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LAND SHORTAGE AND THE ADOPTION OF CROSS-BORDER FARMING BY THE NDAU PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE ALONG THE ZIMBABWE/MOZAMBIQUE BORDERLAND (c.1930-2010)

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on cross-border farming, a practice which has been adopted by the Ndaou communities of South-eastern Zimbabwe to reduce hunger and starvation caused by the shortage of land in the Ndaou-dominated Zimbabwe/Mozambique borderland. While the colonial Rhodesian government seized land from the Ndaou people, the post-independence Zimbabwean government, aggravated the Ndaou people's agrarian plight by annexing formerly white-owned farms during the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) in 2000 without properly returning the land to its original owners. The colonial farms had become a source of employment for the landless Ndaou men and women. Consequently, following their forced removal during the FTLRP, some of the Ndaou communities from Zimbabwe have resorted to cross-border search for land in neighbouring Mozambique. The core of the article's argument is the claim that cross-border farming has saved the Zimbabwean Ndaou people from hunger and starvation. The paper was written using archival documents alongside secondary literature and qualitative research involving semi-structured interviews.

Keywords: *borderland, conflict, farming, settlement, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, sesame.*

1. INTRODUCTION

This research explores cross-border farming undertaken by the Ndaus, borderland residents. The Ndaus, who inhabit the borderland between Zimbabwe and Mozambique, were segmented by the colonial border in 1891. Ndaus land was parcelled out, especially to Europeans who migrated to Southern Rhodesia from South Africa during the early colonial years.¹ The bitter and protracted geopolitical rivalry between the British and the Portuguese over the Manica region, where the Ndaus area is located, underpinned the encouragement of European settlements and plantations in the area. Land dispossession continued even after the initial displacements as estate owners and missionaries repeatedly acquired large tracts of land. Some scholars viewed these developments as a ploy by the British and Portuguese colonialists to strengthen their colonial positions in the Ndaus region.² The establishment of these European settlements had far-reaching implications on the Ndaus society which, apart from being separated by the colonial border, actually lost possession of its land in the region. In particular, the Ndaus on the Zimbabwean side of the border were left with limited land to subsist on. As a result, they resorted to cross-border search for land in Mozambique. To make matters worse, the Zimbabwean government carried out the FTLRP in 2000 which had dire consequences for the Ndaus. The Ndaus lost their employment as Zimbabwe's commercial farming system, and the economy collapsed.³ Taking advantage of their proximity to Mozambique and their cross-border ethnic relations with the Ndaus in Mozambique, the Ndaus from Zimbabwe sought farming land in Mozambique. It is important to note that cross-border farming is undertaken by both men and women.

The Ndaus land dispossession had precedence in the African continent. With the imposition of colonial rule in Africa a new economic order arose. Initially, European companies, individuals and Christian missions acquired land through treaties with local chiefs for large scale-commercial farming.⁴ This gave rise, among other things, to the scarcity of land among Africans. It also resulted in a labour shortage on the white colonisers' farms. This led to the introduction of legislation that was meant to control African tenancy on white-owned farmland.⁵ The legislation spread from South Africa (in the

1 See: HV Moyana, *The political economy of land in Zimbabwe* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 2002).

2 J Hlongwana, *Landlords and tenants in Chipinge district of Zimbabwe* (MA, Midlands State University, 2007), p. 31.

3 Interview: Author with D Muzite, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 7 December 2015.

4 M Mkandawire, "What went wrong with the peasants", *Southern African Political and Economic Monthly (SAPEM)* 12 (3), 1999, p. 35.

5 JK Rennie, "Special issues on themes in agrarian history and society", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 5 (1), 1978, p. 86.

Cape 1869, Natal 1896, Transvaal 1887, Orange Free State 1893, Nyasaland and Kenya 1918.⁶) However, in South Africa, segregation in land ownership was formally introduced in 1913. Owing to white farmers' complaints about cattle-thieving and the exposure of their stock to inferior bulls or rams belonging to Africans, the pressure was brought to bear on legislators to evict tenants and squatters to allow only black wage-earners on white farms. Problems like these were given high priority by South African legislators and resulted in the drastic Native Land Act in 1913.⁷ In each case, the legislation had a common purpose to deny Africans the use of white owned land except in the capacity of labourers.

Similarly, the Rhodesian government enacted the Land Apportionment Act in 1931 which exacerbated land dispossession that began with the arrival of white communities in the 1890s. Consequently, Zimbabweans, the Ndaus included, lost their ancestral land to the European farmers. For instance, John Keith Rennie argued that acute land shortage forced the Ndaus to enter into labour tenancy with white and black farmers.⁸

This study joins a growing body of scholarship on cross-border farming. Chinese rubber farmers from Xishuangbanna District, for example, run cross-border rubber plantations in the adjacent District of Laos. The farmers have expanded the production of rubber to take advantage of the trans-boundary markets, especially the rapidly growing Chinese demand for latex for toys and industrial development.⁹ Indian farmers from the Tripura region also have cross-border fields in neighbouring Bangladesh.¹⁰ Further, Fulani cattle farmers from Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Niger graze their cattle in neighbouring Benin. The cross-border transhumance gives herders the opportunity to exploit weight gain and milk production in the wet season and limit weight loss during the dry season.¹¹ Related to the above is the collective use of borderland space and resources by farmers from Eastern Sudan (Kassala region) and Eritrea.¹² Similarly, the partitioned Kalanga settlements in Botswana/Zimbabwe borderland share strong cross-border relations and

6 Hlongwana, Landlords and tenants in Chipinge district of Zimbabwe, p. 27.

7 AM Grundlingh, "White policy and legislation affecting blacks". In: JP Brits *et al.* (eds.), *History of South Africa from 1902 onwards* (Pretoria: Mucleneuk, 1995), p. 178.

8 JK Rennie, Christianity, colonialism and the origins of nationalism among the Ndaus of Southern Rhodesia 1890-1935 (PhD, North-western University (USA), 1973), p. 43.

9 C Strurgeon, "Cross-border rubber cultivation between China and Laos: Regionalisation by Akha and Tai rubber farmers", *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 34, 2012, p. 71.

10 "Lockdown: Tripura farmers with cross-border fields stare at losses", *EastMojo*, 20 April 2020.

11 See: SO Houessou *et al.*, "The role of cross-border transhumance in influencing resident herders' cattle husbandry practices and use of genetic resources", *Animal* 14 (11), 2020, pp. 2378-2386.

12 E Mohamadain *et al.*, "Informal cross-border trade in Eastern Sudan? A case from Kassala and Gedarf states", *CHR-MICHELSSEN Institute*, 2015, p. 10.

there are no restrictions regarding the use of resources in the borderland.¹³ Worth mentioning also is the partitioned Barwe community living in the Mozambique/Zimbabwe borderland (outside the scope of the current study) which does not subscribe to exclusive territoriality. In such circumstances, pastures and farming land are communally utilised.¹⁴ Pekka Virtanen argues that the principle of mutuality is tacitly observed and strict exclusion of fellow members is not accepted by the cross-border Barwe community.¹⁵

What emerges from the above discussion is that cross-border farming is a sequential outcome of the colonial border demarcation which segmented ethnic groups in several borderlands.¹⁶ Supporting the above assertion, Chriss Singauke argues that the demarcation of colonial boundaries spawned familial cross-border relations which made such cross-border collaboration a necessity.¹⁷ Similarly, owing to existential problems, borderland communities create a cross-boundary society whose opportunities and resources are mutually exploited to mitigate common suffering.¹⁸ Also, it is opined that borderland residents produce their own boundary philosophy rooted in social practice that ignores state sovereignty and claim transnational citizenship in the borderland for personal survival.¹⁹ It can thus be argued that cross-border farming is a consequence of the arbitrary colonial boundary demarcation which caused economic disequilibrium in borderland regions.

While this study draws shape and impetus from the above scholarly works, cross-border farming which is the central focus of this paper has not been investigated in the study area. In considering this aspect, this article draws attention to the development of cross-border farming in the Ndau borderland. Also, it discusses the role of the African Purchase Areas (1930-2010) in the development of cross-border farming in the borderland.

13 *Investigative Africa*, 30 March 2005.

14 T Musayemura, "Resource utilisation in the borderland", Paper presented at Zimbabwe Historical Association Conference (ZHA), Great Zimbabwe University, Masvingo, 3-4 August, 2017.

15 P Virtanen, "Evolving institutional framework for community-based natural resource management in Mozambique: A case study from the Choa highlands", *African Studies Quarterly* 5 (3), 2001, p.141.

16 TK Takavarasha, "Partition of African and impact of borders on African societies in colonial Zimbabwe". In: FPT Duri and N Marongwe (eds.), *Contested spaces, restrictive mechanisms and corridors of opportunity: A social history of Zimbabwean borderland and beyond since the colonial period* (Gweru: Booklove Publishers, 2018), p. 73.

17 C Singauke, The establishment of Rhodesia- Mozambique border and its socio-economic and political effects on the Mapungwana chiefdom 1891-1974 (BA, Great Zimbabwe University, 2013), p. 19.

18 DK Flynn, "We are the border: Identity, exchange and the state along the Benin-Nigeria border", *American Ethnologist* 24 (2), 1997, p. 315.

19 H Donnan and TM Wilson, *Borders: Frontiers of identity, nation and state* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), pp. 58-59.

Further, the paper analyses the part that the FTLRP played in causing cross-border farming in the borderland. Likewise, the article looks at the consequences of cross-border farming in the borderland.

The paper relied on a multi-pronged methodological approach. Informal interviews with respondents in the Ndaou region were conducted to ensure that this study covered the bottom-up indigenous knowledge experiences and thoughts of these people. To solicit data from the informants, personal unstructured questions were asked.²⁰ This was through qualitative research interviews which placed emphasis on the interviewee's thoughts. Archival research was carried out at the National Archives of Zimbabwe, in Harare. The collection consisted of Native Commissioners' reports, field notes and diaries on the origins of the Ndaou people; their social, economic and political organisation, the demarcation of the Zimbabwe/Mozambique border and cross-border migration. These sources were analysed in juxtaposition to existing historiography and arguments about the Ndaou.

2. THE NDAOU PEOPLE

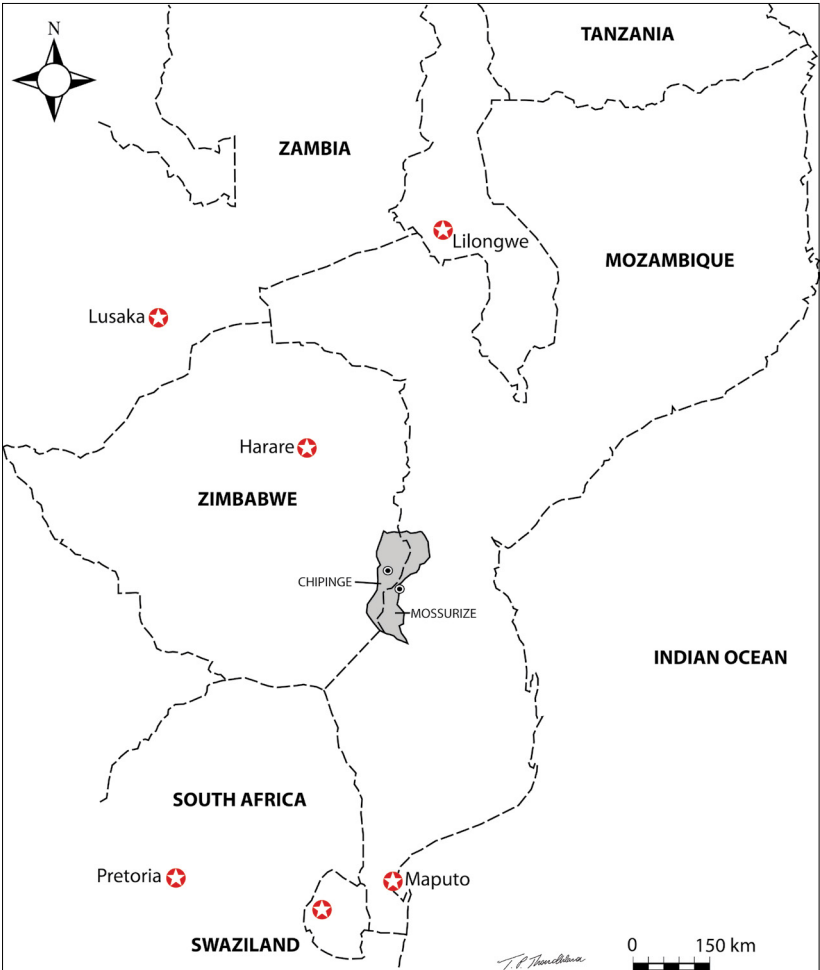
The Ndaou are an ethnic group which is mainly located in south-eastern Zimbabwe, and in the central and western parts of Mozambique (see Map.1 below).²¹ They are members of the Hungwe and Mbire Bantu migrants who came from the north of the Zambezi River and occupied present-day Zimbabwe.²² Internal conflicts within the Rozvi confederacy forced some Rozvi generals, together with their followers, to move eastwards and settle in some parts of present-day Zimbabwe and Mozambique in the 17th century.²³

20 D Kale, *Interviews* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), p. 14.

21 Singauke, The establishment of Rhodesia- Mozambique border and its socio-economic and political effects on the Mapungwana 1891-1974, p. 9.

22 DN Beach, *Zimbabwe before 1900* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1995), p. 24.

23 JK Renne, "From Zimbabwe to a colonial chieftaincy: Four transformations of the Musikavanhu territorial cult in Rhodesia". In: JM Schoffeleer (ed.), *Guardians of the land* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 2000), pp. 257-285.



Map 1: Chipinge and Mossurize districts of Zimbabwe and Mozambique

Source: Illustration by Thomas Thondlana, 2019.

As alluded earlier, the Ndaus were evicted from the Chipinge Highlands to pave way for the development of white agriculture and also to accommodate increased white immigrants after the Second World War.²⁴ It is, however, noted that most of the reserves were located in places that supported limited farming practices owing to the prevalence of arid conditions.²⁵ Expressing similar sentiments, Henry Vhuso Moyana claims that the Ndaus established settlements on rugged terrain in Chipinge District because of the non-availability of arable land.²⁶ Echoing the preceding views, Keith Tawekanyi argues that Ndaus communities in the Sabi Valley depend on selling goats and cattle for survival because the land in the valley cannot support crop farming.²⁷ Consequently, several Ndaus families entered into labour tenancy agreements with black farmers located in the native purchase areas and missionaries in Chipinge District. The loss of land to white farmers and to the American Board of Mission church forced the Ndaus to seek living space from the African purchase areas.²⁸ Such was the determination of some of the Ndaus people that they were prepared to enter into feudal-like economic relations with African farmers for the sake of remaining in their ancestral territory. In this regard, the contribution of African purchase areas to the cross-border farming practices of Zimbabwean Ndaus peasants requires a moment of reflection.

3. CROSS- BORDER FARMING DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD

In accordance with the terms of the Land Appointment Act of 1931, which was passed to divide land between Africans and whites, the Rhodesian government reserved land from which Africans with purchasing power could buy. These African farms were known as African purchase areas.²⁹ It should be noted that before the creation of the African purchase farms, white farmers had asked the Chief Native Commissioner in the 1920s to set aside land where Africans could buy farms.³⁰ Here, the white farmers and missionaries supported the African Affairs Department's argument that the creation of

24 National Archives of Zimbabwe (hereinafter NAZ) S2827/2/2/5 Report Native Commissioner, Melsetter 1952; NAZ, S435/357, Report of the Native Commissioner Chipinga 1956.

25 NAZ, N3/24/12 NC TO CNC, Boundaries of native reserves, March 1956.

26 Moyana, *The political economy of land in Zimbabwe*, p. 123.

27 K Tawekanyi, *The land problem among the Ndaus* (BA, Great Zimbabwe University, 2019), p. 18.

28 These farms were owned by rich Ndaus farmers who had links with the American church of Christ which was given vast expanses of land by Rhodes in the 1890s.

29 G Kay, *Rhodesia, A human geography* (London: University of London Press 1970), p. 93.

30 G Arrighi, "The political economy of Rhodesia". In: G Arrighi and J Saul (eds.), *Essays on the political economy of Africa* (Monthly Review Press, 1993), p. 42.

native purchase areas far from the white community would preserve a “tribal” way of life.³¹ Accordingly, 6 851 876 acres of land were reserved for the creation of the Native Purchase Areas (NPA)³² which was changed to African Purchase Areas. While George Kay differs from Palmer on the amount of land that was set aside, Kay’s figure of 7 460 000 acres is corroborated by data obtained from the Rhodesian legislative reports.³³

The majority of the APAs in Chipinge District were located on the border area stretching from Tamandai to Muzite.³⁴ What needs to be emphasised is that the missionaries who previously owned this land were involved in the identification of suitable people to buy the African purchase farms in the aforementioned region.³⁵ A cursory look at the names of Africans who benefitted from the scheme shows that most of them were not original Ndaue people, but were immigrants who were hired by missionaries on their way to Zimbabwe and these included surnames such as Ndhlovu, Hliziyo, Thabete, Thondhlana, Hlatshwayo, Msimbo, Dhlakama and several others who were not native to Chipinge area.³⁶ This gives credence to the assertion that the beneficiaries did not buy the land, but it was given to them as gratuity for having assisted the missionaries in their evangelical duties.³⁷ The other reason advanced for undertaking the selective sale of land was that the church wanted to maintain its religious dominance in the region and expand beyond the existing margins.³⁸ It was thought that an improved standard of living in the African purchase areas would cajole non-Christian Africans to join the church. Their overarching concern to civilise the Ndaue is supported by the claim that, “the power of the chief would be lessened, individual responsibility encouraged, belief in the spirits of a particular locality dispelled, polygamy dispelled and permanent houses would be erected as development of property”.³⁹ However, many people were disinterested and, instead, the black farmers were seen as an extension of the white community which had expropriated their land. The black farmers did not disappoint the whites and went on to develop modern

31 M Steele, *The foundations of a native policy: Southern Rhodesia 1923-1933* (PhD, Simon Praser University, 1972), p. 406.

32 R Palmer, *Land and racial domination in Southern Rhodesia* (London: Heinemann, 1977), p. 165.

33 Kay, *Rhodesia, A human geography*, p. 93.

34 NAZ, S2827/2/2/2/5, Report for Chipinga 15 March 1952.

35 NAZ, S 2827/2/2/5 Report of NC for Chipinga 1952.

36 Moyana, *The political economy of land in Zimbabwe*, p. 133.

37 Interview: Author with D Muzite, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 7 December 2015.

38 R Matikiti, *Christian theological perspectives on political violence in Zimbabwe: The case of the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe* (PhD, University of Zimbabwe 2012), pp. 106-110.

39 JK Rennie, “White farmers, black tenants and landlord legislation: Southern Rhodesia 1890-1930”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 5 (1), 1978, pp. 76-98.

homes and plant tea and fruit trees, leading to the existence of a developed African community in the area.⁴⁰

It is important to note that the APAs also presented another problem for the Ndaus; exploitation at the hands of African landlords. The unwritten basic economic law underpinning the tenant/landlord relationship was the production of surplus products and exploitation of the landless Ndaus by the African landlords in the form of ground rent. Labour rent was demanded everywhere in the APA.⁴¹ Tenants carried out a wide range of activities on the farm, ranging from digging, weeding, harvesting, tending animals, and cooking to baby-minding.⁴² For instance, everyone residing on the farm, except visitors, children and the elderly, were required to report for work or they risked being ordered to leave the farm.⁴³ Due to the fact that it was mandatory for men and wives to report for work, the landlords benefitted from cheap labour as the majority of Ndaus had several wives. However, the plots that were allocated to the Ndaus were so small that it became imperative for them to acquire additional land for crop cultivation from the Mossurize district in Mozambique.⁴⁴ Also, the land problem in the African purchase areas was aggravated by the fact that land, over and above the plots that were given to the Ndaus, could be acquired after the payment of an annual rent. However, since most of the Ndaus had polygamous families, they failed to pay rent for additional land.⁴⁵

Similarly, land remained a persistent challenge at mission stations. While the church did not compel the landless Ndaus to pay labour or money as rent, the missionaries expected the Ndaus to conform to Christian norms and values. In view of the fact that the Church wanted a big Christian community, it accommodated many Ndaus converts, which then compromised its ability to allocate adequate plots to the land-seeking Ndaus.⁴⁶ The result was that the landless Ndaus acquired additional land from the Mozambican territory which was within walking distance from the mission station and APAs.⁴⁷ Broadly, the Ndaus maintained a farming lifestyle as tenants on the farms of black Africans, while at the same time finding comfort in cross-border

40 NAZ, S2827/2/2/2/5, NC Report Chipinga, 1952.

41 Singauke, *The establishment of Rhodesia- Mozambique border and its socio-economic and political effects on the Mapungwana chiefdom 1891-1974*, p. 19.

42 Interview: Author with S Chakwizira, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 23 December 2018.

43 Hlongwana, *Landlords and tenants in Chipinge district of Zimbabwe*, p. 28.

44 Singauke, *The establishment of Rhodesia- Mozambique border and its socio-economic and political effects on the Mapungwana chiefdom 1891-1974*, p. 19.

45 Interview: Author with S Chakwizira, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 23 December 2018.

46 Interview: Author with D Muzite, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 7 December 2015.

47 Interview: Author with W Maposa, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 4 December 2015.

farming; a split social stratigraphy.⁴⁸ This style of farming has been practised in Chipinge District since the 1930s.⁴⁹

4. POST-COLONIAL CROSS-BORDER FARMING

While Zimbabwe attempted to address the land problem after the attainment of independence in 1980, the land redistribution policy was constrained largely by the Lancaster House Constitution.⁵⁰ In conformity with the spirit of protecting individual property, the government of Zimbabwe made major policy pronouncements in the 1980s, based on the provisions of the Lancaster House Constitution, and this benefitted powerful agro companies in the Chipinge region.⁵¹ In this regard, Palmer argues that the slow pace of land redistribution was a result of the Lancaster House Constitution.⁵² It can thus be argued that the constitution was written with a view to preventing the radical transformation of the colonial relations of production. However, Zimbabwe finally took a decision to address the land problem in the year 2000 and views on the timing differ. One school of thought regards the land invasions as spontaneous expressions of anger by black people over landlessness.⁵³ Drawing from the same line of reasoning Robert Mugabe argued that the FTLRP was a fulfilment of the liberation struggle's promises:

Without doubt our heroes are happy that a crucial part of this new phase of our struggle has been completed. The land has been freed and today all our heroes lie on their spirits are unbound, free to roam the land they left shackled, thanks again to the Third Chimurenga.⁵⁴

On the contrary, Jocelyn Alexander claims that the land reform programme was a political gimmick by the ruling ZANU-PF party in order to retain visibility on the political landscape in the face of strong opposition from the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) which had been formed in 1999.⁵⁵ Yet, while

48 Interview: Author with S Chakwizira, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 23 December 2018.

49 Interview: Author with H Chamboko, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 23 December 2018.

50 The independence constitution that was written by the British and handed down to the Zimbabwean government.

51 J Hlongwana, *Borderless boundary? Historical and geopolitical significance of the Mozambique/Zimbabwe border to the Ndaou People (c. 1940-2010)* (PhD, North West University, 2021), p. 203.

52 R Palmer, "Land reform in Zimbabwe 1980-1990", *African Affairs* 89, 1990, pp. 163-181.

53 Hlongwana, *Landlords and tenants in Chipinge district of Zimbabwe*, p. 27.

54 "Mugabe: Land reform was unnecessarily delayed", *The Herald*, 9 August 2005.

55 J Alexander, "Squatters, veterans and the state in Zimbabwe". In: A Hammar *et al.* (eds.), *Zimbabwe's unfinished business, rethinking land, state and nation in the context of crisis* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003), p. 99.

the former explanation has merit, the latter view seems to carry more weight as the FTLRP was carried out on the eve of a general election.⁵⁶

Notwithstanding Mugabe's assertion that the FTLRP was long overdue, its modus operandi had far-reaching implications on the economy and the livelihoods of the former commercial workers in Zimbabwe.⁵⁷ The initial farm occupations by landless Zimbabweans took place in the Svosve region of Mashonaland East Province of Zimbabwe in 1998.⁵⁸ While the Svosve farm invasions were not instantly followed by nationwide farm annexations, it can be asserted that the Zimbabwean state and non-state actors drew some lessons from it: the implementation of violence to displace white farmers from their farms. Thus, the year 2000 saw widespread farm seizures which led to the reduction of the white farming community in Zimbabwe.⁵⁹ War veterans, politicians, landless villagers and government officials seized farms from commercial white farmers who, for many years, had been the pillars of the Zimbabwean economy.⁶⁰

Similarly, Ndau politicians, landless peasants and war veterans in Chipinge District, particularly in Tamandai, Mount Selinda and Gwenzi areas, invaded traditionally revered areas, protected forests (Mount Selinda and Ngungunyana) and plantations belonging to foreign governments (Smaldeel/Makandi estate).⁶¹ At first, the government of Zimbabwe ignored these farm invasions that were being carried out in the best-known tea and coffee plantations which employed thousands of workers. These included 374 farms belonging to Tanganda Tea Company, Busi Coffee Estate, Petronella Coffee Estate and Chipinge Coffee Company.⁶² Reacting to what looked like the government of Zimbabwe's implicit authorisation of farm occupations on the white-owned plantations, Allan Simango claimed that the farm invaders disregarded the rule of law on the inviolability of private property.⁶³ While the underlying motive for land reclamation in general was to get land for sustainability, it can be argued that farm occupations were instigated by

56 Alexander, "Squatters, veterans and the state in Zimbabwe", p. 99.

57 B Tendi, "Patriotic history and public intellectuals critical of power", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 34 (2), 2008, p. 393.

58 S Moyo, "The evolution of Zimbabwe's land acquisition". In: M Rukuni *et al.* (eds.), *Zimbabwe's agricultural revolution revisited* (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2006), p. 147.

59 LM Musiwa, *Land reform programme in Zimbabwe: Disparity between policy design and implementation* (Harare: Institute of Development Studies, 2004), p. 27.

60 E Osabuohien, *Handbook of research on in-country determinants and implications of foreign land acquisitions* (Hershey: IGI Global, 2015), p. 394.

61 Interview: Author with W Maposa, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 4 December 2015.

62 "Zimbabwe government to seize tea, coffee farms and resorts", *Southern Africa IRI News Brief*, 4 May 2001.

63 Interview: Author with A Simango, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 20 December 2018.

politicians who wanted to get political support from the landless peasants.⁶⁴ For instance, it has been argued that the occupation of plantations and isolated individual farms in Mapungwana and Gwenzi farming areas of Chipinge District was spearheaded by Ndau politicians who harboured the political ambition to contest in parliamentary elections in the study area.⁶⁵ Here, the Zimbabwe Republic Police's lukewarm response to the disturbances on the farms lent credence to the assertion that the government of Zimbabwe condoned the violent situation in the district's farming community to gain political mileage.⁶⁶

The ensuing state of insecurity and loss of business confidence among the white farmers forced commercial farmers to scale down operations in Chipinge District, a region which had been known for supporting diversified farming activities ranging from coffee, timber, tea, and dairy to several other farming activities.⁶⁷ In particular, coffee production in the District was impacted negatively by the farm invasions. Figures released in 2016 showed that following the FTLRP, the number of commercial coffee farmers dropped drastically from 145 to less than 5.⁶⁸ Similarly, tea companies downsized operations out of fear that their plantations were going to be taken over by the war veterans.⁶⁹ Smaldeel Estate, one of the properties of the German government in Zimbabwe, for example, was invaded several times. As a result of the ominous danger posed by the war veterans, the company scaled down production.⁷⁰

Related to the preceding argument, respondents insinuated that in the period preceding the FTLRP, the Estate provided employment to thousands of people from the local communities and also to Mozambicans living astride the border.⁷¹ However, as a result of lawlessness which made the investment in the usual high capital projects a risky undertaking, the company abandoned its traditional projects such as coffee production and embarked on short-season activities such as maize growing.⁷²

While at a national level, maize production was welcome as it ensured food security and also broke the cycle of pests and diseases whose presence

64 W Willems, "Peaceful demonstrators, violent invaders: Representations of land in the Zimbabwean press, *World Development* 32 (10), 2004, pp. 1767-1783.

65 Interview: Author with A Simango Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 20 December 2018.

66 Alexander, "Squatters, veterans and the state in Zimbabwe", p. 99.

67 "Macademia farming: A boon for Chipinge farmers", *The Manica Post*, 17 May 2017.

68 "Commercial coffee farmers leave Zimbabwe", *Daily News*, 1 February 2018.

69 S Moyo, "Land concentration and accumulation after redistributive reform in post-settler Zimbabwe", *Review of African Political Economy* 38 (128), 2011, pp. 257-276.

70 H Bastian, "A look at Zimbabwe Smaldeel coffee estate", *Lockwood Trade Journal co*, 2018.

71 Interview: Author with A Simango, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 20 December 2018.

72 Interview: Author with Z Urimbo, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 20 December 2018.

had been nurtured by coffee monocultural growing, on the whole, maize growing had less visible benefits compared to coffee production. Human labour, which had been central in the production of coffee before the outbreak of violence was replaced by machinery such as planters, combine harvesters and several others.⁷³ Even though the authorities later made a decision to evict the war veterans and the peasants who had illegally settled on the estate and individual farms, companies in the region had taken precautions to downsize operations, and this caused widespread unemployment among the Ndaу people, who, for many years, had relied on the agro-companies for survival.⁷⁴ Consequently, some resorted to cross-border land search in neighbouring Mozambique.

5. THE FTLRP AND A NEW CULTURE OF LAND INVASION

As argued earlier in the paper, most Ndaу families entered into labour tenancy with black farmers after their land had been expropriated by the colonial government in the 1930s. In spite of the loss of land ownership, the peasants, had, at least, remained on their familiar terrain though at a cost. However, it is instructive to note that the FTLRP also inculcated a culture of farm invasions among the Ndaу which also contributed to cross-border farming.⁷⁵ Contrary to the tradition where invaders targeted white farmers for land dispossession, the Ndaу squatters turned against their African landlords in the African Purchase Areas which occupy land along the border from Tamandayi in the north to Muzite in the south. The invasions took place in the Mapungwana, Gwenzi and Muzite areas of Chipinge District, places where feudal practices continue to dominate production relations.⁷⁶ The Ndaу invaders argued that the landlords were not native Ndaу but immigrants from South Africa who had accompanied missionaries who had established mission stations in the region in the 1890s.⁷⁷ They further justified their insurrection against their long-time bosses by arguing that the farms were being underutilised while many Ndaу were landless. Moreover, some of the farms were the source of bitterness, especially Farm NO 39 (Mahaka's farm) as it had been pegged where a respected local Chief Gwenzi had lived before land expropriation by the whites

73 RS Maposa *et al.*, "A luta Continua: A critical reflection on the Chimurenga-within – Third Chimurenga among the Ndaу people in Chipinge district, South-eastern Zimbabwe", *Journal of African Studies and Development* 2 (6), 2010, p. 192.

74 Zimbabwe Report Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, Harare, 20 June 2002.

75 Maposa *et al.*, "Aluta continua: A critical reflection on the Chimurenga-within", p. 193

76 E Gwenzi, *The establishment of the Rhodesia-Mozambique border and its impacts on the Musikavanhu chiefdom (1891-1975)* (BA, Great Zimbabwe University, 2014), p. 17.

77 Interview: Author with L Dekeya, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 5 January 2016.

and missionaries.⁷⁸ However, it should be noted that the eviction of the black farmers by the landless Ndau attracted the wrath of the law as Zimbabwean law protects African farmers against land invasion. Consequently, their action was ruled illegal, thus leading to police intervention to save life and property in this black farming community where landlords had been temporarily chased away by the Ndau squatters. In addition to the arrests, beatings and burning of the squatters' houses, the police ordered the squatters to leave the African purchase areas.⁷⁹

While police intervention led to the restoration of normalcy in the African purchase areas, it displaced the squatters from the African purchase areas.⁸⁰ Scores of displaced families congregated at Chief Gwenzi's residence and Muzite Growth Point where they relied on handouts from nongovernmental organisations such as the International Organisation of Migration (IOM).⁸¹ As the government of Zimbabwe showed little concern for securing land for the former squatters, the displaced people invaded the border region and established settlements along the no man's land from which cross-border farming into Mozambique is undertaken.⁸²

6. CROSS-BORDER FARMING AND CONSEQUENCES

As discussed above, the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean agrarian policies caused acute land shortages among the Zimbabwean Ndau living in the borderland. As a result of landlessness and unemployment, the Ndau embraced cross-border farming. The sections which follow unpack the ramifications of cross-border farming on the Ndau borderland.

7. ILLEGAL SETTLEMENTS ALONG THE NO-MAN'S LAND BETWEEN ZIMBABWE AND MOZAMBIQUE

While the border settlements owe their origins to the land problem in Zimbabwe, cross-border farming - an extension of the land problem - further contributed to the rise of the settlements. According to *The Mirriam Webster Dictionary* a "no man's land" is an area of land between two countries.

78 Maposa *et al.*, "Aluta continua: A critical reflection on the Chimurenga-within", p. 193.

79 Interview: Author with T Dingane, Mossurize district, Mozambique, 10 December 2016.

80 Interview: Author with W Mashava, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 1 December 2015.

81 Maposa *et al.*, "Aluta continua: A critical reflection on the Chimurenga-within", p. 194.

82 J Hlongwana and ES Van Eeden, "Neither here nor there: The landless Ndau who have turned a 'no man's land' between Mozambique and Zimbabwe into a home", Paper presented at a Symposium on Border Regions in Sub-Saharan Africa, University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu, 7th-9th September 2016.

The area is unclaimed and uninhabited.⁸³ It encompasses the border line and its shoulders and functionally, makes the border more visible. Due to landlessness, some Ndau people threw caution to the wind and established “illegal” settlements along the border, arguing that the “no man’s land” had been part of the Ndau territory before the advent of colonialism in the region. The border settlements are predominantly located in Mapungwana, Gwenzi, Musikavanhu and Garahwa chiefdoms.⁸⁴ The chiefdoms were bisected by the Anglo-Portuguese border which frustrated cross-border ethnic relations in the borderland. Apart from claiming that the land belonged to their ancestors prior to the establishment of the colonial border, the Ndau border settlers found comfort in the realisation that both sides of the border were populated by fellow Ndau people.

However, it is important to note that the settlements are fraught with existential challenges. The “neither here nor there” status owing to living at the intersection of the two countries has made them stateless, further resulting in their ineligibility to participate in national processes taking place in the two countries. Closely related to the above, the former farm workers suffer from anxiety because they lack security of tenure of the land they are currently occupying.⁸⁵ Some members of the community do not view the settlements as a panacea to their long-time existential problem in spite of their leading settled existence in the border region. Some sceptical inhabitants suspect that plans could be in the offing to evict them from the border region.⁸⁶

Because of strong ethnic relations transcending the boundary, residents simultaneously empathise with members of their communities in the adjacent state.⁸⁷ It was feared that such strong attachments among clan members in the region could help spread conflicts in the region.⁸⁸ For example, allegations have been made that the Mozambican opposition, *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (RENAMO, a former rebel group), then, was recruiting Zimbabwean youths from the region bordering Zimbabwe to join its insurgent wing as tensions with the ruling Frelimo reached boiling point.⁸⁹ Commenting

83 *Merriam-Webster Dictionary Enclopaedia Britannica*, accessed 24 June 2015.

84 E Konyana, “Euthanasia in Zimbabwe? Reflections on the management of terminally ill persons and the dying in Ndau traditions of Chimanimaini and Chipinge, South-eastern Zimbabwe”. In: DO Lagula (ed.), *Death and life after death in African philosophy and religion, A multiple disciplinary engagement* (Harare: African Institute for Culture, Dialogue and Tolerance Studies, 2014), p. 122.

85 Interview: Author with B Mutendeni, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 7 July 2016.

86 Interview: Author with D Muyambo, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 7 July 2016.

87 Gwenzi, The establishment of the Rhodesia-Mozambique border and its impacts on the Musikavanhu chiefdom (1891-1975), p. 17.

88 A Nhema and PT Zeleza (eds.), *Roots of African conflicts: The causes and costs* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2008), p. 90.

89 “Border fears over Renamo”, *The Sunday Mail*, 20 March 2016.

on the presence of Renamo fighters along the border and their recruitment of Zimbabweans from the border region, a Zimbabwean legislator warned in March 2016:

We should be worried if the recruitment is not stopped, our security is at risk because the Mozambican conflict will spill into Zimbabwe as the recruits will be familiar with our territory and tend to retreat here and cause mayhem when under attack.⁹⁰

Given that the border people were held together by common historical and cultural links, and swore allegiance to both countries, the border settlements posed a serious security threat to both Zimbabwe and Mozambique.⁹¹

Further, the border region is not ideal for human habitation⁹² because the area (especially the Chimbuwe region near Jersey Tea Estate) used to be a burial site during the reign of Chief Mhloyo of Mozambique.⁹³ Contrary to local burial customs that babies should be buried in low-lying areas, they were buried on the plateau, where the border runs through, under Mhloyo's orders. Also, freedom fighters and ordinary people who were killed during the liberation war along the border were buried there in shallow unmarked graves, while other victims of war were not buried at all.⁹⁴ The borderland became a death trap to both people and animals as it fell within the 75km Risuti Muzite minefield⁹⁵ where, between 1974 and 1979, the Rhodesian government planted land mines and booby-traps to prevent infiltration and attacks by Zimbabwean freedom fighters who operated from Mozambique.⁹⁶ Some of the dead were either combatants who died in action or civilians caught in the crossfire.⁹⁷ The borderland enclaves are, therefore, strewn with unmarked shallow graves which the settlers have stumbled upon time and again. What complicates matters is that the remains of the dead, upon being discovered, deserve decent reburial. Yet, according to African culture, relatives of the dead should take the lead in burying the deceased.⁹⁸ The border settlers, however, feel that the spirits of the dead are hardly appeased because the reburials are undertaken by strangers who do not know the name, clan and totem of

90 "Renamo border area threat raises concern", *The Manica Post*, 11 March 2016.

91 "Renamo recruiting along Zimbabwean border areas", *Bulawayo 24 News*, 12 March 2016.

92 Interview: Author with D Hliziyo Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 26 April 2016.

93 Interview: Author with P Chiongororo Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 3 May 2016.

94 EM Chiwome and Z Mguni, *Zimbabwean literature in African languages: Crossing language barriers* (Gweru: Book Love Publishers, 2012), p. 241.

95 "Police attack villagers", *Newsday*, 11 June 2014.

96 MR Rupiyah, "A historical study of land-mines in Zimbabwe 1993-1995", *Zambesia*, 1995, p. 65.

97 *Zimbabwe Independent*, 8 November 2013.

98 MS Tembo, *Satisfying Zambian hunger for culture: Social change in the global world* (Oxford: Langa Books, 2012), p. 316.

the deceased.⁹⁹ One of the informants argued that the presence of graves of unknown people in the vicinity unsettles them and he further claimed that locals have heard voices and seen silhouettes during the night that are believed to be those of ghosts.¹⁰⁰

In spite of these problems, the settlements are viewed as strategic places from which to undertake cross-border farming in neighbouring Mozambique. Several motivating reasons have been advanced to account for the cross-border farmers' choice to operate from the border settlements. An interviewee opined that cross-border farmers did not want to cut ties with their native landscape and also that the border settlements enabled them to access health and educational services available on the Zimbabwean side of the borderland.¹⁰¹ Thus, the border villages were viewed as strategic for farmers to undertake farming business in neighbouring Mozambique.¹⁰²

Another important consideration which motivated the farmers to commute from the border region without necessarily relocating to Mozambique was the Mozambican Ndau's acceptance of cattle from the border villages.¹⁰³ Pastures and water points in Mozambique sustain especially cattle from the drier parts of the border regions such as Mahenye, Muzite, Zamchiya, Mabeye and others.¹⁰⁴ Farmers from the afore-mentioned regions practise transhumance farming where animals are relocated to Mozambique during the dry season as the grass in the border area would have been depleted.¹⁰⁵ In addition cross-border cattle farmers are attracted by the good quality grass which is found in abundance in Mozambican areas such as Gaha, Chirera, Makuuyu, Garahwa and other places. The places are endowed with "sweet veld"- savannah grasslands whose nutritious vegetation favours cattle breeding.¹⁰⁶ The borderland residents have no reason for relocation as their animals can easily access pastures and water points in Mozambique.

The farmers were also persuaded by the poor security situation prevailing in the borderland as a result of the Civil War in Mozambique to operate from the border villages. The Mozambican government had been at war with RENAMO, a rebel movement, between 1978 and 1992, and also

99 Chiwome and Mguni, *Zimbabwean literature in African languages: Crossing language barriers*, p. 241.

100 Interview: Author with D Chigodo, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 10 July 2016.

101 Interview: Author with W Mangwine, Mossurize district, Mozambique, 7 December 2016.

102 Interview: Author with L Mapungwana, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 4 December 2015.

103 Interview: Author with FB Kwanayi Mossurize district, Mozambique, 20 December 2018.

104 Interview: Author with W Mangwine, Mossurize district, Mozambique, 7 December 2016.

105 Interview: Author with T Mazayamba, Mossurize district, Mozambique, 15 December 2016.

106 Singauke, *The establishment of Rhodesia- Mozambique border and its socio-economic and political effects on the Mapungwana chiefdom 1891-1974*, p. 33.

between 2013 and 2019¹⁰⁷. While the second Civil War (2013-2019) was not as disruptive as the first one (1978-1992), the security situation remained precarious as RENAMO fighters controlled large parts of the Ndauspeaking Mozambican regions such as Mossurize, Machaze, Dombe and several others.¹⁰⁸ As a result, although farmers opted to do farming in Mozambique, they operated from the relatively safe border villages which, in terms of international border policy, are “neither here nor there”¹⁰⁹, and were, therefore, safe from the roving RENAMO combatants.¹¹⁰

Lastly, the villages along the no man’s land are strategically located with specific reference to participation in cross-border economic activities between the border settlements and Mozambican and Zimbabwean informal traders.¹¹¹ Revelations by cross-border farmers show that a considerable proportion of them participated in lucrative farming in which surplus produce was sold to the market. Owing to the strategic location of their settlements, their produce has a ready market, especially from Zimbabwean buyers who flock the border region in search of agricultural products. Furthermore, some of them have become so enterprising that they have mastered the art of middleman-ship where they buy agricultural commodities at low prices from Mozambican crop growers and sell them at higher prices to Zimbabwean buyers.¹¹² Such were the reasons given in support of the informal villages along the border, which became dormitory settlements for cross-border farmers. The next section looks at problems that have developed in the borderland as a result of cross-border farming.

8. OVERPOPULATION AND CONFLICT OVER LAND RESOURCES IN MOSSURIZE REGION (MOZAMBIQUE)

Informants indicated that the Ndauspeaking region in Mozambique, especially in the Mossurize district, has experienced an exponential population increase and several explanations have been proffered to account for that demographic development. A common argument given in support of the population increase was that land seekers from Zimbabwe who successfully got land

107 See: FM Chingono, *The state, violence and development, The political economy of war in Mozambique, 1975-1992* (Aldershot: Arebury, 1996).

108 Peace and Security Report, Institute for Peace and Security Studies, Addis Ababa, 2020.

109 Hlongwana and Van Eeden, “Neither here nor there. The landless Ndauspeaking who turned ‘no man’s land’ between Mozambique and Zimbabwe into a home”.

110 Interview: Author with L Mapungwana, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 4 December 2015..

111 Interview: Author with B Xavier, Mossurize district, Mozambique, 1 December 2016.

112 Interview: Author with B Mutondoro, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 5 December 2018.

in Mozambique contributed to population growth in the district.¹¹³ Traditional leaders' greed for money was cited as the underlying source of the problem as it led to unnecessary land allocation to cross-border land seekers. Here, traditional leaders capitalised on Zimbabwean Ndaus' desperation and allocated them land for a fee. They also cooperated with the land-seekers in sharecropping and, above all, allowed them to settle in Mozambique to increase the number of people under their jurisdiction.¹¹⁴ Expressing similar sentiments, Daniel Madzire argues that traditional leaders use the land as bait to attract additional subjects because their status and authority come from the population they lead.¹¹⁵ This explains the lavish allocation of land to the Ndaus from Zimbabwe.

While greed for money contributed to the selling of land to Zimbabwean Ndaus, it is important to highlight that the production and popularity of the sesame crop caused the unprecedented demand for land in Mozambique.¹¹⁶ Since the 1992 Rome Accord which was signed to end the bloody civil war in Mozambique, remarkable economic and political progress has been registered.¹¹⁷ On the political front, communist policies which had been in place since the attainment of independence from Portugal in 1975 have increasingly been abandoned. The policies had adversely affected the country's economy as international investors were reluctant to invest their money in a socialist country.¹¹⁸ Important to note is the fact that the acceptance of multi-party democracy by the Joaquim Chissano-led government in Mozambique since 1994¹¹⁹ attracted international companies to the country.¹²⁰ Here, agro companies, among others, sealed agreements with the Mozambican government to invest in agriculture.¹²¹ In addition to getting

113 Interview: Author with T Dingane, Mossurize district, Mozambique, 10 December 2016.

114 P Gonondo, *Survival strategies in Zimbabwe/Mozambique Borderland* (MA, Midlands State University, 2018), p. 37.

115 D Madzire, *Economic engagements in the borderland* (BA, Great Zimbabwe University, 2011).

116 Interview: Author with B Xavier, Mossurize district, Mozambique, 1 December 2016.

117 B Tavuyanago, "Renamo: From military confrontation to peaceful democratic engagement 1976-2009", *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 1 (3), 2011, pp. 42-51.

118 J Hlongwana, "Victims of Frelimo and Renamo brutality: The Ndaus people of Mossurize district of Mozambique, 1976-2017". In: N Marongwe and FT Duri (eds.), *Violence, peace, and everyday modes of justice and healing in post-colonial Africa* (Bemenda: Laanga, 2019).

119 J Hlongwana, "Old habits die hard: Resistencia Nacional Mozambicana (Renamo) propensity for military confrontation against its professed embracement of peaceful conflict resolution, 1976-2017," *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 12 (2), 2018, pp. 22-32.

120 Interview: Author with B Xavier, Mossurize district, Mozambique, 1 December 2016.

121 See: F Di Matteo and GC Schoneveld, "Agricultural investments in Mozambique: An analysis of investment trends, business models and social and environmental conduct", Working paper 201, *Center for International Forestry Research*, 2016.

vast expanses of land for farming, the companies and individuals from the Far East buy the sesame crop from the Ndaus farmers, offering money which has generally been warmly accepted by these farmers.¹²² As a result, Ndaus peasant farmers have shown interest in growing the sesame crop, leading to a rise in demand for land.¹²³

The sesame crop is grown for important uses which include the management of blood pressure, dermatological disease control, lowering of cholesterol, production of cooking oil and several others.¹²⁴ In addition to its lucrative market value, the crop is drought and pest tolerant and is generally not expensive to grow.¹²⁵ Also, the plant has out-competed other cash crops such as cotton because it is sold on cash-and-carry basis. This sharply contrasts with the situation which obtains in Zimbabwe where farmers are paid several months after they have delivered their produce to the market and they are paid in the "inflation-prone" local currency, the Zimbabwe dollar, which lost its value in the 2000s following Robert Mugabe's populist policies.¹²⁶ Thus, land is widely sought after by both Mozambican and Zimbabwean Ndaus farmers. Ndaus cross-border farmers in Mozambique also market their produce without facing nationality problems because they have Mozambican identity cards and passports which they obtained illegally by manipulating Ndaus cross-border ethnic ties.¹²⁷

As a result of the increasing demand for land, some Mozambican senior family members go against the traditional understanding that land is a hereditary resource which can not be sold willy-nilly. Greedy male elders unilaterally sell family land to outsiders.¹²⁸ It was revealed that the "unreasonable" elders target land belonging to widows, orphans and, in some cases, land owned by relatives who would have overstayed in South Africa for sale.¹²⁹ This has led to conflicts between family members.¹³⁰ The section which follows discusses the conflict between cross-border farmers and Mozambican residents.

122 S Borrás *et al.*, "Towards a better understanding of global land grabbing: an editorial introduction", *Journal of Peasant Studies* 38 (2), 2011, pp. 209-216.

123 Gonondo, *Survival strategies in Zimbabwe/Mozambique borderland*, p. 43.

124 MNP Nagendra *et al.*, "A review on nutritional and nutraceutical properties of sesame", *Journal of Nutrition and Food Science* 2 (2), 2012, pp. 1-6.

125 IAJK Dissanayake, *The impact of water deficit on growth and yield performance of sesame: Analysis through mathematical modelling* (PhD, Queensland University of Technology, 2017), p. v.

126 Interview: Author with P Hlaenyani, Mossuzize district, Mozambique, 6 January 2017.

127 Singauke, *The establishment of Rhodesia- Mozambique border and its socio-economic and political effects on the Mapungwana chiefdom 1891-1974*, p. 36.

128 Interview: Author with M Magwaza, Mossuzize district, Mozambique, 5 January 2017.

129 Interview: Author with P Hlaenyani, Mossuzize district, Mozambique, 6 January 2017.

130 Musayemura, "Resource utilisation in the borderland".

9. CROSS-BORDER CONFLICT BETWEEN NDAU FARMERS AND MOZAMBICAN RESIDENTS

Informants in Mozambique opined that land shortage due to population increase has caused conflicts between the local communities and the Zimbabwean cross-border farmers. They argued that the farmers from Zimbabwe have indiscriminately populated Mozambican space, including places which, since time immemorial, had been avoided by Mozambicans.¹³¹ Expressing similar sentiments, Paul Gonondo argued that Zimbabwean land seekers in Mozambique had established settlements in mountains and game parks.¹³² In addition to the haphazard settlement patterns, the presence of Zimbabwean farmers has caused environmental degradation as most of the farmers own large herds of cattle. The animal population which was estimated to exceed the carrying capacity of most of the areas has led to landscape damage and the drying of wetlands. For instance, informants pointed out that the Nyamatsanga river valley in the Sita area has dried up.¹³³ Respondents claimed that the disappearance of the wet valley has undermined the livelihoods of the local community which, among other activities, depended on banana and sugarcane plantations to produce home-made beer for sale.¹³⁴ Thus, the lucrative beer “industry” has been adversely affected as the raw materials are no longer abundantly available in the vicinity. Furthermore, while the local chiefs had made a fortune by selling land to Zimbabweans, the lives of the communities have been endangered by terrestrial and aquatic degradation owing to people and animal overpopulation.¹³⁵

Worth pursuing also was the role of envy in the development of the conflict. While in the preceding discussion, it was argued that conflict was engendered by high animal and human population densities, informants also posited that the local Ndaus were jealous of the prosperous cross-border farmers in Mozambique.¹³⁶ It is important to highlight that successful engagement in farming by farmers from Zimbabwe was a consequence of colonial and post-colonial policies that offered agricultural education to black Zimbabweans. In this regard, cross-border farmers were better schooled on the application of modern agricultural techniques as they benefitted from the scientific programme that had been rolled out to improve their farming in

131 Interview: Author with SK Mangenje, Mossurize district, Mozambique, 14 December 2016.

132 Gonondo, *Survival strategies in Zimbabwe/Mozambique borderland*, 2018, p. 40.

133 Interview: Author with SK Mangenje, Mossurize district, Mozambique, 14 December 2016.

134 Interview: Author with Dingane, Mossurize district, Mozambique, 10 December 2016 .

135 Interview: Author with D Mashaishakuvata, Mossurize district, Mozambique, 6 December 2016.

136 Interview: Author with P Hlaenyani Mossuzize district, Mozambique, 6 January 2017.

general.¹³⁷ The scheme had later been replicated countrywide. The pioneer of such an agricultural science programme was Alvord, an American missionary whose success at Mount Selinda Mission earned him recognition from the Rhodesian government.¹³⁸ Alvord's curriculum, among other courses, included crop rotation, post-harvest field management, manure and fertiliser application, soil conservation, pests and disease control measures.¹³⁹ In addition to the scientific education they had gotten from the Rhodesian government¹⁴⁰, the majority of the border settlers claimed that they had hands-on experience as they had worked for commercial white farmers for many years.¹⁴¹ It was revealed that while some Mozambicans adopted scientific farming practices, others resorted to jealousy-inspired enmity.¹⁴² While the conflict under discussion has been described as a low-level misunderstanding, it has, nonetheless, been alleged that Mozambican residents have sometimes perpetrated arson, theft, animal poisoning and crop slashing against cross-border farmers.¹⁴³

10. CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

It is important to note that cross-border farming is not haphazardly done. The majority of the families from the southern margins of the Chipinge district migrate to relatively drier regions of the Mossurize district of Mozambique.¹⁴⁴ The need to maintain large herds of cattle is the motivational reason to settle in the region because the area is sparsely populated and devoid of wet valleys that naturally harbour bovine parasites and fatal diseases.¹⁴⁵ As a result, places such as Garahwa, Chikwekwete, Chaibva and several other places in the low-lying areas have received Ndau cattle farmers from Zimbabwe.¹⁴⁶ However, the majority of crop farmers have tended to obtain land in places such as Gwenzi, Mapungwana, Makuyana, Mafusi, Zinyumbu and several others.¹⁴⁷ These regions are located in the Buzi/Musiriziwi basin,

137 NAZ, S 840/2/2/23 American Board Mission, Mt. Selinda, 1943.

138 AG Davis, "The work of E.D. Alvord in Mazowe valley", *Zambezia* xix (i), 1992, pp. 42-63.

139 See: N Ndumeya, Acquisition, ownership and use of natural resources in South East Zimbabwe, 1929-1969 (PhD, University of the Free State, 2016).

140 Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly Debates, 11 April 1951.

141 Interview: Author with F Chigodho, Mossurize district, Mozambique, 11 December 2016.

142 Gwenzi, The establishment of the Rhodesia-Mozambique border and its impacts on the Musikavanhu chiefdom (1891-1975), p. 21.

143 Interview: Author with F Chigodho, Mossurize district, Mozambique, 11 December 2016.

144 NAZ, S1057/16 Native Board Meetings 12 June 1934.

145 Interview: Author with F Chigodho, Mossurize district, Mozambique, 11 December 2016.

146 Interview: Author with B Xavier, Mossurize district, Mozambique, 1 December 2016..

147 Interview: Author with D Gwenzi, Chipinge district, Zimbabwe, 7 December 2015.

a rich agricultural region with plenty of rainfall.¹⁴⁸ Not only are the areas attractive because of arable soils and high rainfall but they are also endowed with wet valleys which permit all-year-round growing of crops.¹⁴⁹ In addition to the cultivation of cereal crops, the Ndaу farmers grow tubers such as yams, commonly known as *madhumbe/magogoya* in the Ndaу community.

While cross-border farming has ushered a moment of gainful economic activity among Ndaу men and women, who for many years had been starved of land, cross-border farmers argue that the practice is cumbersome and exploitative as Mozambican Ndaу chiefs are cashing on the landless Zimbabwean Ndaу peasants.¹⁵⁰ In addition to exploitation, the land seekers from Zimbabwe have to guard the crop against wild animals and thieves. The result is that men spend several months in Mozambique while taking care of crops and animals. As a result, some have relocated completely to Mozambique because they find it cumbersome and counter-productive to manage transnational homes and businesses.¹⁵¹ Indeed, Ndaу cross-border farmers argue that in spite of these problems, the benefits from cross-border farming outweigh the hardships. Consequently, they are grateful to the Mozambican Ndaу chiefs for giving them land.¹⁵²

11. CONCLUSION

The central aim of this article was to assess the utility of cross-border farming in the Zimbabwe/Mozambique borderland. The discussion has established that Ndaу communities residing on the Zimbabwean side of the borderland entered into labour tenancy with African Purchase Area, farmers and mission stations after their land had been expropriated by the Rhodesian government. It was argued in the paper that Ndaу tenants suffered exploitation perpetrated by the African Purchase Area farmers and missionaries ranging from working for several days for landlords to paying rent for the land they utilised on the farm. It was also shown that the plots they rented were so small that they had to look for additional land elsewhere. Consequently, a considerable population of the tenants, taking advantage of proximity to Mozambique and Ndaу tribal relations, resorted to cross-border farming to augment the yields obtained from the African Purchase Areas Farmers' owned plots and mission stations.

148 HH Bhila, *Trade and politics in a Shona Kingdom: The Manyika and their African and Portuguese neighbours 1575-1902* (Harare: Longman Zimbabwe, 1982), p. 2.

149 Interview: Author with SK Mangenje, Mossurize district, Mozambique, 14 December 2016.

150 T Mangwirow, "Contract farming in Mozambique", Paper presented at Zimbabwe Historical Association Conference, Great Zimbabwe University, Masvingo, 3-4 August, 2017.

151 Gonondo, *Survival strategies in Zimbabwe/Mozambique borderland*, 2018, p. 32.

152 Interview: Author with M Magwaza, Mossurize district, Mozambique, 5 January 2017.

The role of the Land Reform Programme in driving cross-border farming in the Zimbabwe/Mozambique borderland was assessed. It was pointed out that the disturbances which occurred in farming areas crippled Zimbabwe's economy, leading to the loss of jobs by the Ndau who, for many years, had been dependent on the white farmers for employment. As a result, several Ndau families relocated to Mozambique where land was still available. Overall, the study demonstrated that the Ndau were not passive victims of land expropriation. Rather than standing with hands akimbo and bemoaning their predicament, they have manipulated the border in order to earn a living in a harsh borderland environment.