Hydraulics Research Wallingford (1986) shows that these health education training and awareness campaigns first occurred in 1986 at Mushandike focusing on the dangers of (*zvidhadhamuko*-generated) schistosomiasis on smallholder irrigation scheme waters in Zimbabwe. Therefore farmers still remember that there is a health risk associated with spending long hours in water or

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mud at Mushandike. They simply remember it as *zvidhadhamuko*, and are not necessarily aware of the scientific understanding of the problem as schistosomiasis. But the scientific evidence does show that high exposure to schistosomiasis occurs during irrigation activities which include “the operation and maintenance of canals and water control structures, during the application of water to crops and during other cultivation activities” (Hydraulics Research Wallingford 1986:2). Thus, local knowledge of how infection occurs and where high likelihood of infection lies remains quite accurate. Their fear of infection is therefore legitimate and should be accompanied by precautionary measures. This health issue, though important, is dwarfed by broader problems around productivity including in relation to the land invasions.

6.4.2 Land invasions and implication on production

In this subsection, I focus on the land invasions with specific reference to their effects on agricultural production at Mushandike. This includes the impact on animal husbandry and the ways in which the loss of grazing land affected crop production. The following excerpt from an interview sums up the issues relating to land invasions and land husbandry:

When people settled on grazing land cattle suffered loss of pasture. We now graze them in a shooting range belonging to the Zimbabwe National Army. It is a dangerous area full of live explosives. In 2013 a young boy from village 14 was killed when a bomb he picked-up exploded in his hands. The army does not allow us to graze in that area but we do it because we do not have much choice. If the army catches you, the usual punishment is that you spend an entire day working in its crop fields. These challenges forced many farmers to sell their animals as keeping them had become untenable. A few others transferred them to other regions (Interview with Njodzi, a Village 12 farmer, 17 May 2015).

The loss of pasture caused by the resettlement of land-seekers on grazing land not only creates conflictual relationships between neighbours (army and irrigators) but also endangers the lives of those who herd cattle. The unnecessary and unfortunate loss of life resulting from encroachment into military territory in search of pasture is of course an issue which could have been avoided through properly-planned land allocations. Figure 5 shows the warning signs placed all over the military land used by farmers for grazing.

Figure 5: Dangerous Area Where Cattle are Grazed



Source: Field Photo

Cattle thefts are also said to have risen with the arrival of land seekers, with is a source of conflict between irrigators and land seekers. Most of the thefts have occurred at night and followed a consistent pattern which included the slaughter of beasts in the kraals. The police then advised farmers to relocate their kraals from the periphery of the village to their homesteads so that they would hear any suspicious activities occurring at night, as illustrated in Figure 6. Since cattle are important to the farmers, they had no choice but to oblige. Now kraals are located right at the homesteads, a metre or two from rooms in which people sleep. That means that people have to bear with the noise that animals produce throughout the night as well as with the smell of cow dung especially during the rainy season. Those without livestock are said to have attempted to resist the idea, citing potential problems such as bad smell and having to deal with flies among other inconveniences that arise out of being close to cattle kraals (in this instance, their

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neighbours). However, they eventually accepted it following the continuous rise in animal theft, and this diffused mounting tension between neighbours.

Figure 6: Living Side By Side With Livestock for Security Purposes



Source: Field Photo

Livestock such as cattle and donkeys are equally vital as a source of draught power even to farmers who do not own livestock, and thus they tended to support endeavours to curb animal losses through theft. The importance of animal draught power increased in 2014 as the need to plough and level land that had been subjected to rain-fed agricultural production for years arose, following the filling-up of the dam during the 2013-2014 rainy season.

Flood irrigation requires a well-levelled crop field to allow water to flow from one end of the field close to the tertiary canal to the opposite end. A tertiary canal is usually the narrowest of the three

canals ordinarily used in flood irrigation. The main canal is the largest as it carries huge volumes of water from the main water source (dam or river) to secondary canals. Secondary canals are the second largest of these canals. They draw water from the main canal to the overnight dam(s) and from the dam to crop fields. They channel water to tertiary canals which, as already noted, are narrower and quite shallow and are lined very close to irrigated land.

Figure 7: Village Level Water Bailiff Channelling Irrigation Water to the Appropriate Block



Source: Field Photo

Irrigators draw water for flood irrigation from tertiary canals using syphons. Mushandike irrigators agreed that each farmer uses about eight 50mm wide syphons at a time for irrigation to allow water to flow all the way to the furthest irrigated piece of land. There are valves with gauges where these canals meet allowing for the release of the agreed upon volumes of water from the bigger to the smaller canal. Each village has a couple of water bailiffs (who are also irrigators) who, among other activities, open and close release valves beginning with one by the overnight and going all

the way down to where the secondary canal releases water into the tertiary canal. Their services are voluntary hence operate at no cost to the scheme (see Figure 7).

In returning to the ground levelling process, it is clearly physically demanding and unimaginably difficult without access to mechanised draught power. Figure 8 shows part of the levelling process. As well, it is particularly problematic for women to measure up to the physical demands of field levelling. For this (and other) reasons, flood irrigation appears gender insensitive. More specifically, households without an able-bodied adult male member found it very difficult to level their land.

Figure 8: Levelling Crop Field for Flood Irrigation



Source: Field Photo

Some farmers had no choice but to dispose of part of their herd (or even their entire herd in some cases) as pasture and crime problems worsened. This was a huge setback considering that cattle

are usually a dependable source of income when crops fail. Crop production was equally affected by loss of draught power and the need to herd cattle as noted below:

Loss of grazing land meant we had to herd cattle. This new task caused increased labour demands upon every household that had animals to be looked after. A household with two people found itself with one person working on the crop field while one looked after animals. This adversely affected crop production as farmers struggled to cope with labour demands (Focus Group Discussion 18 May 2015).

Nearly all farmers also feed their animals in kraals either at night or throughout the day depending on the availability of animal feed. In most instances, they cut and ferry grass from crop fields to the kraals to feed the animals. This is a physically demanding and time consuming practice that never used to be necessary before loss of grazing land. Figure 9 illustrates the transportation of cut grass for cattle feeding.

Figure 9: Transporting Grass Cut from Crop Fields to Feed Cattle



Source: Field Photo

Overall, then, land invasions had a direct impact on production at Mushandike. Land invaders were also directly affected as many could not engage in the growing and cultivating of crops due to land shortages at the scheme. Although no quantitative data was collected to show how drastic the unintended consequences of land invasions have been on crop and animal agricultural activities, local narratives suggest that they were significant.

Land invaders also became a target of collective verbal attacks by irrigators as they were blamed for the loss of the barbed wire that fenced-off crop fields. The collective view shared by irrigators is that the land invaders who stole the wire ended up exposing crop-fields to roaming animals. Land-invaders deny this accusation, but are far from being exonerated since their arrival coincided with the loss of the barbed wire and a broader increase in theft across the scheme.

6.4.3 Introduction of Village 10 and its impact on production

Village 10 was a later addition to the scheme as discussed in the introductory chapter. The challenge it posed to crop production relates to water usage. Village 10 farmers have 3-4 hectares of irrigated land. The fields were not prepared properly for irrigation as land allocation occurred without proper planning as already discussed. Flood irrigation occurs better when the field is well levelled (see Figure 10) to allow for water to flow freely and the fields in Village 10 are not levelled. Significant water loss takes place due to seepage and flowing in the wrong direction as the flow cannot be easily controlled due to unevenness. In Village 10, unlike in all other villages, water wastage was compounded by the fact that both the secondary and tertiary canals are not concrete-lined and this leads to the loss of water through seepage.

Village 10 farmers were the worst affected by water wastage for the reasons outlined. As a result, their water bills were continually high and this affected their earnings significantly. When in 2008 GMB failed to pay them for their maize crop, they were unable to service their water bill and their irrigation water was cut off. They have not irrigated ever since.

It seems then that change, even when informed by positive intentions, can have far reaching negative consequences if proper planning is not undertaken. The idea of extending access to irrigation water to Village 10 beneficiaries was a positive development in the lives of these

historically disadvantaged farmers. However, this was not accompanied by sufficient foresight and planning, and it was not backed up by any support in the form of training on irrigation for the Village 10 irrigators. Beneficiaries in all other villages received intensive training on farming in general and irrigation in particular and are all performing significantly better in terms of agricultural production when compared to Village 10.

Figure 10: Flood Irrigation is Dependent upon a Well Levelled Field



Source: Field Photo

6.4.4 Drought and crop production at Mushandike

Drought which occurred between 2009 and 2013 and coincided with the drying up of the dam (as discussed above) proved to be a huge milestone in the lives of Mushandike irrigators. It created circumstances that significantly impacted their collective idea of who they were, their way of life and broader social relationships. As shown below, drought had implications for group identity, infrastructure and long-term socio-economic realities for the irrigators.

The following excerpt summarises how drought-induced life-style changes forced scheme members to rethink their identity at Mushandike:

We had known ourselves as competent irrigators who sold fresh produce for close to two decades, but when the dam dried up everything changed. We went back to long forgotten rain-fed production. We had not had silos during our long stay here, but we had to build them for the first time after close to twenty years. To us silos are a symbol of regress and poverty; they reflect traditional production and harvesting of crops which we had long forgotten about. Now that the drought is over, silos stand as a constant reminder of a period of regress in our lives. They also push us to seek to embrace sustainable water use while waiting for government to come up with alternative sources of water. It has for years now promised us that we are going to get water from Muzhi dam in Mashava, [but] we are still waiting (Interview with Njodzi, 17 May 2015).

The quotation reveals that traumatic events such as droughts alter the course of local lives and, with it, prevailing views of reality. Drought in this case relegated progressive irrigation scheme farmers to pedestrian rain-fed producers and harvesters of dry maize. Evidently, who people are (that is, their perception of collective identity) is to an extent dependent upon their contemporary socio-economic activities as much as it draws from history and aspirations for the future. Their self-image, as modern agriculturalists, became under threat because of the drought and the material presence of the silos constantly remind them of this temporary loss of modernity.

The drying up of Mushandike dam thus meant that irrigators had to change the crops they grew. They were compelled to revert to growing drought resistant small grains, maize (which they had to harvest instead of selling due to the need for food), cotton and other crops suitable for rain-fed production. The harvested maize was stored in the silos (see Figure 11). Horticultural and other cash crops which depended heavily on irrigation were simply not grown. Poverty set in as significant earnings were not realised due to poor harvests while savings were eroded during this time of poorly-performing subsistence production.

Figure 11: Household Silo



Source: Field Photo

Additionally, many years of rain-fed production altered the quality of crop-fields. The levelling which suited flood irrigation was gone as farmers responded to new crop demands. Animals roamed the crop fields in search of water and pasture and, in the process, they destroyed secondary and tertiary canals. When the rains returned and filled up the dam, allowing for the resumption of irrigation, farmers faced new challenges. They needed to clean up and repair damaged secondary and tertiary canals as well as toilets in the fields. This requirement triggered conflictual relations.

Not all farmers wanted to participate in cleaning and repairing canals for various reasons. For instance, some alleged that they were not ready to resume irrigation. This meant that farmers whose fields were at the tail-end of the stretch of fields would not access sufficient water as much would be lost because of the still-damaged infrastructure or, alternatively, they would receive dirty, slow-

flowing water as the canals are hardly cleaned (see Figure 12). These farmers had no choice but to carry out the required repair operations throughout the scheme and to shoulder the added financial cost. This involved the buying of cement with which damaged parts of the canals were repaired. As well, for households without a male member or someone with building skills, an added cost of hiring someone with appropriate competences had to be endured. This was burdensome considering that they had not realised significant harvests over about five seasons. Some of the conflict and contestations which arose at this time persist to this day as repairs are still ongoing.

Figure 12: Secondary and Tertiary Canals Requiring Cleaning Up and Repairs



Source: Field Photo

In general, there has been poor crop production in the past two seasons following the resumption of irrigation at the beginning of the 2014 cropping season. Other factors such as depleted draught power and insufficient finances exacerbated subdued production. Certainly, drought brought about significant changes, both direct and indirect, to the lives of irrigators, which were hitherto

relatively stable. It placed a heavy labour demand on the lives of irrigators and also forced them to rethink many issues including who they were as individuals and as a collective: as they confronted the transience of their privileged status as producers, consumers and traders of fresh produce which hinged on nothing more than being irrigators.

6.4.5 Markets and production at Mushandike

Findings suggest that markets for agricultural produce are shrinking largely because of poor cash availability in Zimbabwe compounded by the poor performance of the macro-economy characterised by industrial closures, amongst which are some agro-industries, due to operational difficulties. Poor cash availability on the market is restricting buying and selling. For instance, potential buyers of Mushandike produce in and around Masvingo town are not able to purchase produce although they may want to and can afford to do so. The problem is that they cannot access cash for purchasing produce. For an extended period, it was simply not possible to withdraw money from banks because of cash shortages.

Operating within such an environment forces farmers to lower the selling prices of their produce, especially of horticultural produce; not because the market is flooded with such produce but because there is no cash with which to transact. Through low prices they strive to sell large quantities of perishables before they go bad. Such an awareness is encapsulated in the following contribution by an irrigator:

People want to buy but they do not have cash. It is difficult for anyone to buy tomatoes after queuing in the bank for cash for days only to emerge with a maximum of US\$100. Farmers are pushed into a corner. We now sell a whole bucket of tomatoes for a dollar to avoid throwing away more than half of one's daily produce (Interview with Rusununguko, 7 September 2016).

Farmers together with the government are trying to come up with so-called value-added activities as a way of assisting farmers recoup more from their produce and with the hope that the macro-economic environment is going to improve soon. An interview with an Agritex official revealed that this seemingly distant dream is quickly transforming into a reality as noted below:

We now have acquired land and material for a shed a Bhuku Township, close to the Masvingo–Beitbridge highway so that we are able to sell to both travellers and the local population. Construction will be completed before the end of 2017. This does not readily sound like orthodox value addition per se, but it is. The shed allows farmers to clean-up, package and sell their produce under ideal quality-maintaining and -enhancing conditions. The shed also helps reduce unnecessary competition between farmers who are encouraged to cooperate in seeking to get a good price for their produce. Similarly, it gives buyers easy access and wider choice. After completion of shed construction, the construction of a processing plant will commence (Interview with Murimisi, 6 September 2016).

These efforts are a welcome development in seeking solutions to non-profit-making crop production. Though very elementary, they herald the beginning of practical endeavours in dealing with a problem that has bedevilled farming at Mushandike for decades. Cold rooms would significantly help in preserving perishables although electricity and other charges would inevitably push prices up. These rooms are expected to be in place within a few years, followed by the implementation of other value-addition programmes such as canning of tomatoes and beans, and drying, roasting and packaging of nuts among other activities.

6.4.6 Contract farming at Mushandike

Contract farming remains an alternative solution to marketing problems though, as indicated, this has become more difficult for Mushandike farmers in recent years. It has its own pros and cons but is a tried and tested way of addressing market challenges for farmers across the world. In many instances, it is depicted as having both positive and negative social impacts on poor farming communities. For instance, it is framed as “a new business model that can transform traditional farming systems into dynamic and opportunistic enterprises to the benefit of both small farmers and agro-industries” (Da Vià, 2011: 11). Thus it is depicted as endowed with generic advantages such as being a mechanism for eliminating intermediaries and “linking nominally ‘independent’ family farmers with a central processing, export, or purchasing unit that regulates prices, production practices, product quality, and credit arranged in advance under contract” (Watts, 1992: 69). However, it is also blamed for allowing for the capture of peasant producers in largely exploitative social relations (through credit) and patterns of accumulation. In support of this, White

(1997), who focused on Indonesia, suggests that contract farming traps peasants in debt and forces them to gradually degrade their position from landowners to labourers.

Contract farming relates to contractual agreements into which agro-companies and farmers enter. A contracting company and a farmer agree to fulfil certain mutually beneficial contractual agreements that result in the production of a crop needed by the contracting company. The contracting company supplies inputs to the farmer and recovers its money through collecting agreed quantities of produce of a specific quality from the farmer. If willing, the company might buy whatever crops the farmer remains with after paying his debt but, in many instances, it is not obliged to do so. Irrespective of this, the farmer has a ready market while the contracting company acquires, at a reasonable cost, a product grown to its own specifications. This issue is projected aptly by the following excerpt:

When a company wants a specific crop to be produced it comes to us via Agritex. It tells us what it wants, the quantities and quality involved as well as the inputs it will supply. Usually it tells us when the inputs will arrive and when we should start planting and the expected time of harvesting. It also informs us how it will monitor quality and progress throughout the season. Those who accept the terms sign the contract (Interview with Garwe, 16 May 2015).

While all this seems straightforward on paper, the problem that arises is that implementation tends to follow a different path from the one agreed upon during negotiations, as highlighted below:

First, sometimes the contracting company delivers inputs late and this affects planting dates and everything else that follows. Yet it insists that standards should be met as agreed. Second, the inputs are sometimes insufficient yet the company still expects a standard crop. Third, the value of the land, labour, water and time the farmer invests is undervalued so much that the contracting company does not consider such issues when it considers costs incurred in the production process. Fourth, the contracting company always expects the farmer to meet his obligations to the extent that it can collect the whole harvest leaving the

farmer with absolutely nothing. The costs incurred by the farmer mean nothing to it (Interview with Garwe, 16 May 2015).

This brings out a few important aspects with regard to contract farming as seen through the eyes of Mushandike farmers. First, contract farming is characterised by the pursuit of interests by actors motivated by certain values. For the contracting company, its sole focus is on pursuing profit. In that respect, the farmer functions merely as a means to an end. To the farmer, contract farming could be a viable alternative to market problems and a dependable way of accessing inputs. Second, contract farming is characterised by power asymmetries which relate closely to the socio-economic realities of the two parties. The contracting company is financially better-off than the farmer; therefore, it has greater bargaining power. Its interests and values tend to prevail over those of the farmer.

In this context, at Mushandike, the attitude towards contract farming is highly ambivalent. Some farmers regard contract farming as the solution one embraces only under desperation. One respondent was thus of the view that “*it is an alternative in the absence of alternatives*” (Interview with Rusununguko, 16 May 2015). In 2014, a female farmer remained with four buckets of wheat after the contracting company collected all her harvest as payment for inputs. Her experience was used as a classic example of how ruthless contract companies can be, as articulated at three contract farming meetings I attended at the scheme in 2015. The contracting company was eventually rejected by farmers and it pulled out of Mushandike.

6.5 Concluding remarks

Providing empirical evidence, the chapter has suggested that communities are significantly affected by externally driven social change, be it occurring within the social, political and economic sphere. Further, the chapter has indicated that such social change impacts individuals and local households either negatively or positively, depending on how it is managed. For instance, in the short-term, well-managed and sponsored land reform programmes affect beneficiaries much more positively than chaotic land invasions, largely due to the ways in which resources are accessed (for instance, either enabling or disabling policy and support mechanisms). Similarly, extensive rapid social change brings about a huge degree of uncertainty about the present and

future. For instance, at Mushandike, externally driven changes included land invasions which, amongst other effects, forced disruptive social reorganisation due to land shortages, led to the introduction of chiefly (customary) authority, and resulted in the replacement of the ministry responsible for water with Zinwa, which all triggered uncertainty and contestation within land and water politics.

Other resultant challenges which emerged as a consequence of land invasions, as addressed in this chapter, were questions around land and water ownership, arising not only from contestations for space between land invaders and scheme beneficiaries but also from even complicating attempts to resolve the land invasion problem by various stakeholders. Attempting to solve the question of ownership, some government officials suggested that it is not possible for beneficiaries to own land which was allocated to them for free. Such views were also echoed by some beneficiaries, while other government officials made desperate attempts to lean upon constitutional provisions.

In essence, this chapter has highlighted complex social relations and processes characterising communities even those as small as at Mushandike Smallholder Irrigation Scheme. Social change, ownership, tenure, land rights and production all impact social relations in as much as they are also shaped by them. The intricate interconnections between these issues and the implications they have on everyday social life in rural areas like Mushandike reflect the importance of paying close attention to non-technical issues in seeking to understand the complexities of smallholder irrigation schemes, and in finding solutions to problems around agricultural productivity and sustainable livelihoods.

CHAPTER 7: THE IRRIGATION SCHEME AS SOCIAL SPACE – IMAGINATIONS, REALITIES AND CONSTRUCTIONS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the various ways in which the Mushandike irrigation scheme has been constructed from its inception to the present. It analyses factors that inform or cause the production of various constructions of it and the consequences they trigger. In so doing, it pays attention to how practices and ideas lead to the portrayal of specific perceptions and realities and how these impact social relations. For instance, it analyses how social relations that are characterised by information deficiencies provoke imaginations or constructions of place and relations. It suggests that ideas and practices provoke reality constructions which in turn influence practices.

The chapter begins with an interrogation of the reasons why a significant population of the land hungry did not attempt to join the irrigation scheme upon its inception when, in principle, the scheme was supposed to be an enabling social space to which all land hungry people would aspire. Information asymmetry emerges as a factor that caused many to refrain from attempting to join the scheme. The information vacuum created by insufficient flows of information from government to the land hungry was filled with inaccurate information that resulted in the negative discursive construction of the scheme, which discouraged many from joining and even led to fears in the minds of those who joined. The chapter then moves to positive constructions of the scheme (as a kind of Canaan) by beneficiaries which resulted from the realisation of socio-economic benefits after moving onto the scheme. The shift in the construction of the Mushandike social space from being one negatively imagined to one deeply cherished emanated from an encounter with reality through experiences with reality, which displaced imaginative wonderings of the space.

Other kinds of constructions emerged at Mushandike. For instance, while the recipient population imagined the scheme negatively prior to their encounters, the state was busy constructing it as a space that would be characterised by modernity. The state placed the scheme away from traditional institutions which were regarded then as unsupportive of progressive farming. The scheme was

then, from its inception, placed under a Resettlement Officer (RO) supported by locally elected production Chairmen (who spearheaded the pursuit of agricultural production in their respective villages) and Village Heads (who led in addressing social issues within respective villages too). However, after a couple of years, the state began to imagine the scheme in other ways, as manifested through its shifting administrative and political positions. Such shifts, which smuggled in issues such as re-traditionalisation still affect socio-economic realities at Mushandike today as shown by the rest of the sections of this chapter.

7.2 Information asymmetry and reality construction

In the mid-1980s, the government of Zimbabwe extended a verbal invitation to all Zimbabweans who qualified for the Mushandike Smallholder Irrigation Scheme to express their intent to join the scheme through filling in application forms. The most preferred candidates, according to an Agritex official, were *“poor, landless farmers who were prepared to be full-time farmers”* (Interview with Murimisi, 11 June 2014). Government officials held interviews with prospective irrigators to choose the most suitable candidates, with successful candidates being allocated land by lot to emphasise fairness and transparency.

Most of the initial scheme beneficiaries came from Chivi, Nyajena and Mapanzure, with the exception of village 23B and village 10. A few others came from neighbouring Charumbira communal area and other parts of the country. Each farmer was allocated 1.5 hectares of irrigated land, 0,3 hectares for rain-fed crop production and a residential stand; additionally, they had access to communally-controlled grazing land. According to our findings, many people (even those from as close-by as Charumbira communal area) refrained from joining because they were averse to being ‘exploited’ by the government. More specifically, rumours circulating at the time suggested that government along with white farmers had a grand plan to exploit poor Africans through allocating them land to produce crops which they would share with these two entities. Government would be entitled to a share as provider of inputs and whites as owners of the land. Toilets that had been built within crop fields were pointed at as evidence that irrigators were going to be managed like slaves to the extent that they would not be allowed to be out of sight of their managers to use the bush toilet system (commonly used across communal areas at the time). Using the bush system

would allow one to disappear out of sight of fellow farmers on the open crop field, a ‘luxury’ not permitted by the use of toilets which are located right inside the crop-fields.

Since the construction of toilets in crop-fields was a new unexplained phenomenon, lack of information explaining why they had been built allowed rumours to spread and fill the knowledge vacuum as credible facts. Lack of accurate information created an environment in which many depended on hearsay and imagination in trying to understand the emerging scheme and its rationale. For instance, many local people wondered why the government restricted its scheme invitation to poor, unemployed, landless land-seekers and one explanation which emerged, according to an irrigator, was: “*The government wants free labourers, and uneducated people really make the grade. They are afraid of the government so they will not complain; they have no money so they cannot get help from lawyers*” (Interview with Rusununguko, 14 June 2014). Fears of exploitation were commonly shared and nearly every respondent alluded to it. An irrigation farmer thus noted:

The song many sang for long was mumunda mune matoilets, muchaitwa mabhoi, madhumeni anenge achiti komani komani, munhu ungade kuitwa bhoi remurungu makore ano. It's a trick. Varungu vachikuverengerai mabagwe nemhuri dzenyu. [There are toilets in the fields, they will make you servants. Agritex officials will be driving you, who wants to be a servant of whites these years. Whites will be allocating maize rations to you and your families] (Interview with Hohodza, 16 June 2014).

Five reasons served as a basis for these fears around the scheme. First, historical mistrust of the government spilling over from exploitative and conflictual colonial relations informed people's suspicion. Such a philanthropic gesture (by way of the scheme) intimidated a people who were not used to receiving favours from government. For them, government (even the post-colonial government) served its own interests, hence people doubted that there were no sinister motives behind acts of generosity reserved for the very poor.

Second, the land on which the scheme was established had just been acquired by government from white farmers and, unaware of this unshared reality, locals continued to believe that the land still

belonged to whites. The infrastructure (the dam and main canal, and so on) had been in place for many years and operated by white farmers; hence, the role of the government remained justifiably unclear. That is why, to local people, whites were still seen as a major factor and were supposedly fronting the government. The two (the state and white farmers) were imagined to be in cahoots as they historically had been. Because of this, potential scheme beneficiaries were going to be turned into mere labouring servants.

Third, toilets were strewn all over the crop fields (as already noted), and these were an unfamiliar sight which created an unusual landscape. The reasons for the presence of these toilets were unclear especially to people who were unfamiliar with the heavy demands of irrigation work vis-à-vis the possibility of using the bush toilet option. Fourth, Agritex officials specifically had a bad reputation which was earned during colonial days when agricultural extension officers acted as demonstrators. These officers were notorious for their over-enthusiasm in implementing the colonial state's agricultural policy regardless of its impact on peasant lives, hence the evident suspicion and mistrust. The discussion (in Chapter 4) on the role played by Emery Alvord, the arch-colonial demonstrator, justifies the fear of nefarious acts coming from demonstrators. Fifth, whites were notoriously reputed for doling out food rations to their farmworkers to replenish energy levels depleted by hard labour (with food rations often given in lieu of cash). Therefore, with white farmers as presumed owners of the land, the local fear that whites were going to be giving maize rations to their servants-cum-scheme-beneficiaries was reasonable.

Two vital issues emerge from these points. First, an information asymmetry existed – this entailed an information deficit on the part of local residents and it resulted in some of them making possibly ill-informed decisions such as refraining from joining the scheme. Government officials had all the necessary information that could easily have allayed the fears of the local population, but these officials did not share it on time and hence it remained inaccessible to locals when needed. Rumour filled in the resultant information vacuum and this led to decisions not to join the scheme. Second, the post-colonial view that the past is not gone but is connected to the present and the future, as articulated by Said (1994), is affirmed. As Said (1994:4) argued, “there is no just way in which the past can be quarantined from the present. Past and present inform each other, each implies the

other”. Although issues discussed here were occurring years into independence (or post-1980), peasant farmers still vividly remembered colonial government oppression to the extent that their past experiences and recollections informed their current decisions.

Evidently, the irrigation scheme space was constructed by ill-informed land-hungry peasants as suspicious, deceitful, and potentially malignantly exploitative. Stripped of positivity, it was an unattractive and uninviting space unworthy of entering. Consequently, being precautionary, peasants from neighbouring communal areas distanced themselves from the scheme, informed by appropriate knowledge and reality constructed through their past and present interactive relationships. Their socially constructed knowledge and reality created a localised truth about the world around them, such that that their consequent decisions and actions were consistent with, and embedded within, their life-world. These local constructions justified the decision of refraining from joining the scheme.

This is despite the fact that the government had seemingly positive intentions in inviting people to join the scheme. This finds support in assertions by one government official from the Ministry of Lands, who said:

The government wanted to kill several birds with one stone. First the scheme was established to boost agricultural production through availing irrigation water and support to communal farmers. Second, it was bent on solving land-hunger and to relieve overpopulation in communal areas hence it restricted membership to landless and unemployed people interested in farming. Possession of a Master Farmer Certificate was the primary indicator of interest, followed by an application and so on (Interview with Ivhu, 19 June 2014).

However, the information vacuum the government had unintentionally allowed to develop had obscured uncommunicated truth. Similar experiences were recorded at Murara irrigation scheme in Mutoko (Zimbabwe) (FAO, 2000). This suggests that government communication might have been highly ineffective during the inception phase of smallholder irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe.

Neighbouring communities were of course in dire need of arable land and water, as they were elsewhere in the country. Their refusal to join the irrigation scheme ended up further entrenching

their socio-economic marginalisation. A respondent from Village 12 aptly summed up Charumbira communal area's poor productivity with a rhetorical question: "MaCharumbira vakasawana Matohwe vanowanei? [*In Charumbira communal area what else can one harvest besides wild fruit?*]" (Interview with Nhamburo, 10 September 2016). A few years after the scheme became operational, it was evident that it was improving the quality of life of irrigation beneficiaries. Besides good harvests and significant financial returns, beneficiaries had easier and improved access to natural resources (including land and water) compared to those who remained in communal areas. In the light of their ongoing restricted access to land and water, residents of Charumbira and other communal areas in the province soon began to seek access to the scheme. The study findings suggest that after realising that beneficiaries were benefiting from the scheme, Chief Charumbira took it upon himself to ensure that his people also benefited. His efforts resulted in the establishment of Village 23B (which borders his communal area), reserved just for his people. This is encapsulated in the following words from an interview with a Village 23B irrigator:

Ishe vakataura nehurumende tikawana minda. Taigwadziwa vamwe vagere kune mipwezha, miti yesadza isu tiri parukangarabwe mhiri kwezhira. Zvino towana chikafu nguva yega-yega, hatina zhizha kana chirimo. [*The Chief approached the government and we were allocated land [at the scheme]. We were pained seeing others owning fertile land while we were patched on rocky soils across the road. Now we get food all the time; we have neither rainy nor dry season*] (Interview with Shangazhiko, 5 May 2015).

This section affirms that everyday reality and knowledge are social constructs (Gergen and Gergen, 2004) forged by communities through human interaction and communication (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). They both tend to be fickle, changing as new facts or knowledge is gained or interests change. Where information is unavailable or distorted, reality is still constructed from such distortions. Subsequently, social practices (actions and even inactions, as in the case of Mushandike) ensue from such 'inaccuracies'; though, from the perspective of the individuals engaged in the practices, these 'inaccuracies' are faithful (subjective) representations of the local rural setting and its dynamics.

7.3 The scheme as Canaan: deliverance from marginality

Mushandike allows for high quality crop production (see Figure 13), which makes it a very suitable place to make a living, certainly compared to communal areas. According to some respondents, their access to the scheme only occurred because the Creator allows for miracles to happen. Thus they drew an analogy between their exclusion in communal areas, ‘migration’ from poverty and a life of dignity, pride and self-sufficiency at Mushandike on the one hand, to the biblical exodus on the other hand, that is, the God-led Jewish journey from Egyptian bondage to peace, dignity and abundance in Canaan. For them, both stories are characterised by miraculous escapes from severe human-induced indignity, marginality and exclusion, to dignity, prosperity and abundance. They regard both as miraculous acts of God which occurred as an act of ‘favour’ (or spiritual blessing), as opposed to resulting from deliberate human endeavour. One apparently pious woman said:

Imagine poor wretched property-less people rising from nothing to becoming respected self-sufficient proud owners of irrigated land. A fairy tale. We had nothing except excess poverty. The government came looking for people like us. In this life, nobody looks for the poorest of the poor but government came looking for us. My husband responded, was interviewed and the rest is history (Interview with Sibusiso, 16 February 2015).

Her views were echoed by another Mushandike woman who suggested: “Mushandike iCanaan, ine huchi nemukaka, vazukuru vanouya vogara vodyawo nhaka, ibread basket yedunhu rino [Mushandike is Canaan, overflowing with milk and honey. Our grandchildren will grow-up and enjoy their inheritance. It is the bread basket of this region]” (interview with Mai Rutendo, 6 May 2015).

This somewhat hyperbolic view expresses intrinsic joy amongst those who perceive themselves as having significantly registered unexpected accomplishments in their lives regardless of how trivial or minuscule they might appear to us. To many, these people might still be poor and vulnerable, as they merely own 1.5 hectares of irrigated land without title deeds. But they did not view themselves as such. They considered themselves as a God-favoured few who were rescued from dire poverty and hunger and entered a realm of self-sufficiency. This reveals that perspectives on improvement and progress differ across societies, communities and households. As such, progress

in the case of Mushandike is conceptualised temporally in terms of a shift over time within the life-world of a community or household, rather than being understood in a contemporaneously comparative manner.

Figure 13: Quality Crop at Mushandike



Source: Field Photo

Many at Mushandike construct their reality as characterised by a significant shift from invisibility to dignity, considering where and what they were in the past and the seemingly insurmountable odds which were stacked against them by birth. They regard themselves as having scaled dizzy socio-economic heights to be counted amongst the country's few self-sufficient small-scale irrigators, repeatedly researched on, written about and addressed by politicians and other important national and international people. Enumerating tangible and intangible benefits accruing as a result of having joined the scheme, one male irrigator exclaimed:

Coming to Mushandike was right, very good for us, kwakatinakira chaizvo [it is good for us]; our children went to good schools, we built houses, have electricity and tap water. We are guests of the government, because it invited us here; we passed interviews therefore qualified to be here and were equipped to be competently here through receiving training and material support (Interview with Hohodza, 4 May 2015).

Mushandike is therefore depicted as a place of privileged upward mobility, of ‘God ordained’ successful accomplishments. It is a place where the once excluded encounter dignity and are possibly transformed into social citizens. It ascribes a positive identity (irrigators) to the once downtrodden. Furthermore, it is also a place where material growth complements intellectual development across generations. Both parents and their progeny have acquired significant training which prepares them for a better life. Although they regard their qualification as somewhat miraculous, training has legitimated their role as irrigators who are counted amongst others on merit. Mushandike is, therefore, a place of learning too.

7.4 How learning and productivity impact the construction of Mushandike as place of business

Findings suggest that irrigators regard the scheme as a space within which business occurs and which demands that, as entrepreneurs, they avidly learn and make good entrepreneurial decisions to survive and to make profit. Learning implies, on the one hand, attending formal structured courses, presentations and training sessions and, on the other, experiential learning bordering on accumulating knowledge from daily practice and observation. For the farmers, decision-making is a vital entrepreneurial component which significantly determines whether one succeeds or fails. One proud farmer suggested:

We are always learning. When we arrived here we were trained on how to use water sparingly, utilise the environment sustainably, and to work closely with government officials especially Agritex and veterinary officers. From them the farmer is informed about the best crop to grow at a particular time and the quantity, where the markets are, and what the profit margins are; as well as what diseases are affecting animals, and what to do [to treat them], and how to feed them to get the best draught power or profit from them at point of

sale. The farmer also learns how to hunt for markets, to produce in bulk as a group to meet [market] demand and reduce competition which leads to exploitative price negotiations on the market (Interview with Dzidzo, 10 July 2014).

Good decision-making emanates from sufficient knowledge of the subject matter upon which rational business decisions are forthcoming. The same farmer thus noted that:

Masvingo town, our largest market accessible at a reasonable cost, is a small town that quickly gets flooded [with produce]. Producers from Chisase and Birchenough Bridge also sell their produce in Masvingo. One has to know the crops they are going to produce and when to avoid getting caught-up in a flooded market. Markets determine prices and when they are flooded the farmer loses. More importantly, this year Zimbabwe has such a big cash crisis that buyers have no cash with which to buy. It is, therefore, ill advised to try to sell perishables in such a market especially when one has no access to cold rooms. Therefore, a good understanding of one's environment well informs decision-making (Interview with Dzidzo, 8 September 2016).

Experiential knowledge though is equally considered as vital knowledge which helps the farmer navigate the potentially exploitative terrain of an agrarian existence. Farmers indicate that they live and work in an environment where everyone wants to make a profit. Therefore, every interface is characterised by a possible clash of interests.

In some instances, interests are openly declared but often times they are concealed behind expressions of philanthropy and so on. These claims of good intentions might deceive a novice but not a seasoned farmer, farmers argue. In particular, irrigation farmers band together to avoid being subject to exploitative practices, and they may draw upon the support of one outside group when being preyed upon by another. These issues are encapsulated below in assertions made by one farmer:

The government, NGOs, agro-based companies all come to us with sweet talk. The first thing I need to know is: what is in it for the other person? What does he want to gain from our interaction? We have been exploited for long so we try to be careful. I know they would not

come to sweet talk us for nothing. Experience has taught us that once we establish what they want, we are able to navigate to equally derive benefits from the relationship. Companies doing contract farming, for instance, are very nice when they lure you into a contract. But when they come to inspect your crop they demand incredible quality in the most unfriendly way. They are worse when they come to buy. They either reject your crop or under-price it in such a way that they take everything leaving you with nothing but debt. They behave as if their contribution is the only one that is valuable while ours is worth nothing. However, we make them understand that we contribute land, water and labour while they come in with inputs. So both parties should benefit. Our solution is that we cooperate as farmers, assisted by Agritex officials. We negotiate as a team for good contractual conditions. However, desperate farmers accept unfavourable conditions because of their financial situation and these are always exploited. That is why I abhor every situation that slides me deeper into poverty because it exposes me to exploitation (Interview with Chiramwiwa, 6 May 2015).

Similarly, one woman argued that she no longer allows herself to be milked by contract farming companies. She said the following concerning contract farming:

I do not grow crops for anybody but for my family. I have to benefit no matter what. Ndinongosvetawo twumvura mukarwizi ndapfira pfira vana vangu vararame [I suck a little water from the little stream and spit on my children so that they remain alive]. What I mean is, I cannot surrender the whole harvest to the contract farming company to the extent that I am left desperate. What do I tell my children who laboured in the wheat fields for four months when I fail to feed them? Handirwari [I am not sick] (Interview with Mai Rutendo, 8 September 2016).

Evidently, Mushandike, as a business terrain, obviously imposes huge demands on farmers to be profitably enterprising. The farmer has to function not only as a land tiller, but as a shrewd decision-maker too, one who not only understands the market but is equally capable of identifying and growing profitable marketable crops as well as ensure healthy animals for draught power. Thus, the farmer has to be multi-skilled to make profit. Farmers therefore need periodic workshops and seminars which help them gain the latest ideas and information about crop and animal

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production and markets. They often though rely upon their own wits to negotiate their way through their agrarian existence.

7.5 Change and progress: from tradition to modernity and back again

Mushandike, like other state-instituted smallholder irrigation schemes across Zimbabwe, was established with the aim of modernising smallholder agriculture to break the cycle of rural poverty and increase productivity and raise incomes (Samakande et al., 2004; Musara et al., 2010). Thus, the irrigation scheme became designated as an exclusive space for the project of modernity as opposed to being characterised by tradition as in communal areas. Modernity, viewed through the prism of modernisation theorists, entails the deliberate and systematic renunciation of tradition and the subsequent embrace of progressive modern ideas, practices and processes. The journey towards modernity involves being placed beyond the influence and reach of Chiefs and *Sabhukus* who epitomise tradition, and it entails receiving scientific training and technical support systems allowing for rural agriculture to be literally transformed. This is expected to happen to such an extent that the irrigation scheme reflects and embodies an entrepreneurial spirit and dimension which differentiates it from peasant-based subsistence production steeped in traditional ways of being and doing.

Modern agriculture had to be cushioned (and even isolated) from supposed retrogressive traditional mind-sets, methods, structures and leadership found in communal areas under the leadership of chiefs and Village Heads. Unsurprisingly, a Mushandike beneficiary highlights that:

Upon arrival we were placed under the leadership of a Resettlement Officer [RO]. The RO was educated, respected and respectful of people and policy. He was straightforward and transparent. He helped us organise ourselves under local leadership comprising of two committees, a production and a village committee. Both committees were led by Chairmen. The production committee led and still leads production related issues and solves challenges that arise. The village committee addresses social issues within the village. The committees were voted into office for a five-year term. This system was as progressive as it was democratic. We were told by government officials and by Chief Charumbira that we were

not under any chief and that as irrigators we had no chisi [sacred traditional day of rest]. For many years this was our lived reality (Interview with Vandudzai, 5 May 2014).

These views were echoed by another farmer who also notes why certain traditional practices were considered inappropriate for the irrigation scheme. He says:

Ishe Charumbira waitonga maCharumbira umo panguva yatakauya akauya muno tichisvika akasimbaradza mashoko ehurumemnde ekuti muno hamuna chisi nokuti hakusi kumaruwa, haisi nzvimbo yekungogara asi ndeyebasa napo tinofanira kudiridza chero nechisi goho risaminama [Chief Charumbira who ruled over there [in the communal area] at the time we arrived reiterated the government position that we do not recognise chisi here, as this is not a communal area where people ordinarily reside but a business place where we are supposed to irrigate appropriately to realise good harvests] (Interview with Zvazviri, 3 April 2015).

However, when the structural adjustment programme emerged in the 1990s, government restructuring brought in many changes. This programme led to a downsizing of Zimbabwean state involvement in the agricultural sector, including in relation to supporting small-scale farmers. One such change, as discussed previously, was the withdrawal from the irrigation scheme of the Resettlement Officer together with the District Development Fund (DDF) with which he worked. The DDF was the mechanised unit of the state (which had a legion of tractors) through which the government offered subsidised tillage services to small-scale farmers. This reduced state intervention inadvertently created a power vacuum within certain agrarian spaces which led to the jostling for power by many players. One such jostler for power, according to a government official, was the current chief in the area. He argued explicitly and in detail the following:

Seeing the power vacuum, chief Fortune Charumbira quickly moved in and declared himself chief over irrigators. He proffered the arguments that Mushandike territory originally belonged to his ancestors. He argued that his people were the indigenous owners of the land. He solicited political support to counter brewing resistance from Bere's people who argued that the territory actually belonged to chief Bere before he was stripped of his chieftaincy by

the colonial state for recalcitrant insubordination. Divisions quickly developed. Residents sought government and political intervention which yielded nothing. Charumbira consolidated power to the disappointment of Bere people and their supporters. When the national referendum came in 2000, Bere people and their supporters/sympathisers overwhelmingly voted no. Overnight, Mushandike was unofficially declared an opposition stronghold by the ruling party. The chief found justification for seeking stronger political support. He is accused of luring land invaders into Mushandike from 2000 on the pretext that he was neutralising opposition support. Others argue that his agenda was to populate Mushandike with his own people to counter Bere's territorial claims. His foot soldiers were Sabhukus which he created through converting Village Chairmen into permanent office bearers as Sabhukus. They [Sabhukus] claim to know all [to be more knowledgeable than fellow farmers] and to be able to do the impossible [in solving social and political issues]; ndivana nzizi tochera [we dig rivers] (Interview with Zvinorova, 7 May 2015).

This issue is discussed in further detail in the following section. For now, it suffices to emphasise that social constructions of the Mushandike social space (as modern or traditional) tended to quickly shift in response to contending interests of various groups.

7.6 Contradictions in land politics

Whereas the motive for setting up the irrigation scheme was to improve agricultural production for poor communal farmers through access to water, and to subsequently transform the economic fortunes of the poor, reality on the ground is permeated with contradictions. The scheme is an arena within which various interests and values collide, and this implies dynamics which contradict intended objectives. This section discusses the return of (and to) tradition as a major contradiction that defeats at least in part the main objectives for which the scheme was initially established.

The irrigation scheme was established to promote a new modern democratic and productive ethos but, in practice, it has reverted to certain traditional practices where power is centralised in the institution and person of the *Sabhuku*. Upon his conversion from being a democratically-elected office bearer on a five-year term to a permanent traditional entity (accountable to the chief), the *Sabhuku* assumed a new identity divorced from what he stood for as Village Chairman. The

Sabhuku appears more concerned with promoting the interests of the Chief as his appointing officer than those of fellow scheme members with whom he shares – to a large extent – a common history, experiences and vision for the future. For instance, in a number of villages, the *Sabhuku* exercises a monopoly of power and even allocates graves to members of the local community. It is thus commonly known that:

Hakuna anoviga asina kuratidzwa guva naSabhuku, unoripa. Sabhuku ndiye anopa go-ahead yezvinhu zvakawanda – ukada kuita zvaunoda unoripa. Ukaviga munhu usina kuratidzwa guva naSabhuku unoripa mombe kwaCharumbira. Asi hatizivi kuti zvinoitirwei. [*Nobody buries without having been allocated a grave by the Sabhuku; [otherwise] he will be fined. The Sabhuku is the one who authorises many activities – if anybody chooses to do anything willy-nilly, they will be fined. If you bury someone without having been allocated the grave by the Sabhuku you will pay a fine of a cow to Charumbira. But we don't know why*] (Interview with Kutonga, 17 May 2014).

Power is centralised in the name of tradition and is practiced purportedly to appease the Chief. Furthermore, every *Sabhuku* works alongside a Committee of 7, with the members of the committee selected from the community by the *Sabhuku*. At Mushandike, the *Sabhuku* picks one of the seven members from the land-invaders so that they also have representation. But the *Sabhuku* is accused of wantonly or corruptly allocating land without consultation. In one village, for instance, it is claimed that the *Sabhuku* and the Committee of 7 have corruptly allocated land and water rights to 13 adult children of powerful irrigation farmers from the village without consultation with fellow irrigators. Additionally, these children have 3-4 hectares, way more than the stipulated 1.5 hectares, and they irrigate their fields as they please. Yet, they pay the same amount of money for water as the rest of the village members.

According to some village members, the formal agreement is that water rights are extended to a single member of every stand-holder in each village. However, following the wanton unregulated allocation of land and water rights by the Committee of 7, some families now have two or three members with water rights. One respondent declared:

Patsika dzedu tinoti mvura hainyimwi munhu. Asika chibvumirano chinofanira kuremekedzwa. Uyezve iyi haisiyo mvura isinganyimwi munhu patsika dzedu, tinoreva yekunwa nekubikisa. Ye business inoripwa. Zvakare, chinorwadza kutyorwa kechibvumirano kukunda kusandiswa kwemvura. *[Traditionally we say no one should be denied water [for domestic homestead consumption]. But an [irrigation] agreement should be respected. This [water for irrigation] is not the water that nobody should be denied access according to our tradition, but water for domestic purposes. Water for business should be paid for. But what is [particularly] painful is the violation of our [irrigation] agreement, more than the unauthorised utilisation of water]* (Focus Group Discussion 17 May 2015).

The allocation of land and water to a favoured few without wider consultation has not only created despondency but has also fomented intra-group conflict and contestations. While, at first sight, it might seem that irrigators are basically aggrieved by the presence of squatters and are at peace with and among themselves, village irrigators are actually affected by any practices which go against the basic defining principles of their co-existence. This is encapsulated in the following words, with reference to the allocation of water rights to the children of local elites:

Sabhuku and Committee of 7 gave water to 13 adult children without consultation. The village agreed that these children be given 3-4 hectares so that they practice dryland cropping. But the Committee of 7 allowed these 13 to irrigate without our consent. The 13 made earth canals and now irrigate more land than us. Our discussion of the issue triggered so much conflict that we ended up having a meeting with the Minister of Water at Flamboyant Hotel in Masvingo. The Minister could not resolve the issue. His temporary suggestion was that we allow them to irrigate for the season. They regarded that as a license to water forever (Interview with Rujeko, May 17 2015).

Across the Mushandike scheme, Sabhuku and the Committee of 7 are accused of openly selling land to land-seekers (as already discussed). Findings indicate that there were several infills within the original villages which have all been sold to land-seekers some of whom are in the process of building ‘mansions’. Figure 14 below shows a homestead under construction on an infill.

Figure 14: Land-seeker's Homestead under Construction on an Infill



Source: Field Photo

Sabhukus are purported to be acting on behalf of the chief, as indicated earlier. To substantiate this claim, the Village 15 *Sabhuku* leads all the land-seekers in his village, on a yearly basis, to the chief's farm for *zunde raMambo*. To reiterate, this is a traditional practice where members of a community participate in producing food (either as a collective in the chief's fields, or in fields set aside for that purpose, or as individuals in their own crop fields) and then later pool the harvest together under the chief's custody. The produce, which traditionally has to entail some grain products, is supposed to serve the purpose of feeding the hungry, less fortunate or needy members of the community, or hungry visitors or passers-by.

However, in this case, land-seekers work in the fields of the Chief as a way of paying homage to him for allocating them land. They cultivate any type of crop and never get to know where it ends up. Therefore, this has been transformed into an exploitative practice which exacerbates the

marginalisation of the poor, carried out in the name of tradition. Whereas such traditional arrangements are supposed to protect the weak and marginalised, they now seem to form the basis for self-aggrandisement at Mushandike. Only the poor category of land-seekers participates in this *zunde raMambo* practice, but this does not mean that well-off members are thereby not bound to chiefly obligations, as they merely express gratitude financially. This study did not try to establish whether or not the money in fact ends up in the pocket of the supposedly rich Chief. Rather, its focus throughout is about capturing competing local constructions of reality and how these are embedded in alternative renderings of historical and contemporary practices. Therefore, as noted in Chapter 2, the study does not seek to identify an absolute truth but highlights ‘reality’ and ‘truth’ as historical and social constructs which define and delimit the lifeworld of individuals and groups at localised levels.

I must hasten though to add that, with regard to the *zunde raMambo* practice, not many Mushandike people are aggrieved by performing it. Many who have participated in it are to an extent pleased of having done so, and for two reasons. First, it is a practice consistent with their traditions, therefore there is nothing amiss about it. Second, it affirms the Chief’s recognition of their continued presence in the scheme. Thus, it confirms their existence at Mushandike and expresses that they still need chiefly protection as already discussed.

The conversion of the Village Chairmen into *Sabhukus* simultaneously transferred land ownership from the collective to the Chief. The notion that the grazing land was collectively owned by all irrigators fell away. Because of this, the *Sabhuku* supposedly resettles people on this land as he so pleases and deems fit. The blue cards that farmers possess merely suggest that one is a member of the Mushandike irrigation scheme and possesses three pieces of 0.5 hectare blocks of irrigated land and a residential stand on Chief Charumbira’s land and nothing more.

Land owning at Mushandike does not denote right to dispose of it. Ordinarily, owners of commercial land have the legitimate right to sell it. Commercial agricultural land, just like urban land, can be sold at market value in Zimbabwe. But smallholder scheme land purportedly cannot be sold because it accords the poor a place to stay and pursue livelihoods. Consequently, a rural

household may hold onto the land regardless of whether it still has an interest in farming or not, as it is not possible to commercially dispose of the land. A Ministry of Lands official explained:

They cannot sell the land because it is not theirs. They only have a permit to graze, reside and to cultivate. The land is not theirs. They do not have title deeds. We will not allocate them title deeds because they will automatically have the right to sell. The danger is whites will come back and buy all the land. We do not want the land to be in the hands of whites. To be Zimbabwean is to own land. Many Zimbabweans are not yet economically mature; they will be duped by whites, therefore the government has to control the selling of land to protect its citizens (Interview with Ivhu, 10 June 2014).

Perhaps surprisingly, such paternalism is based on the construction of small-scale farmers as “childlike adults” who need state protection. It is ironic that this pejorative perception of Africans as ignorant or immature adults is now a category reserved for the poor by fellow Africans, such as the Ministry of Lands official. The assumption that Mushandike farmers do not know what they want economically contradicts the entrepreneurial views and practices they embody as discussed above. The assumption therefore is a discursive representation involving, it seems, a baseless claim that lacks empirical foundations. The delusionary fear that whites are shrewdly lurking out there waiting for an opportune time to pounce on naïve farmers and walk away with their land may thus have no merit.

Evidently, Mushandike is studded with contradictions which are promoting and resulting in contestations and conflict. Competing perceptions and interests are creating a huge difference between what is supposed to be and what exists. Power-holders appear interested in creating and advancing realities which promote the interests of marginalised groups while they are in fact busy protecting and advancing their own.

7.7 Inter-group and intra-group contestations

Although the presence of land invaders is the major source of despair for irrigation farmers, there are many other issues creating and sustaining internal conflict at the irrigation scheme. Some of these conflicts have already been discussed so, in this section, certain conflicts are brought to the

fore or further elaborated upon: namely, party politics (related to the imposition of *Sabhukus*) and intra-family quarrels.

The people of Mushandike are divided with regard to the conversion of Chairmen to *Sabhukus*, with the exception of Village 10 and 23B. Village 10 people were literally rescued by Chief Charumbira when they were being evicted from Morgenster by the mission. He asked government to allow them to occupy Village 10. The government did not only allow them to settle but permitted them to irrigate too. Consequently, they feel that they owe the Chief a huge debt and they readily accept his administrative decisions. Residents of Village 23 were also allocated land after the intervention of Chief Charumbira. They come from his communal land and he has always been their Chief; therefore, they do not have problems with embracing his decisions as well.

However, in other villages, opinions differ. One farmer opposed to the idea of having a *Sabhuku* in the place of a village chairman argued:

Sabhuku haana basa mu irrigation scheme nekuti haataure nezve development ye Village zvaiita village chairman. Ndewe kutorerana vakadzi, kubirana huku nekutukanirana makuhwa. Isu handizvo zvatakagarira muno. [*Sabhuku has no role to play in the irrigation scheme because he does not spearhead development, as the Village Chairman used to do. He merely deals with issues such as infidelity and felony. That is not what we are here for*] (Interview with Hazvigoni, 15 May 2015).

This view trivialises the relevance of the *Sabhuku* and claims that, upon his conversion from being a village chairman, the *Sabhuku* was given in effect a new job description from the Chief, with his new role relinquishing the development focus of the village chairman role. The *Sabhuku* assumed unwritten political roles although no local resident including himself can openly say so because the *Sabhuku* purports to be apolitical. A few irrigators who support having *Sabhukus* argue that there is nothing amiss with what the Chief did as it is consistent with tradition. One respondent argued: “*Before we came here, Charumbira had meetings with chiefs who were sending people here to say your people are coming to my area, they will become my people, do they agree – chiefs and headmen had meetings with us and we agreed. What then has changed?*” (Interview with

Nhoroondo, 15 May 2015). The view that there were meetings to discuss such issues has been disputed by many as fictitious. They argue that the scheme was not in any within Chief Charumbira's territory and hence there was no basis for such an arrangement to be put into place. They further argue that government was at that time averse to turning the irrigation scheme into *ruzevha* (a communal area) under a chief. The importance of these contending views is that they show the differences in intra-group knowledge and reality construction.

Some ZANU-PF supporters amongst both irrigators and non-irrigators suggest that the Chief is playing a crucial political role as he has the power to rightfully remove MDC *Sabhukus* and replace them with those in support of ZANU-PF. The argument is that aligning with ZANU-PF is important for both principled and tactical reasons, as noted by one interviewee:

The ZANU-PF government offered us this land when we had nothing; why should we abandon it [the party] now? We should express gratitude through supporting ZANU-PF. Second, ZANU-PF as the ruling party has influence over intervention activities, therefore, if we fight it, we do lose (Interview with Mavambo, 13 April 2015).

This is a pragmatic view as well as a partisan one. Conversely, MDC supporters argue that this is ultimately apologetic and unnecessary, as it amounts to justifying actions which violated rights, even of those who express such views. They argue that the Chief in cahoots with the ruling party is silencing different opinions. The Chief is viewed as trampling on the democratic ethos upon which the scheme was first established. Reports indicate for example that, in Village 21, villagers removed the chief's *Sabhuku* called Chikadzi and replaced him with the people's favourite called Mapiye. The chief was incensed and descended upon the community as the following interview shows:

The chief asked who crowns Sabhukus in your places of origin. The people answered saying the Chief and tradition does it. The Chief then asked, which Chief crowned Mapiye and the people could not answer. Yesterday [April 12, 2015], Mapiye was to pay mombe [cow] to the Chief for being made Sabhuku. Members of the Committee of 7 were to pay a goat each

to the chief for participating in electing Mapiye as Sabhuku. The choosing of Sabhuku is not political therefore should not involve voting (Interview with Bipi, 13 April 2015).

MDC supporters argue that the allusion to tradition is a desperate attempt by a party who have lost support. One local MDC leader argued:

ZANU-PF was insensitive to our concerns and pushed us away till we joined the MDC. The very insensitivity it demonstrated in Village 21. When it realised that it would not win any public office democratically it devised this brilliant idea of using one person to dictate to thousands by allowing the chief to reign over us. This is called dictatorship. ZANU-PF has divided us. Irrigation farmers attack one another openly. We can't agree on anything. No matter how brilliant an idea is, if it is suggested by a ZANU-PF supporter we reject it and they reject ours. We cannot progress any more. Even witchcraft is being openly practiced (Interview with Zvinoira, 13 April 2015).

Conflicts in fact are said to be playing out through practices of witchcraft. A classic case links the death of a prominent ZANU-PF activist and leader to witchcraft. Findings suggest that the woman from the ruling party was allegedly killed by those she supposedly threatened with eviction from the scheme. One respondent had this to say about her death:

She told MDC supporters as she was leaving for a meeting in Harare for the President's inauguration in 2013 that upon her return she was going to evict all MDC supporters. On the day she returned she was seen jovially arriving at her home in the company of several ZANU-PF supporters. A few minutes later she accompanied a few guests out of her house for a few metres and quickly went back into the house where her guests awaited her. A few minutes later we learnt that she had collapsed and was foaming on the mouth. We went there running but before we arrived at her house to render whatever necessary help we could, she had died. People say she was evicted [sarcasm for 'killed'] by some of those she wanted to evict (Interview with Zvinoira, 13 April 2015).

The story of the death of this lady is known throughout Mushandike even by children. Some within the ranks of the MDC, and many others who are simply infuriated by talk of eviction, argue that

what happened to this leader of the ruling party's women's league (and wife to a *Sabhuku*) was a call for caution and sobriety in handling land invasion issues. They argue that once people are pushed to a point of desperation, they can do anything including engaging in witchcraft practices to defend themselves.

Family and household disputes and/or antagonisms also play out in land politics. For instance, there are incidences where land allocations were seemingly used to resolve family disputes. Two examples suffice in illustrating this dimension. First is the story of one young man from *makombo* raised by his irrigating parents at Mushandike. To reiterate, *makombo* refers originally to residential spaces earmarked for adult children of irrigators but now also refers to where land-invaders live; in most instances, they (children and land-invaders) both live in the same area, the former grazing land. This young man said:

After I got married my wife and stepmother failed to co-exist amicably. Their disagreements quickly degenerated into quarrels that sucked in my father and me. I tried to do my best and still failed to resolve their differences; if anything their animosity got even worse to the extent that the police public relations unit ended up coming in to try and help us and again without success. My father ended up giving me land here in Makombo despite the fact that he has two vacant stands next to his [at Mushandike] which he had indicated he was going to give my brother and I. A short while after my wife and I came to stay here, relations between her and my stepmother rapidly improved. Overtime we forgave each other. Makombo akatisunungura [Makombo liberated us]. I am happy to be here, although I came over very bitter. I now cherish the peace I have and the good relationship I now have with my parents. I am sure that we will not be evicted from here even if invaders were to be evicted for the simple reason that our parents wouldn't want us to go back home. They are happy with us being here. What makes me sad about being here is that I cannot build a big house for fear of losing if we were to be evicted (Interview with Younger, 17 June 2014).

Figure 15: A Typical *Makombo* Homestead of Children of Irrigators



Source: Field Photo

Land-invaders live in fear of eviction, and irrigators hope that land-invaders will one day be evicted' but the government and politicians keep everyone guessing, as discussed below. The point here, though, is (at least in this case) that land allocations act as social valves through which social pressure is released. Both parties, the allocating and the receiving, understood that the land allocation not only availed land to the recipient, but diffused tension and hatred that were tearing the family apart. Thus land allocation helped improve relations at the family level. In this respect,

Figure 15 represents a typical *makombo* homestead of children of irrigation scheme members. Unlike their fellow *makombo* members from elsewhere, most of the young men here are still poor and are discouraged from building better houses in *makombo* because of tenure uncertainty as noted above. Their well-off brothers and sisters opt to establish themselves outside Mushandike.

In a second case, another young man whose wife also failed to co-exist with his mother ended up in *makombo*. But he believes that he worked hard for the family over many years and does not belong in *makombo*. Consequently, he developed a significant abhorrence of irrigation scheme life in part because of poor relations between his wife and mother, and importantly due to the exploitation he argues he experienced in the scheme at the hands of his family. With regards his personal feeling about residing in *makombo*, he lamented as follows:

Makombo is like a dumping place for those with wives who are not acceptable to their parents. Survival in Makombo demands off-farm livelihood strategies. There are few who have productive land but, for most of us, crop production is unrewarding. What makes me sad is that I worked so hard for my father that I did not deserve to wind up here. I am so unhappy that I will not even decide to seek employment in the scheme even if I suffer very much. That place is DRC [in reference to the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo]. The life is as tough as being in a battlefield where only the lucky few survive (Interview with Kurerwa, 7 June 2014).

This section has accorded significant insights into land politics at Mushandike. It has highlighted the connectivity between various aspects of social existence and how they play out in land politics. It is evident that land issues, as hinted in preceding chapters, are not only about material existence but are intertwined with the politics of living and belonging, both within households and communities more broadly.

7.8 Criminal accusations

In addition to all this, accusations emerge as communities of land invaders co-exist with scheme beneficiaries at Mushandike. Land-invaders are accused of exacerbating deforestation, theft of livestock and water wastage. Both groups though proffer interesting interpretations of reality from

their perspective. After a close look at what is obtaining, it is sensible to appreciate that the accusations are reflective of a problematic co-existence founded on hatred and conflict.

Land invaders are accused of several crimes, the most prominent being animal theft. The logical argument by their accusers is that many of them have no stable source of income so they depend upon theft. The assumption is that thieves are those people without a stable source of livelihood. Although this is not a proven fact, it is a view commonly shared by many irrigation farmers at Mushandike. Some have even gone on to label sons of scheme members (who also do not have a stable source of livelihood) as accomplices in local thefts. Scheme members argue that the theft of livestock worsened after the arrival of land invaders and therefore they are the thieves.

Although some scheme members are strongly convinced that land invaders are responsible for the escalation of livestock thefts, no single land invader has been ever caught in the process of stealing or in possession of a stolen animal. Findings indicate that the only person who was almost caught was a high-profile politician who is now deceased. The police could not arrest him, and neither could they release the stolen cattle found in his possession, because of his political influence. The victim of this crime was the *Sabhuku* of Village 23 B. One day the *Sabhuku*, while in the town of Masvingo, came across his 13 missing animals being driven by the politician's workers to meet a buyer. He alerted the police and the workers together with the cattle were taken to the police station. However, upon learning the identity of the supposed owner of the herd, the police failed to press charges. The politician later arrived and argued that the animals were his except two oxen. The police released the two animals into the custody of the *Sabhuku* and asked him to return after two days with proof that the remaining 11 animals were his. Upon his return, he found the animals had been released into the hands of the politician. The police no longer wanted anything to do with the matter. The *Sabhuku* did not pursue the issue any further following advice from family and friends.

Residents of *makombo* (land invaders and children of irrigators) are also accused of killing animals belonging to irrigators because the cattle destroy their crops, an accusation the *makombo* residents refute. One resident, a son of an irrigator disputed this accusation in some depth:

The accusations are false. We do not do that. I was personally accused of killing someone's donkey, a crime I never even contemplated committing. The fact is that I woke up one night to relieve myself and saw the donkey sleeping close to my homestead and left it there when I went back to sleep. In the morning I discovered that the donkey had died. I never got to know what caused its death. I informed the owner whom I have known all my life since I was born and raised in the irrigation scheme although I now live here in makombo. Surprisingly, he accused me of having poisoned his donkey and I was stunned largely because I had always treated him like my father. I had respected him all my life. He dragged the donkey into the bush and left it to rot. Dogs ate it but none died. Although he saw that he had erred in falsely accusing me of a crime I never committed, he refused to apologise. My view is that they accuse us because most of the people here [makombo] are land invaders. Some irrigators call them colonisers and really despise them (Interview with Kuchena, 7 June 2014).

Furthermore, land invaders are accused of cutting down trees and wasting water. They also dismiss this accusation as reflective of deep-seated aversion for one another. One female land invader, while not denying all accusations, nevertheless sought to justify their actions: *"We do not have gardens so how do we waste water. Of course those who still want to build, mould bricks. That is the basis for the argument that we cut down trees and waste water. We do not do it to damage the environment but out of need"* (Interview with Kutyei, 8 June 2014).

Clearly, then, co-existence which is rooted in animosity exacerbates social conflict. Evidently, criminal accusations are more about what one thinks about the other and not about facts on the ground. Hatred is therefore based on accusations of wrongdoing that have never been substantiated. Some amongst the irrigators are of the view that there is no need to prove that the accused committed the crime because, after all, they are capable of committing crimes since their stay at Mushandike is a crime in itself.

7.9 Ambivalence and uncertainty

In this context, many amongst the land invaders developed a sense of ambivalence with regard to their stay and lives at Mushandike. Irrigators have also fallen victim to anxiety following a

protracted period of uncertainty. In fact, the deferred resolution of the land invasions is creating a sense of despondency within both social groups.

Evidence reveals that water shortages are causing a huge sense of uncertainty amongst irrigation farmers. From 2009 to 2013, there was no irrigation across Mushandike because the dam had dried up. Although many suggest that this was caused by siltation triggered by the illegal resettlement of people upstream, studies indicate there is virtually no sign of siltation (Fitshane, 2014). The other logical but equally unsubstantiated argument is that the drying up was caused by over-use of water due to a rising animal and human population dependent upon the dam as a source of water. Whatever the cause of the drying up of the dam, four years without irrigation exacerbated uncertainty, stress and despondency due to loss of income and erosion of savings. The ramifications are still very much alive.

Although uncertainty continues to lead to widespread despondency, a significant measure of hope also pervades the local social milieu at Mushandike. Hope emanates from the belief that water woes are soon going to be addressed in a significant way, following a promise by government that water will be drawn from Muzhi Dam once the Tokwe Mukosi project is completed. Currently, water from Muzhi Dam (near the town of Mashava) irrigates Hippo Valley and Triangle estates. The government of Zimbabwe is said to have indicated that, once the Tokwe Mukosi dam construction is completed, Muzhi water shall be for local purposes including irrigating Mushandike. Feasibility studies are said to have been completed already. An Agritex official informed noted:

Muzhi might start supplying water to Mushandike in the coming 10 years if there is no change of plans. Feasibility studies were carried out and it was decided that, instead of drilling a canal through mountains, it will be better to go round the mountains as that allows for extending water access to communities in those areas. What remains uncertain is whether the government is going to prioritise the project by way of funding it (Interview with Murimisi, 8 September 2016).

Many irrigation farmers express a huge sense of uncertainty with the future as the land invasions have significant political connotations. One elderly woman expressed her worries in the following few lines: *“Many of us MDC supporters are repeatedly threatened with eviction. We do not know what the future holds. We also don’t know whether all these people in makombo will be removed. If they are allowed to stay, what will happen to the scheme?”* (Interview with Chokuchera, 8 September 2016).

Some from amongst the land invaders are disgruntled by being identified as belonging to *makombo*. They would rather be referred to as *vejambanja* (‘of forced or violent entry’). The *jambanja* label is broadly embraced by the invaders largely because it is already of national acclaim and accepted as identifying the brave forceful repossession of land during the war veteran-led land occupations. Though the term *jambanja* is used by opponents of the land occupations to denigrate the supposed anarchic violence of the occupiers, it is welcomed by the Mushandike land invaders because it connects their invasion to the nation-wide struggle for historical redress through repossession of land alienated through colonisation (Chaumba et al., 2003). Their concern and setback is that, while land seekers during the nation-wide occupations in large part invaded resource-rich white-owned land, they targeted black-owned land which is not only arid and degraded but also in short supply. Therefore, the *jambanja* label might be misleading as it legitimates the local invasion through locating it inappropriately within broader national struggles for land.

The term *makombo* (new fields/settlements) mainly used by irrigators and some land-invaders is largely despised by land invaders because it denotes newness. It speaks of new fields. In doing so, it portrays residential areas and crop fields which are 15 years old as new, suggesting that the owners are simply new arrivals. One woman protested: *“When I came here my son was in grade one, now he is a grown up man in college, I can’t still be new”* (Interview with Kurasikirwa, 7 September 2016). For this lady, newness not only suggests difference but is also a deliberate reminder of the possible impermanence of stay. She went on to argue:

Our arrival date should not matter anymore. The truth is that we have co-existed with these irrigators for close to 20 years now. Numerous intermarriages have been witnessed; we have

befriended one another for years now. We have already built a life here and don't want to move. We can't afford to destroy and build again; we are very poor and not getting any younger (Interview with Kurasikirwa, 7 September 2016).

For the sons of irrigators, the label has had a long-standing negative connotation. *Makombo* thus has become associated with failure and hopelessness in some areas of Mushandike well before the arrival of land invaders, because that is where failed sons and daughters of irrigators were allocated land. The following lines by a child of an irrigator sum this view up:

Makombo is the domicile of failures. The successful got jobs elsewhere. A few who remain in Mushandike and are viewed favourably by parents are allocated land within the residential area of the scheme not in paddocks like cows. We are quarantined here as failures who should not influence other children (Interview with Hlalo, 15 June 2014).

7.10 Concluding remarks

This chapter has reflected upon the centrality of ideas in shaping relations and identities, and in constructing and determining reality. The chapter re-affirmed the notion that reality and knowledge are social constructs (Gergen and Gergen, 2004), which are forged by communities through interaction and communication. The process of social construction utilises available resources or lack thereof. For instance, where information is unavailable or distorted, reality is constructed from such distortions. Subsequently, social practices ensue from such inaccuracies, often leading to contestations.

For instance, to beneficiaries, Mushandike is commonly viewed as a God-given place which accords them the privilege of upward mobility. It is a place endowed with 'mystical' powers to transform the once excluded into social citizens. Therefore, the place is associated with positivity and ascribes a positive identity (irrigators) to the once downtrodden. The state moved from imagining Mushandike as an island of modernity to its construction as a place deprived of tradition, thereby requiring re-traditionalism to ensure that Mushandike would have cultural congruence with other rural communities. Although such a shift permeated the social space of Mushandike

through political rather than administrative corridors, as there are no formal documents to endorse such a shift, its implication on socio-economic life has been phenomenal.

Thus the chapter confirms that everyday reality and knowledge as social constructs might appear hard, fast and enduring yet, in essence, they tend to be subject to change because of shifting conditions, new knowledge arising, institutional rearrangements and contingent interests being altered. The social reality of a place is therefore studded with social constructs obtaining at a particular time and existing for various periods. At Mushandike, as elsewhere, reality construction translates into imaginations of the self and the other. Likewise, reality reconstructions change alongside changes in self-identification and how others are identified.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

Between 2014 and 2016, I carried out several study visits to Mushandike and encountered, interrogated and understood challenges, concerns, fears, realities and knowledge of a people grappling with social exclusion in a harsh agro-ecological part of the country. They played a crucial important role in the production of this thesis through giving me the knowledge I needed for its completion. Since my first visit, I have also been bothered by what contribution I was going to make in changing their lives to pay the debt of having been so thoroughly ‘schooled’ by them for free.

This concern is compounded by the challenge posed by the assertion by Marx and Engels’ (1969) that “[t]he philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it”. As I strived to come to terms with how I could help members of this small, fractured, community to improve their social circumstances, I concluded that the first step is to document their life stories, and to analyse and critically present them in this thesis in a manner as balanced as possible not only to highlight their challenges but to give them a voice to communicate their realities to a broader and hopefully attentive audience. This chapter is equally part of that desire to build and share an understanding of a people’s lifeworld in a manner that provokes solution-seeking.

This chapter allows me to revisit the entire thesis, sifting out, summarising and laying bare the fundamental questions, ideas and issues which form the pillars upon which its justification and significance exist. The chapter begins with a brief summary of the entire thesis, chapter by chapter, and reiterates the key themes and points. On this basis, I seek to elucidate how social constructionism enabled me to understand nuanced land and water politics at the local level in Mushandike. This leads to a discussion of the theoretical and empirical contributions of the thesis to prevailing knowledge and to brief comments about further possible research.

8.2 Synopsis of thesis, key issues and conclusions

As indicated in chapter one, the main goal of the thesis was to identify and analyse how contestations for access and ownership of natural resources (notably land and water) is conceptualised, constructed, framed, negotiated and possibly resolved at the local level at Mushandike Smallholder Irrigation Scheme in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. Secondary goals included to:

- a) Identify and examine the socio-spatial environment that triggers contestations.
- b) Analyse how local communities as agents participate in processes of inclusion and exclusion.
- c) To examine the role of the state and political parties in exacerbating or resolving contestations at the local level.

In a bid to clarify the significance of the thesis, the introductory chapter sought to place the study within a broader discussion of land and water conceptions and politics based on a review of pertinent academic literature. It also set out the research methodology and methods, involving a case study design with the use of qualitative methods, as this was seen as consistent with understanding local-level conceptions and contestations around land and water.

In this context, chapter two set out the theoretical framing for the thesis. Again, given the thesis focus and objective, it was necessary to adopt a theoretical perspective which enabled the thesis objectives to be addressed (Harrington, 2005) and hence would assist in examining micro-level land and water politics in a nuanced manner. Through argumentation, it was claimed that social constructionism would be the most useful analytical framing, because of its sensitivity to the fundamental character of social reality as meaning-laden. The chapter thus showed how social constructionism, as complemented by other theories (such as by postcolonial theory), would facilitate an understanding of how land and water issues are conceptualised, problematised and acted upon at the local level. The version of social constructionism adopted though was not wholly rooted in subjectivism, as structure and power are central to enriching social constructionist analyses.

In chapter three, I historicised and critiqued trends, ideas and processes through which land and water issues were shaped by and simultaneously impacted on social relations, largely at the macro-level. It analysed how ideas shaped practices through which inclusion and exclusion are played out, and this included themes such as identity construction, othering, the deployment of violence, and the creation and utilisation of the law to carve out distinct spaces for belonging and identity groups. Most of these studies in the available literature focus on the macro-level, creating the need for micro-level interrogation which this thesis sought to tackle. There is no disjuncture between macro-level and micro-level analyses, as there are diverse connections between these levels of analysis. In this respect, the chapter highlighted the far-reaching significance of land and water related issues across agrarian spaces in Zimbabwe, and it also showed the need to shed light on how communities at the local level make sense of what is happening in the broader world and how world structures local happenings. Certainly, though, local events are not reducible to national developments, as the case of Mushandike makes abundantly clear.

Although chapter four has similarities with chapter three, it is different in that it narrows the focus towards land and water issues in relation to smallholder irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe. It firstly located and developed connections between global issues on water and land on the one hand, and smallholder irrigation schemes in particular on the other. It then moved into a discussion on Zimbabwe, highlighting the discriminatory nature of water politics historically and its deferred resolution which still defines social, economic and political realities across the country. In so doing, chapter four emphasised the centrality of the state in shaping land and water politics, even as it participates simultaneously at a micro-level in establishing smallholder irrigation schemes. Though state intervention has potential benefits, it also tends to complicate smallholder irrigation scheme politics as shown throughout chapter four. Lastly, the chapter portrays smallholder irrigation schemes in general and those in Zimbabwe as characterised by multiple interests with the potential of creating conflict, contestation, compromise or consensus.

These chapters all provide in some way the methodological, theoretical, global and national context for analysing the case study. Thus, in this context, the following three chapters (chapters

five, six and seven) address the empirical concerns of the thesis by focusing on Mushandike irrigation scheme.

In particular, these chapters answered the following questions which guided the thesis:

1. How are land issues problematised?
2. Which land and what related challenges are being experienced in and around Mushandike?
3. How are they conceptualised and what do different stakeholders perceive as causes of the challenges?
4. What effects do they have on people's lives and livelihoods?
5. How are the challenges addressed?
6. If there are any constraining and enabling factors, what are they, how are they dealt with and to what effect?

Chapter five addresses the first three of these questions. Findings suggest that there are various ways in which social issues, such as the occupation of irrigation scheme grazing land, is conceptualised and problematised at the local level in Mushandike. Certainly, there is no consensus with regards to the causes, meaning and consequences of land invasions and occupations. Perspectives on resolving the land challenges at Mushandike seemingly point mainly towards the need for some kind of political intervention to address the problem of the invasions, with some suggestions that administrators and not politicians are the most qualified to address the problem as they have expertise. They should thus be empowered to do so. These divergences emphasise the heterogeneity of views at the local level which hinges on interests, power asymmetries, political machinations and pronounced partisan allegiances. The link between local realities and broader political interests (including national political parties) connects macro-level social issues to micro-level occurrences that subsequently influence and shape local existence. The existence of divergent views notwithstanding, the chapter highlights consensus on the view that occupations are a gnawing social challenge that needs to be addressed. This view is shared by both land occupiers and original irrigation scheme members, and equally observed by external stakeholders

such as government. These local realities at Mushandike confirm the constructionist view that individuals and groups embody ideas and knowledge generated relationally within a socio-cultural context, leading to divergence of interpretations around historical and contemporary events and happenings. Interpretation are influenced by many factors including interests, values and cultural arrangements.

Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 together engage with the last three questions (four, five and six), but from different perspectives. Chapter 6 tackles the implication of the land occupations on life and livelihoods at Mushandike. It highlights the implications of land invasions for agricultural production, including the land shortage problems that beset smallholder irrigation farmers and that confronted land-seekers upon their arrival. Chapter 6 also shows that the land invasions have had the effect of the drying up of the dam and destroying the irrigation infrastructure, which have led to the subsequent deterioration of the macro-economic environment. Findings in this regard also suggest a close link between production issues at the local level and economic challenges at the macro-level.

Furthermore, the land occupations disrupted irrigation activities through affecting cattle rearing, as grazing land was converted to residential stands; lowered draught power due to the depletion of the cattle population; and increased labour demands caused by the need to herd cattle that came with land shortages and worsened by grazing land occupation by land-seekers. Thus, the land invasions, though raising critical questions about belonging and identity, also had major material effects. In the end, agricultural production at an irrigation scheme is affected by an intricate inter-connection between various developments and many of these clearly are of a non-technical character and often overlooked when seeking solutions to lower levels of productivity. Evidently, land occupations produced intricate social relations at the local level which equally led to complex challenges whose resolution are far from being realised.

The last empirical chapter, Chapter 7, focuses on the implications of change for social issues such as identity (of the self and the other), perceptions about the scheme, tradition, the rise in crime, uncertainty and numerous other aspects that shape social relations. The chapter highlights the important impact of rapid and far-reaching change which shifts or significantly changes existing

realities as well as the ways in which individuals and groups (irrigators and invaders) make sense of the new social order and its accompanying reality. Many do not regard themselves as mere victims of change as they strive to create normalcy within the shifting circumstances in order not only to explain but to gain control of their lives and their environment. In this light, explanations were proffered in the chapter for such social phenomena as crime, tradition and the propensity to disease and infection (that comes with canal cleaning) and uncertainties (such as drought).

Both irrigators and non-irrigators demonstrate a significant level of awareness of the changes taking place in their lives and their immediate environment, and the chapter shows how these changes relate to questions of livelihoods, identity, productivity, hopes and aspirations. While both groups are intent on making the best with their lives, it became clear that Mushandike irrigation scheme is a social space dominated by asymmetries of power which define who enters into the space and who does not, and who defines who as what and when. At Mushandike, power impacted relationships, played a part in constructing identities, and was involved in the capacity to ascribe labels to satisfy specific interests.

In these following three sections, I detail some of the insights provided by social constructionism in relation to Mushandike, and indicate how the empirical chapters have sought to address the main and secondary objectives of the thesis.

8.3 Understanding water, land, land access and landscape

Evidence shows that, at Mushandike, land and water possession and access accords one privileged passage to material well-being, livelihood possibilities, social justice, dignity, identity and belonging. Similarly, lack of access involves social exclusion, lack of liberty and deprivation (secondary objective 'a'). For many, land and water are highly prized possessions which also function as identity symbols or markers denoting and connecting one to the past, present and future. Further, land and water access is based on principles of inclusion and can function as a social valve through which tension is diffused.

From a social constructionist perspective, land use transforms space into material and discursive landscape. Landscapes, as noted by Trudeau (2006: 421), become “constellations” of enduring and

significant “meaning, aesthetics ... [and] ... values” as ascribed by and for people. A landscape, therefore, reflects a specific “territory and the community relations and identity of the polity associated with that territory” (Trudeau, 2006: 422). At Mushandike, for instance, irrigation, *Makombo* and even the arrangement of houses, as seemingly mere material artefacts, additionally portray differences and similarities upon which identities are derived, conferred and deduced. The ascription of *Makombo* identity to informal settlements not only reflects the connections between land use and identity but also the process or manner through which such land was accessed.

Similarly, landscape (as cultural, social and material space) allows for the development and concretisation of a sense of identity and belonging on a relational basis. It is where social differentiation takes effect and where boundaries evolve and are maintained, thereby segmenting insiders from outsiders through simultaneous processes of inclusion and exclusion (Schein, 2008). The events and experiences at Mushandike denote the existence of such marked social differentiation despite the fact that the insider-outsider dichotomy did not evolve slowly over time but existed from the onset, from the time of the land invasions. This was reinforced by the involvement of external agents (such as political party cadres) who emphasised difference between irrigators who were largely branded as sell-outs and land occupiers who were projected as patriotic Zimbabweans. Violence, confrontation and conflict which punctuated the formative years of co-existence shaped subsequent animosity and distance between the communities to the extent that amicable co-existence has failed to meaningfully develop. These issues not only reflect how contestations for access to land were conceptualised at the beginning of the land invasions (juxtaposition of sell-outs vs. patriots), but how such constructions shaped negotiations of co-existence (for example, the use of violence) which continue to condition social relations to this day. The bifurcation of a local population into opposing groups of patriots and sell-outs suggests (impliedly though) the direct involvement of a political party (secondary objective ‘c’) in local level natural resource contestations, as it smacks of machinisations of the politics of a particular political party which in this case is the ruling party.

Furthermore, landscape is a space within which life can derive a good measure of normalcy to the point that some social relations and ideas appear natural. At Mushandike, the insider-outsider

dichotomy, weaved around events and processes through which land was accessed, now appear natural, fixed and inevitable to the point that it does not appear as if the symbolic and material boundaries separating irrigators and land invaders can be breached so as to allow for the formation of shared identities between these two different and antagonistic groups and for a collective endeavour towards resolution of existing social challenges. The character of the socio-spatial environment (secondary objective 'a') not only foments antagonistic relations but also nurtures unresolved contestations for access to land and water.

It seems farfetched to imagine land-invaders (supposedly intrusive) one day becoming or identifying with (law-abiding and dignified) land owning irrigators. Incidentally, the land-seekers appear to have been reduced to a 'squatter' problem by political processes, whose habitation of space at Mushandike is so glaringly illegal that it is permanently dependent upon the protection of the *Sabhuku* and the Chief. The involvement of these institutions (*Sabhuku* and Chief) reflect the role being played by the state (secondary objective 'c') in perpetuating and concretising contestations for access to land and water. Incidentally, illegality of residence (of informal settlers) is thus constructed by some (notably by irrigators) as a permanent defining disempowering characteristic of a specific population group at Mushandike. From this perspective, land-invaders are positioned as vulnerable and desperate in a land to which they are not entitled. This is tantamount to a denial of any territorialised sense of belonging on the part of the land-invaders and hence reinforces the blockages in reducing the fractures and developing social cohesion between the two – ultimately – marginalised rural groups. This reflects that the way co-existence is being framed and negotiated is far from thrusting local groups towards arriving at an amicable solution.

Evidence shows that the use of land contributes towards image-making and the subsequent identities that develop. As a particular land use, a smallholder irrigation scheme in Zimbabwe (as pursued by the state and readily embraced by communities of irrigators) is a space for serious all-year-round crop production, effectively a business context within which knowledgeable farmers (holders of Master Farmer certificates or in the process of agricultural training) are defined as commercial producers. Though rural, Mushandike is supposed to embody a measure of modernity (according to the state) and all that comes with this – the latest farming methods, market

connections to networks of consumers and input producers, technical experts and policy implementers. For these reasons, a smallholder irrigation scheme is meant to lie outside the realms of customary authority. Again, though rural, it is different from land use in communal areas where agricultural production is rudimentary, dependent upon natural rains, and practised by poorly resourced and ‘unknowledgeable’ farmers. Communal areas, according to convention, are spaces under the dominion of unprogressive traditional leaders wherein customary law and communal land rights are the norm. Part of the tensions between irrigators and land-invaders at Mushandike pivots around these different images of agriculture within rural Zimbabwe, as if the two groups belong to two different worlds or at least two alternative trajectories of land use and agriculture (secondary objectives ‘a’ and ‘b’).

Furthermore, landscapes are “narrative constructs” existing as places through which stories are told about them and through them (Schein, 2008). For instance, when we tell stories about ourselves and our places we not only create an identity for our land and landscape, but for ourselves and our community, simultaneously developing and maintaining a sense of place and community belonging. Many, as evidenced by realities at Mushandike, are denied social citizenship and a sense of community and belonging through land shortages. The experiences of both irrigation scheme members and land-invaders reflect this. More importantly, the exclusionary character of their existence exacerbates or entails denial of social justice, equity and equality ordinarily experienced through substantive access to land and landscape; and this inadvertently foment contestations for land (for inclusion).

Overall, the situation at Mushandike indicates that landscape allows the self and the other to be spatially constructed. Boundaries that separate insiders from outsiders, that promote or do not promote a sense of belonging and that involve processes of inclusion or exclusion are simultaneously social and spatial. Landscapes though are constructed and subject to change. As such, they are about being and becoming, developing through social struggles which configure and reconfigure identities and senses of belonging.

8.4 Power and social relations at the local level

In adopting a social constructionist perspective, I stressed the importance of a sensitivity to power and how it helps define the socio-spatial environment within which contestations for access to land and water ensue. In this regard, evidence from Mushandike confirms Lefebvre's (1972) observation that access to space is a matter of power relationships. Power impacts relationships and plays a part in constructing identities and feelings of belonging. It also defines who has access to which space and under what conditions. As particular groups of agents gain traction and currency in society, they accrue power to the extent that they are able to use it to dictate conditions of access to space (Gasteyer et al., 2012). In the case of Mushandike (a power laden socio-spatial environment), various notions of power are apparent and influence relations differently. For instance, the Chief, who is accused of fomenting invasions from behind the scenes, has the power seemingly to do as he pleases partly because he connects his spatial expansionism to advancing political party interests. Party politics emerges as the source of his power more than his status in the chieftainship system (secondary objective 'c').

Sabhukus and land-invaders both draw their power from their direct link with the Chief. Similarly, *Sabhukus* also anchor their power on the invocation of readily and socially constructed and accepted notions of tradition. Furthermore, political relevance (from a party-political and chiefly perspective) designates land-invaders as powerful players that are immovable from illegally occupied land despite the magnitude of animosity that land-owners harbour against them. Exploiting the high politicisation of the social milieu at Mushandike, *Sabhukus* wantonly allocate and sell community land as if it were their own private possession.

Irrigation scheme members also have power which they use to influence relations (secondary objective 'b'). First, they name, define and label the different other (land-invaders) in a manner which fixes a measure of intrusive impermanence to difference. For instance, by labelling land-invaders as *vekuMakombo*, they do not only ascribe a 'late-comers' label to them but also fix their identity as different from that of irrigation farmers and even as colonisers, almost like white settlers in the colonial context. Because of this, the imposition of their presence at Mushandike needs to be viewed as subject to reversal (i.e. as not permanent) and as a reason for ongoing struggle given

the ongoing fraught co-existence. The label is perpetually reminiscent of the historical fact that these late comers colonised poor people's land using political support and the power of the state. They functioned as willing pawns in a complex political game from which well-placed politicians recouped substantial benefits.

8.5 Implications of identity on social relations

The definition of the self and the other is very important in that it influences social relations. This view finds support in Mamdani's (2001: 9) assertion in his study on genocide that "before you can try and eliminate an enemy, you must first define that enemy". This means that a group has to ascribe or posit an identity not only to the enemy but to itself in relation to the enemy to be able to relate with it in a manner it deems appropriate. For instance, in occupying farms in the year 2000, *jambanja* land invaders defined, constructed and identified the white farmer in Zimbabwe in a particular manner as a basis for justifying actions which went contrary to existing legislation. *Jambanja* land 'invaders' defined themselves as completing the war of liberation by taking part in the Third *Chimurenga* (liberation war), and as supported by the ruling party as the historical liberators against colonial rule. Similarly, white farmers and their sympathisers defined 'land invaders' and ruling party backers as pursuing an authoritarian and oppressive form of political struggle which went against the rule of law. In the end, the occupiers saw themselves as re-occupying dispossessed land while white farmers saw them as mere invaders.

In terms of the broader arguments of Mamdani (2001:13), the re-occupiers would have legitimised their actions (including acts of violence) as life-affirming and not as life-denying because, as victims of historical injustices, they had the right and responsibility to reclaim their lost lands. Past (and current) white oppressors were receiving their 'just desserts'. However, historical victims of past injustices were themselves also victims of the fast track land occupations, notably the agricultural labourers on white commercial farms who lost their livelihoods and even historical places of belonging because of forced displacements. In this sense, the occupations were not strictly speaking between past victors and victims. In the case of Mushandike, the situation is even more complicated and less 'black and white' both literally and metaphorically.

Invaded space at Mushandike was quickly redefined by politicians (informally, that is) not as irrigators' land but as seemingly open space accidentally taken over by land-seekers who presumed it to be unoccupied. Interestingly, such an argument is reminiscent of the *terra nullius* claims that were used by Europeans to justify occupation of territories possessed and controlled by the indigenous populations of America, Australia and sub-Saharan Africa. Thus space becomes framed and defined by power in terms of its significance for ensuing practices. This identification of the space of Mushandike of course did not go uncontested and alternative renderings of the space were put forward by the irrigators, using their rootedness in (and belonging) to place as a source of power. This led to contestations between two different groups of historical victims, who at times were manipulated by higher powers, including state bureaucrats.

The construction of space as supposedly unoccupied, and the emphasis on demand for space for human habitation, weakened arguments for keeping land to graze livestock despite the invaluable place of animals in the lives of the rural poor. Any juxtapositioning of the two made retaining land for livestock seemingly wrong. Those who reserve land for cattle were made to appear as if they did not actually need that land, in comparative terms, to those who wanted to reside on it. Land, according to dominant political views at Mushandike, should not be reserved for livestock but should be allocated to people who vote. Impliedly, the benefits of allocating land are not dependent upon the quality of productivity or quality of life accessed by those allocated land but on how many eventually vote for the ruling party. But when alternatives that presented themselves at the time of invasions (and even now) are filtered in, then the argument for retaining land for grazing immediately gets restored. Mushandike grazing land was not the only piece of land available to land-seekers then and now as underutilised farms are but a stonethrow away. These contestations involved questions around the very identity of people at Mushandike, either as farmers who sought agricultural productivity or as citizens requiring to cast their vote for, and align themselves with, the ruling party.

8.6 Empirical, theoretical contributions and further research

This thesis makes important empirical and theoretical contributions. First, it brings to the fore the significance of a social constructionist approach to land and water struggles at local levels,

particularly when power is properly integrated into this approach. In this regard, it reiterates the more anthropological claim about the importance of place, identity and belonging when it comes to understanding and analysing land questions in Zimbabwe and beyond. In doing so, it also highlights the necessity of taking seriously the perspectives and claims of ordinary rural people, and the ways in which their local experiential-based knowledge is crucial in problematising, conceptualising and framing land and water politics.

Second, the interrogation of the intricate connection between micro and macro phenomena in shaping land and water related social relations contributes towards an improved understanding of land and water politics. In the thesis, the often covert roles of some stakeholders, hidden from public eye, were unearthed, helping in understanding that the complexities characterising land and water relations at Mushandike are influenced by broader processes and forces. This does not mean that it is possible to read the local from the national. Rather, it implies that the national is embedded in the local, and that the local and national intertwine in fluid and diverse ways which depend, ultimately I would argue, on local dynamics.

Two important areas of further research emerged during this study and could not be interrogated adequately as they fell slightly out of the major focus of the thesis. First, there is need for a detailed interrogation of the role of politicians, *Sabhukus* and Chiefs in land politics at the local level. This study for example highlighted nefarious activities with regards to illegal land allocations among other aspects. This might be an isolated case in as much as it could be a tip of the iceberg. Secondly, and related to this, there is need to more fully address chieftaincy and territorial issues in Zimbabwe. This is particularly important given that chiefs are not expanding their territories to include fast track farms. Evidence at Mushandike suggests that there could be problems in other parts of the country with regard to the colonial legacy of chieftaincies in terms of the demarcation of territorial boundaries, and the possible impact of this on renderings of the past and contemporary places and senses of belonging. Certainly, at Mushandike, findings suggest that the lack of clear boundaries between territories controlled by chiefs potentially generates local conflicts.

These, as indicated, are possible avenues for further research. It is hoped though that this thesis, in the ways indicated, has made a contribution no matter how limited to our existing understanding of land and water politics globally and in Zimbabwe more specifically.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview schedule, beneficiaries and land-seekers

Questionnaire designed to understand land and water relations at Mushandike Irrigation Scheme, Masvingo, Zimbabwe

Dear Respondent

Jonathan Mafukidze, the interviewer is a PhD Candidate, Department of Sociology, Rhodes University, South Africa. He is carrying out a study on land and water relations at and around Mushandike Irrigation Scheme, Masvingo, Zimbabwe. The study seeks to understand how local people share these scarce resources and if/when any problems arise how do they solve them. This study will help create a clear understanding of problems faced by communities at a local level and how they are solved.

You are therefore asked to assist him through responding to his questions.

If you have problems or complaints to make or seek any form of clarity please do not hesitate to contact Rhodes University through Prof. Kirk Helliker

- Telephone number: 27-46-6038361
- Postal address: Department of Sociology, Rhodes University, P O Box 94, Grahamstown, South Africa, 6140
- Email address: k.helliker@ru.ac.za

A. Identification

Respondent's name _____

Plot No. _____

Date of Interview _____

Signature to express consent _____

B. Personnel and Household Data

1. Sex of the Respondent: _____
2. Age of the Respondent: _____
3. Marital Status: _____
4. Educational Status: _____
5. Birth place: _____
 - i. (Village/Town: _____
 - ii. (Chief if any): _____
 - iii. (district): _____
 - iv. (Province) _____
6. Reasons for coming to this place: _____
7. Which of the following best describes you as of now?
 - a. Full-time farmer
 - b. Part-time farmer
 - c. Landowner who rents or leases to someone
 - d. Landowner who is not using land
 - e. Other, please specifyExplain: _____

8. People living on the plot:

Name	Age	Gender	Marital status	Level of education	Other training	Relationship with respondent	Place of birth	Reasons for migrating
a.								
b.								
c.								
d.								
e.								

C. Household migration history

1. Is the household originally from here: _____
2. If No, where did it come from and when: _____
3. Who made the household come here and why: _____

4. Why was it staying where it was staying: _____
5. Did the household stay anywhere before that place: _____
If yes where _____ (why did it stay there: _____
6. Why did it leave that place: _____

D. The context and issues

1. Can you give me a brief history of Mushandike Irrigation Scheme going as far back as you know: _____
2. Can you give me a brief history of the coming in informal settlers: _____
3. What were the causes (Explain): _____
4. How is the relationship between scheme beneficiaries and informal settlers: _____
5. What are the factors that influence or define these relations (Explain): _____

E. Ownership and inheritance

1. How long has the household live here: _____
2. How did you get this land: ____ Was it easy to get the land: ____
3. Does the household own this land: _____
(if yes does it have papers to show that: _____
(if yes what kind of papers are they) _____
If not, what other arrangement tenure arrangement is in place? _____
4. Do you think papers help protect land ownership: ____ Why/how) _____
5. How big is the land on which you cultivate crops: _____ _ does the size change across seasons and why _____
6. How big is irrigation land: _____ (why): _____ (how far is it from the homestead): _____
7. How big is land for dry cultivation: _____ (Why): _____
_____ (how far is it from the homestead): _____
8. Do you have access to grazing land: ____ (if yes how big): _____
(why): _____ (how far is it from the homestead): _____
9. Can all your land be inherited: _____ (if yes by who): _____
(how): _____

10. Can you sell your land (explain): _____
11. Do you ever rent out part of your land
- i. Irrigated land _____ How big _____
for how much _____
 - ii. Non-irrigated _____ How big _____
for how much _____
 - iii. Why would one rent out land _____
and to whom _____ and does it vary across seasons

12. Do you ever rent land
- i. Irrigated land _____ How big _____
for how much _____
 - ii. Non-irrigated _____ How big _____
for how much _____
 - iii. Why would one rent out land _____

13. Do you have any other piece of land elsewhere (Explain): _____

F. Access to water and irrigation

1. where do you get water – (for household use and who does it): _____ (for animals
and who does it): _____ (for irrigation and who does it) _____
2. Do you find it easy to access enough water for all your needs: _____
3. Can the water be accessed for free: _____
4. Who owns the water: _____
5. Are there any rules as to who gets water, when and how: _____
For domestic use _____ for irrigation _____ for animals _____

G. Livestock: Do you have

1. Cattle: _____ if yes how many _____ and why
_____ did you at any given time have more than you have now and what
happened _____

2. Sheep: _____ if yes how many _____ and why _____ did you at any given time have more than you have now and what happened _____
3. Goats: _____ if yes how many _____ and why _____ did you at any given time have more than you have now and what happened _____
4. Do you have enough grazing land for them: _____ and why _____ who looks after them _____
5. Do you have easy access to sufficient water for them: _____ and why _____
6. Pigs: _____ if yes how many _____ and why _____ who feeds them _____
7. Chickens: _____ if yes how many _____ and why _____ who feeds them _____
8. Do you have easy access to sufficient water for them: _____ and why _____ who fetches the water _____
9. Do you have access to sufficient land for them: _____ and why _____
10. Do you discuss home consumption and marketing of livestock? _____

H. Crop production: which crops do you cultivate

1. _____ irrigated/non-irrigated _____
Land size _____ and why _____
2. _____ irrigated/non-irrigated _____
Land size _____ and why _____
3. _____ irrigated/non-irrigated _____
Land size _____ and why _____
4. How many people are there to work the land
 - i. Full time: _____ male _____ female _____
 - ii. Part time: _____ male _____ female _____
 - iii. Paid: _____ male _____ female _____ how much _____ male _____ female _____

iv. Unpaid: _____ male _____ female _____

5. How do you plough your fields _____ Do you have access to sufficient draught power _____ what farming equipment is (a) owned by the household _____ (b) is owned communally owned _____ (c) Is shared/rented or hired _____

6. How many people are there to look after animals

i. Full time: _____ ii. Part time: _____

iii. Paid: _____ How much _____ iv. Unpaid: _____

I. Crop harvest and income from crop and animal sales

1. Which crops did you harvest most recently

A. _____, tons/ no of bags _____ How much did you sell _____ How much _____ *for how much* _____ where _____ *is it easy to sell* _____ did you get as much money as you expected _____

B. _____, tons/ no of bags _____ How much did you sell _____ *for how much* _____ where _____ *is it easy to sell* _____

did you get as much money as you expected _____

C. _____, tons/ no of bags _____ Did you sell _____ How much _____ *for how much* _____ where _____ *is it easy to sell* _____

did you get as much money as you expected _____

2. Did you produce enough for family consumption: _____
3. If not, how do you fill the gap between your production and the food you need: ____are there any family members working elsewhere who assist ____ what do they do ____ do family members try to get jobs around here (where and how) _____
4. Did you sell any animals in the past year
 - A. _____ How many _____ where _____ -For how much _____
 - B. _____ How many _____ where _____ For how much _____
 - C. _____ How many _____ where _____ For how much _____
5. What are your other sources of income besides agricultural production _____ how much do you get _____

J. Decision-making

1. Who makes decisions on which crops to grow, how much, when to sell, what and how much (Explain) _____
2. Are the decision well-informed and readily accepted by other household members (Explain) _____

K. Expert advice and relations

1. Do you work closely with extension officers _____
if yes do you find them helpful _____
2. Do you work closely with veterinary services officers _____
if yes do you find them helpful _____
3. Do you work closely with the local headman _____
if yes do you find him helpful _____
4. Do you work closely with the local chief _____
if yes do you find him helpful _____
5. Do you work closely with the district administrator _____
if yes do you find him helpful _____

6. Do you work closely with political leadership _____
if yes do you find them helpful _____
7. Any other committee/ group or NGO you work with _____
if yes do you find them helpful _____

L. Sense of belonging

1. Do you feel you belong here _____ Why _____
2. Do people here feel they belong together _____ Why _____
3. Do you think that scheme members and informal settlers feel that they belong to the broader Charumbira community _____ why _____
4. Do scheme members and informal settlers participate in social events that take part in Charumbira (Explain): _____
5. Do Charumbira people view the scheme as theirs (Explain): _____
6. Do scheme, informal settlers and Charumbira people feel they belong together _____ why _____
7. Is there anything that happens between the two communities that indicates the kind of relationship between them (Explain): _____
8. Do you think this relationship could have been different if something had been done differently (Explain): _____
9. Do you think that your family made a good decision by coming here ____

M. Challenges

1. What are the biggest challenges you face in this place as a household
(Explain): _____
2. What are the biggest challenges you face as a community?
(Explain): _____
3. Do you get support from any source (specify) _____
How much _____ is it enough _____
4. Do you encounter any conservation problems _____
Farm land _____
Grazing land _____ Water _____

N. Power and influence: indigeneity, state, NGOS and political parties

1. How much control over land and other resources would one without ancestral connections to the land have, suppose one is resettled, migrates to or buys land here compared to others whose ancestors lived on the very land (Explain): _____
2. Where resettlement is concerned how involved are chiefs before, during and after the process (Explain): _____
3. What kind of social relations emerge when a resettlement with access to resources is set up in a community where the rest have no resources and cannot access those in the scheme (Explain and give examples): _____
4. When a resettlement is setup and people from elsewhere are resettled on land that belonged to another people's ancestors, would there develop a sense of loss of land (Explain): _____
5. Does the chief's power spread over resettlements and why (Explain): _____
6. What marks people as insiders and outsiders in this place (Explain): _____
7. For how long does one possibly remain an outsider: (Explain): _____
8. Does language difference separate people (Explain): _____
How about culture (explain): _____ How about origin (Explain): _____
9. Is it possible that resources that used to belong to one people can cease to and automatically belong to another because they bought or were resettled on the land (Explain) : _____
10. How easy or difficult is it for scheme members to co-exist with surrounding communities (Explain): _____ what is/can be done to promote co-existence and by who (Explain): _____
 - a. Are social and spatial boundaries respected, for instance between scheme and surrounding communities and why (Explain): _____
10. Can property rights be exercised, that is can one have effective power and control over property as an individual or collective (Explain): _____
12. What is the relationship between scheme members and NGOs (give names) _____
How does the state influence life within the irrigation scheme _____

13. Do party politics affect life in the scheme _____

14. Do you have the following household goods and valuables

- a. TV _____ (b) Radio _____ (c) Sofas _____ (d) Table and chairs _____ (e) Tractor _____ (f) Car _____ (g) Lorry _____ (h) Grinding mill _____
- b. Welding machine _____ Other _____

15. What type of energy do you use

- a. electricity _____ if yes do you pay _____ if yes how much per month _____
- b. Firewood _____ if yes where do you get them _____ how far _____

Do you face any challenges _____

c. Other (Specify) _____

16. House type _____

- a. How big _____
- b. Other small houses _____
- c. Huts _____

17. Feeling about place

- a. How do you feel about living in this place _____
- b. How would life be improved here _____
- c. How do you see the future of Mushandike Irrigation Scheme (Explain) _____

Thank You

Appendix 2: Interview schedule, key informants

Questionnaire Designed to understand land and water relations at Mushandike Irrigation Scheme, Masvingo, Zimbabwe

Dear Respondent

Jonathan Mafukidze, the interviewer, is a PhD Candidate, Department of Sociology, Rhodes University, South Africa. He is carrying out a study on land and water relations at and around Mushandike Irrigation Scheme, Masvingo, Zimbabwe. The study seeks to understand how local people share these scarce resources and if/when any problems arise how do they solve them. This study will help create a clear understanding of problems faced by communities at a local level and how they solve them.

You are therefore asked to assist him through responding to his questions.

If you have problems or complaints to make or seek any form of clarity please do not hesitate to contact Rhodes University through Prof. Kirk Helliker

- Telephone number: 27-46-6038361
- Postal address: Department of Sociology, Rhodes University, P O Box 94, Grahamstown, South Africa, 6140,
- Email address: k.helliker@ru.ac.za

M. Identification

Respondent's name _____	
Title. _____	Institution _____
Date of Interview _____	
Signature to express consent _____	

B. Personal Data

9. Sex of Respondent: _____

10. Age of the Respondent: _____

11. Marital Status: _____
12. Educational Status: _____
13. Birth place: _____
1. (Village/Town: _____
 2. (Chief if any): _____
 3. (District): _____
 4. (Province) _____
14. For how long have you as an individual lived/interacted with residents of Mushandike and what is your opinion about them as a community _____ in what capacity _____ for how long has your institution worked with scheme members, please describe the official opinion regarding the working relationship _____
15. What role has your institution been playing here over the years. _____
16. Do you see its role changing going into the future (Explain): _____

C. The context and issues

1. Can you give me a brief history of Mushandike Smallholder Irrigation Scheme going as far back as you know: _____
2. Can you give me a brief history of informal settlements going as far back as you know: _____
3. How is the relationship between scheme beneficiaries and informal settlers: _____
4. What are the factors that influence or define these relations (Explain): _____

D. Sense of belonging

1. Do you think that scheme members feel that they 1. belong together with informal settlers _____ 2. belong to the broader Charumbira community _____ why _____
2. Do scheme members participate in social events that take part in 1. informal settlements and vice versa _____ 2. in Charumbira and vice versa (Explain): _____
3. Do Charumbira people view the scheme as theirs (Explain): _____
4. Do scheme and Charumbira people feel they belong together _____ Why _____

5. Is there anything that happens between the two communities that indicates the kind of relationship between them (Explain): _____
6. Do you think this relationship could have been different if something had been done differently (Explain): _____

E. Challenges

1. What are the biggest challenges scheme members face and how are they or can they be solved (Explain): _____
2. What are the biggest challenges informal settlers face and how are/can they be solved (Explain): _____
3. Do these communities get support from any source (specify) _____ How much _____ is it enough _____ Do scheme members encounter any conservation problems _____
Farm land _____ Grazing land _____ Water _____

F. Power and influence

1. How much control over land and other resources would one without ancestral connections to the land have, suppose one is resettled, migrates to or buys land here compared to others whose ancestors lived on the very land (Explain): _____
2. Where resettlement is concerned how involved are chiefs before, during and after the process (Explain): _____
NGOS _____ the DA _____ political parties _____ the local population _____
3. What kind of social relations emerge when a resettlement with access to resources is set up in a context where neighbouring communities have very limited resources and cannot access those in the scheme (Explain and give examples): _____

4. When a resettlement is setup and people from elsewhere are resettled on land that belonged to another people's ancestors, would there develop a sense of loss of land (Explain): _____
5. Which of these institutions do you think should be given a bigger role to play at Mushandike (NGOs, political parties, churches, government workers and which ones, traditional leaders or any not mentioned). (Explain): _____
6. Do you think scheme beneficiaries treated as outsiders (Explain) _____
7. Do scheme members treat informal settlers and people from surrounding villages as outsiders (Explain): _____
8. In your own opinion for how long does one who is resettled remain an outsider(Explain): _____
9. Is it possible that resources that used to belong to one people can cease to and automatically belong to another because they bought or were resettled on the land (Explain) : _____
10. How easy or difficult is it for scheme members to co-exist with surrounding communities (Explain): _____ what is being/can be done to promote co-existence and by who (Explain): _____ how is/can amicable co-existence be shown between families/communities _____
11. Does language difference antagonise people (Explain): _____
How about culture (explain): _____ How about origin (Explain): _____
12. Are social and geographical boundaries respected, for instance between scheme beneficiaries, informal settlers and surrounding communities and why (Explain):

13. Can property rights be exercised, that is, can one have effective power and control over property as an individual or collective (Explain): _____
14. How do you see the future of Mushandike Irrigation Scheme (Explain)

Thank you very much.

Appendix 3: Focus group discussion guide

I distribute pieces of paper with questions 1-8 if participants are free to write or help fill them in before commencement of discussions.

1. Age _____
2. Sex _____
3. Village _____
4. Formal/Informal settlement _____
5. Marital status _____
6. Highest level of education attained _____
7. Tertiary qualifications _____
8. How long have you lived in Mushandike _____

Welcome

I welcome and thank participants for volunteering to participate. Inform them that their contributions are invaluable to us.

Introduction

I introduce the group to the business at hand which is to gain insight into their understanding of social issues obtaining at Mushandike through their sincere and open contributions. Advise them that the discussion time is open, that everyone shall be given a chance to make contributions and that proceedings shall be recorded

Anonymity

I inform participants that anonymity shall be upheld despite recordings. I advise them that records shall be kept for a short period of time when they will be worked upon thereafter they shall be

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immediately destroyed. Any notes that will be kept will contain no link to the speaker, therefore, I encourage all to participate freely, openly and as sincerely as possible. I also encourage all participants not to discuss contributions by others after the group discussions have ended and to address all arising questions and concerns to my team and I.

Necessary rules

- We agree
 - that only one person speaks at a time.
 - to patiently wait for one's turn
 - not to shoot one another down
 - that all answers are important
 - that everyone should speak freely and anyhow, following no method
 - no one is expected to embrace or share the views of the other

Discussion guiding questions

1. What do you think about Mushandike as an irrigation scheme
2. What challenges does it face and how can they be resolved
3. What is your understanding of Mushandike's informal settlements
4. What challenges do they face
5. How did informal settlers end up here
6. Do you work with any external people to try and address land shortages
7. How are these external people helping

8. How would you want Mushandike's challenges to be resolved
9. How is the relationship between scheme members and informal settlers
10. How can this relationship be improved
11. What are the livelihood strategies of
 - a. scheme beneficiaries
 - b. informal settlers
12. How are they affected by informal settlements
13. What is the future of informal settlements
14. How is the future of Mushandike
15. What is the most important thing you would want to share with us

Gratitude

At the end I express gratitude and invite the group for refreshments.

Appendix 4: Observation guide

ASPECTS TO BE OBSERVED (allowing for participation)

1. Scheme layout
2. Layout of formal villages
3. Layout of informal settlements
4. Water points
 - a. domestic
 - i. wells
 - ii. boreholes
 - iii. water tapes
 - iv. other
 - b. agricultural
 - i. main dam
 - ii. main, secondary and tertiary canals
 - iii. overnight dam
 - iv. other
5. Crop-field layout
 - a. irrigation
 - b. rainfed
6. Layout of irrigation system
7. Grazing land and pastures
8. Other land use patterns
9. Livestock
10. Human relations and functions
 - a. meetings
 - b. informal relations
 - c. daily activities
11. Agricultural activities
 - a. cattle grazing

- b. crop husbandry
 - c. harvesting
 - d. selling
- 12. Any other
- 13. Serendipity