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FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

**CHIEFS AND CONTESTATIONS OVER POWER AND TERRITORY: THE CASE OF
NJANJA OF BUHERA DISTRICT, 1950s-2016.**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Tavonga Zhanje, hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work which has never been submitted to any university. I concur that some of the work in this dissertation which is not mine is surely acknowledged to show that it is the work from other scholars in accordance to copyright law. This is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in History offered by the Midlands State University.

Tavonga Zhanje.

.....

2017June.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved family: my father Mr. E Zhanje, my mother Mrs. A Chiutsu Zhanje, my sisters Shuvai, Priscilla, Glory and Faith, my brothers Tendai and Dominic lastly to my nephew Kudakwashe.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS.

B.S.A.C	British South African Company.
D. A	District Administrator.
C.N.C	Chief Native Commissioner.
M.D.C	Movement for Democratic Change.
N.A.D.A	Native Affairs Department Annual.
N.A.Z	National Archives of Zimbabwe.
N.L.H.A	Native Land Husbandry Act.
T.T.L	Trust Tribal Land.
Z.A.N.U P.F	Zimbabwe National Union Patriotic Front.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Chieftaincy	- political institution where indigenous leaders are granted the office as either headman or chief by their clansmen following the customary succession system applicable to that particular community.
Customary law	- African traditional cultural beliefs and norms that protect the community.
Contestations	- to struggle or fight for against something.
Decadence	- marked by decay the Njanja chieftaincy.
Gambiza	- the praise name of the Njanja wives.
Genealogy	- the biologically linked particular family history showing how the different members are related to each other.
Makumbe	- paramount chief of the Njanja tribe in Buhera District.
Neshangwe	- the father of the all the Njanja chiefs in Zimbabwe.
Njanja	- a tribe with the heart (<i>moyo</i>) totem and its praise name <i>Sinyoro</i> came from Portuguese traders.
Power	- the ability to control people or thing in the Njanja community.
Sinyoro	- praise name of the Njanja patriarchy. Is a corrupted senhor, the Portuguese form of mister.
Territory	- an area of land that belongs to or controlled by government.

ABSTRACT

The study looked at chiefs and contestations over power and territory: The case of Njanja people of Buhera District, 1950-2016. The research was motivated by the keenness to find the instability of chieftaincy which was informed by contingent socio-economic and political factors. Contestation over power and territory is the prime problem. This was caused by colonial land policies which started in the 1950s such as the NLHA and the abolition of some chieftaincy that disrupt the customary law of rotational succession system. The study looked at the origins of Njanja tribe, its genealogy and expansion. It also focused on Njanja, chiefly disputes over power and territory. Again, in addition the research looked at the disputes resolution strategies in the Njanja and the effect of contestations over power and territory culturally, economically and politically. The research used various published books such as those written by Weinrich and Holleman. They talked about chiefs in the colonial state and also the book by Jocelyn Alexander which analyses unsettled disputes over land from colonial to post-colonial era in Zimbabwe. These books gave the researcher a clear background of chiefs' disputes from Rhodesia beyond community development to post-colonial era in Zimbabwe. The dissertation used primary sources such as delineation reports, NADAs from National Archives of Zimbabwe which mapped the history of the Njanja people genealogy and its rotational succession system. Of the major concern, the dissertation used qualitative technique as the methodology of the study.

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INTRODUCTION

The Traditional Leaders Act defines Chieftaincy/Chieftainship as a political institution where indigenous leaders are granted the office of either headman or chief by their clansmen following the customary succession systems applicable to that particular community. The selection of chiefs in Zimbabwe follows customary principles prescribed by the Traditional Leaders Act of 1998 and chiefs' functions are customary defined. ¹Functions and duties of chiefs are grounded in the historical past. According to the Act, traditional leaders are supposed to “*inter alia*”, promote and uphold cultural values among members of the community under their jurisdictions, particularly the preservation of extended family lives.²

Usually at the apex of the institution, there is a paramount chief (*mambo*), under him falls the headman (*madzishu/sadunhu*) with the village heads (*masabhuku*) occupying the lowest strata. This structure was established in the pre-colonial era but some chieftaincies, headmanships and village heads were an invention of the colonial administration.³

The Njanja chieftaincy was mired by vicious contest over power and territory, as the conservative rotational chieftaincy succession system erodes in the modern political context. The traditional leadership structures are enshrined and provided for in subsidiary legislation (Traditional Leadership Act) prohibiting political, nepotism, abuse of office and corruption. Howbeit, the customary, traditional leadership system has been smitten by corruption, as principals of good leadership sacrificed for personal enrichment extenuating the fundamental mission of cultural preservation and protection. The Njanja chieftainship was a warzone composed of a rulership perpetually thirst for more power and territory. Thus territorial disputes

and power struggles were the prevalent tenets prioritized by the Njanja chieftainship in the Buhera District community.

The research focused on the Njanja chieftaincy due to the fact that from 1950s during the colonial rule period up to 2016 there was rampant corruption and nepotism that eroded the succession matrix of the chieftainship system. In addition, during that period the Njanja chieftaincy was almost distorted by a virus of disunity that created tensions over power and territory among its descendants. Of the major concern, reported court cases that clog at the high court show that there is instability in the Njanja, this encouraged this research to focus on the history of the Njanja people of Buhera District. The role played by outside interference especially political parties in Buhera community triggered tensions. Moreover, there is loggerhead between the local authorities and the Njanja chiefs over land, chiefs proclaimed that they are the custodians of the land as they followed the traditional land tenure system. Last but not least, traditionally the Njanja rotational succession system was not transparent due to broken traditional records.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The vicious conflict over power and territory in the Njanja chieftaincy of Buhera District community is the prime problem in this research. Thus the chieftainship accumulated corrupt tendencies on a bid to gain power even at the expense of the rotational succession system. As the legitimacy of the houses remains unresolved, hence the research is a mechanism to unravel the legitimate and authentic successor of the chieftainship. In addition, the Njanja chieftaincy is characterized by external interferences which influenced the hereditary chieftainship system compromising the customary initiation of chiefs. The boundary issue is also encompassed as one of the pivotal causes of conflict. As chiefs' perpetually grumble over land boundaries, the ambition for the expansion intensifies; however, lack of transparent territorial demarcation projects is an infinite conflict.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research seeks to achieve many outcomes such as:

To give an account of the origins of Njanja chiefly genealogy and its expansion.

To map out the Njanja chiefs and disputes over power and territory.

To show out dispute resolution strategies among the Njanja.

To examine the effect of contestations over power and territory.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

For a clear understanding of this upcoming study, research questions were formulated so as to be used as guidelines of the research. They were as follows:

How did the Njanja chieftainship originate?

What are the causes of Njanja disputes over power and territory?

What are the dispute resolutions and strategies used to solve the Njanja conflict?

What is the effect of contestations over power and territory in the Njanja?

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Chieftainship is not a stable institution. It is informed by contingent, economic, political, and social factors. In addition chiefs are disrupting societies due to corrupt activities and partial in discharging their duties. In accordance to the Traditional Leaders Act, chiefs are obliged to be politically neutral. However, chieftainship has been an avenue for political affiliations. As traditional leaders are actively involved in political matters especially electoral issues instead of preserving cultural norms, traditional leaders have become vital mechanisms for mobilizing the electorate to veto certain political parties. The relationship between traditional leaders and politicians is the route for partiality in the modern day political context. Traditional leaders are directly affiliated to influential political officials rendering them the power to manipulate decisions to their favour. Even the distribution of resources from national government to local government has become a channel for corrupt activities as resources are equitably distributed.

The initiation of chiefs is no longer founded primarily on rotational system as the legitimacy of the houses is in question. Thus, the selection of chiefs has become a procedure riddled by qualities like wealth, political affiliations and education. The vanishing customary systems are being overshadowed by modern day democratically ideologies. Chiefs have become mere political puppets void of authority engaging in corrupt activities and serving political interest. Thus, the chieftaincy is merged with cultural and political interest struggling to preserve the eroding culture yet affirming political structures. Traditional leaders have become servants thirst for wealth, and personal enrichment instead of protecting and preserving cultural traits. Their interests are virtually conflicting, as they abusing authority invested on them by the law to fulfill their personal goals. In addition chiefs are manipulating their authority by their prerogative over resources to satisfy those dear to them.

Chiefs are ordained to oversee the distributed of values to their and to ensure their alleviation of poverty in rural areas. On the contrary, traditional authorities are partisan distributing values at the expense of the impoverished and malnourished rural populace. The thirsts for wealth and personal enrichment has created a battlefield were the priority is ultravires and contrary to the legislative functions of chiefs. The chieftaincy is corrupting principles of justice and fairness perpetually in abuse of authority as a series of allegations of corruption, rape, under age marriage, and extra-marital affairs (adultery) surface. Thus, it is just to assert that chieftaincy has become a hub of corrupt, criminal activities abusing power and projecting gross incompetence to detriment of the populace.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A notable number of academic works have been produced in the field of traditional leaders in Zimbabwe. These scholars wrote about chiefs and contestations over power and territory. In the case of Njanja various scholars work on it and give a credible history of the origins, expansion and genealogy Njanja chieftaincy of Buhera district.

Beach in his book *Zimbabwean Past* wrote about the Njanja confederacy. He postulated that they had Portuguese origins in terms of genealogy and expansion. He further explained that they settled in Wedza in Mashonaland East and then expanded to Buhera but continued with their rotating system of succession. Beach also went to talk about the name of the trader *Muroro* which was adopted from the Rozvi *moyo* totem, but his praise name *Sinyoro* was said to have been derived from Portuguese *Senhor*. He alluded that originally the Njanja were attracted by iron at Wedza Mountain around 1857. The Wedza iron field was well known by 1890s, the Njanja had developed a considerable iron industry and trade of hoes. Beach interpreted the genealogy of the beginning of the Njanja for example: Muroro-Neshangwe -sons of Neshangwe (Chivese, Makumbe and others)

He wrote about the demographic expansion of the Njanja in the 20th century that led to Hera territory being split into two by a solid mass of Njanja dynasties stretching from Save to the upper Nyazvidzi in old Buhera.⁴ However, the literature was silent when it comes to the colonial period from 1950s up to date in the history of VaNjanja in Buhera. It did not give much detail on descendants of Makumbe and its true succession; hence there is a gap in literature.

Another literature used, is the book by Weinrich called *Chiefs and Council in Rhodesia-Transition from Patriarchal to Bureaucratic Power*. This book illustrated the background of chieftaincy conflicts in the administration of African rural areas in Rhodesia from 1890 to 1969, especially the status of chiefs that have undergone major changes over the last eighty years. According to government documents and historical studies, different attitudes have been expressed by the government towards African chiefs as well as the emergence of councils. Weinrich divided history into four major periods in Rhodesia. The first 1890 to 1923 were Rhodesia was administered by the company. In that period powers of chiefs were removed, Weinrich, who further notes that the ‘effective replacement of chiefs by Native Commissioners (NCs) as local rulers and the consequent decrease in prestige and power of chiefs had its origin in the suspicion and fear which Europeans had of the leaders of two “native” uprisings in the 1890.⁵

The second period, extending from 1923 to 1953, represents the period of Internal Self-Government. The position of the chiefs was raised because of the outbreak of Second World War were individual native commissioners began to take more notice of chiefs in their districts. In 1950 the Chief Native Commissioner’s report stated for the first time that ‘some self-seeking Native agitators’ had visited African areas and that it would be advisable to increase the powers of chiefs. The year 1951 saw a complete restructure of African chieftainships. Of 323 who had registered their chieftainship in 1914, 89 were abolished, 11 were pensioned off, and 37 lost rank together. The remaining chiefs received a salary increase and were organized into provincial assemblies.⁶ This period was the time chief s started contestation of power.

The third period, extending from 1953 to 1963 was the period of federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The period proved a turning point in the position of Rhodesian chiefs. Whereas in the

past they had been rejected as leaders of rebellions or as inefficient old men, during the Federal period chiefs were wooed by both government and the African nationalists. In 1959 the chiefs sided for the first time openly with the government against nationalists, when they petitioned the government through their provincial assemblies to ban nationalist meetings in the areas.⁷ this period chiefs were used as agents of colonial administration because government had begun to rely on the support of the chiefs for a successful administration of rural areas. The fourth period is the dissolution of Federation in 1963, and continuing with UDI and it may be called the 'Post-Federal Period.' If during the Federal period African chiefs rose to power, during the post-federal they were propelled into prominence. One act after another was passed by parliament to increase their power.⁸

However, the works of Weinrich have gaps and silences. These gaps and silences are, Weinrich did not write about the position of the chiefs after 1969 up to post-colonial Zimbabwe; hence during the liberation struggle the history of chiefs' position was less written and published. In addition he did not give a historical account about how chiefs were treated after independence. Again, the works of Weinrich does not show the detrimental effects of colonial government over chiefly territory. For example, there are gaps and silences in the disruption of traditional boundaries by the NLHA and the politics of land and its disputes. It only focused on the position of chiefs and council as transition from patriarchal to bureaucratic power. Furthermore Weinrich works emphasis the return of powers of chiefs but does not give the extent of the powers as they remained in the bottom line in colonial administration.

Jocelyn Alexander in his book *'The unsettled land, State making and Politics of land in Zimbabwe 1893-2003'* she wrote about chiefs, nationalism and land knowing the colonial state. Alexander wrote about reassessing the return of powers to chiefs, land and chiefs where there

was NLHA and chiefs on the National Council all adamantly refused to consider making allocations to TTLs. The shows chiefs contested over power and territory in colonial Zimbabwe and post-colonial Zimbabwe. Again, she wrote about land and state making in the 1990s, as we have seen chiefs lobbied vociferously for recognition of their authority over land in the 1980s and they were promised concessions at time of the 1990 elections.⁹ In a speech to chiefs in 1992, the president stressed the importance 'African-ness'. He condemned the Communal Lands Act for excluding customary leaders from land allocation, and called for them to be granted role in the hierarchy of development institutions.

Michael Bratton in his book called '*From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe, beyond community development: The political economy of rural administration in Zimbabwe.*' Bratton gave us a literature about how chiefs in the federal period lost power and land due to establishments of councils. He confidently held that chiefs have lost claim to represent peasants because of their collective decision to join forces with settlers against Zimbabwe nationalism.¹⁰ Additionally, Bratton wrote about rural administration in pre-1962 the time state placed and heightened reliance on traditional leaders for the administration of native affairs. Chiefs were given salaries for exercising state functions.

In the case of powers of chiefs in Rhodesia the book by D.J.Murray elaborated the strength and power brought to the chiefs by the confidential government in the survey carried out in 1950, particularly the shona chiefs and headman formed part of existing policy in the department of Native Affairs, and furtherance of this the number of chiefs was being reduced from existing 320 to 178 and at the same time greater uniformity was being introduced into the size of the area under a single one chiefs control.¹¹ Murray also talk about NLHA which was launched by Native agriculture which the chiefs had no direct powers because it was removed from their powers-

that of land grading. The act undermines the position of the Native Affairs Department's principle executive agents at a time when the department was explicitly building up their power. Since, it was not immediately enforced; this remained a problem for the future.

J.F. Holleman in his book *chiefs, council and commissioner* shows some of the conflicts and problems that arise that cause chiefs and contestation over power and territory in Rhodesia. Holleman wrote about tribal wards (*Dunhu*) normally has well defined territory, usually its boundaries marked by physical features also wrote about chiefdom (Nyika) usually made up several tribal wards.¹² He mentioned the problem that some boundaries were destroyed by natural disasters and human practices hence; they caused many disputes among the chiefs.

Nicholas Govo et al in their article '*The Politics of Land in Zimbabwe's Communal and Resettlement Area*' show the impact of the Native Husbandry Act to the community and that it destroyed the traditional land tenure system. Beach in his book *Zimbabwe Before 1900* shows that chiefs were backed by the spirit mediums as and custodians of the land contested against the municipalities. '*Where are the Ancestors?*' the book by Bourdillon stated that traditional leaders were the custodians or guardians of land and land was the property of the ancestors, parceled to the people who owned it.¹³ Joseline W. Chitotombe in her article called '*Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion in Governance of Natural Resources: The case of Buhera communal areas, Zimbabwe*' shows that chiefs in Buhera contested over power and territory as the custodians of land since the colonial regime.¹⁴ She shows how traditional culture was eroded. She went on to allude that modern institutions override the authority of the traditional leaders in a bid to uphold democratic principles thereby leading to the wax and wane of traditional authority.

Christina Rautenbath in her article, “*Traditional Court as an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)*”, shows resolution strategies in case of conflicts. She wrote about customary dispute resolution as a way to solve conflict and disputes.¹⁵ Fayem Ademola Kazeem shows the role of solving disputes using the institution of elders in the community. Chaudree’s article, “*Traditions of Conflict Resolution in South Africa*” showed that traditional method is a way of solving disputes in rural communities. Okrah, Kwadwo Asafo-Agyei, in his article “*Towards Global Conflict Resolution*” shows alternatives for dispute resolution. These resolutions go hand in hand with that of the Njanja chieftainship.

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

The researcher used oral sources and primary. Oral sources is the assembly and study of historical material about families, individuals, important events or everyday lifespan using videotapes, audiotapes or manuscripts ions of planned interviews. Examples of oral sources are oral history, speeches, music interview, telephone conservations and recordings (tape records). The research used these oral sources because; they are a simple and interesting way of achieving knowledge. The researcher gathered information on how chiefs in the Njanja contested over power and territory by asking the people.

Oral history allowed gathering of different kind of information. The researcher used this because there is a lot of learning about hopes, feelings, aspirations, disappointments, family histories and personal experience of the people.

Another advantage of oral history is that it allowed the researcher to learn about the perspectives of the individuals who might not otherwise appear in the historical record. In rural community for example, are many old men full of knowledge who helped the research through informal education.

Oral history also provided historical actors with an opportunity to tell their own words. Interviews gave them the chance to participate in the creation of historical telling of their lives. Oral history provides a rich prospect for human interaction. Researchers and interviews come together in safeguarding about a common shared interest with all human interaction. There are few disadvantages of using oral sources, for instances one may gather biased information. A

researcher cannot be sure that the gathered data is correct and also sometimes the data is not precise.

Oral tradition is information passed down through the generations by the word of mouth that is not written down. These include historical and cultural traditions, literature and law. Again it is information, memories and knowledge held in common by a group of people, over many generations and it is not the same as testimony or oral history. The research used oral tradition which is broadcasted through speech or song and it may include folktales, chants, prose and verses. In this way, it is possible for a society to transmit oral history, oral law and other knowledge across generations without a writing system or a parallel to a writing system.

The primary sources the research used were newspapers, articles, NADA index, delineation reports and other archival sources that provides history about chieftaincy of Njanja in terms of origins, family tree, boundaries and legitimacy as well as successions.

The research was purely grounded on qualitative technique as a research methodology to capture the views and experiences of chiefs in Buhera rural district. This allowed for impressive data cases. The research used interviews which are formal and informal. Group interviews with both men were also crucial especially at beer parties and other gatherings. The target groups were chiefs, headman, district administrators, traditional leaders' police and village heads who were interviewed. This helped with knowledge on traditional perspectives in the study of traditional leadership of the Njanja.

DISSERTATION LAYOUT/ STRUCTURE

The research is divided into four chapters excluding introduction and conclusion. Emphasis was put on exploring the various traditional and modern concept of history of the Njanja chieftainship and their contestations over power and territory.

Chapter one: Mapping the Njanja chiefly genealogy: A history

The first chapter dealt with the origins of the Njanja chieftaincy from south of Wedza to Buhera. In the origin the research looked at Muroro (the half breed Portuguese) up to the descendants of Neshangwe (Gambiza 1) who include Makumbe of the house of Chikono (one of Neshangwe wife) who became the chief in Buhera District. Also, the chapter narrates how the Njanja gained power from Wedza through wealth from iron deposits up to the split of the Hera territory into two which is old Buhera. More so, the chapter talked about the Njanja legitimacy, the descendants of Makumbe who keep on the rotating system of succession thus showing the family tree.

Chapter two: Njanja chiefs and disputes over power and territory

In chapter two the research talked about the reasons why the Njanja chiefs contested over power and territory. It looked back to causes of contestations grounded from the 1950s. The influence of both colonial administrators and post-colonial rule which removed the powers of chiefs caused the contestations. Also the research talked about the restructuring of the African chieftaincy in 1951 where chiefs' power was returned due to the fact that there was rise of nationalism. Some of the chiefs who did not support white administration were removed, some because of old age and inefficiency, some because of criminals hence all these caused succession conflicts in the

future over legitimacy. In addition, the use of chiefs by colonial administrators as agents created contestations over power and territory because the statuses of chiefs were raised and they were given salaries. Cultural erosion also caused chiefs' contestations over power and territory because their traditional custom was violated by democratic principles in the Traditional Leadership Act that removed chiefs in allocation of land as custodians to the council administration.

Chapter three: Disputes resolution strategies among the Njanja

In chapter three the research talked about dispute resolution strategies in the conflicting Njanja chieftainship over land and territory. It brought to light methods like arbitration, mediation, reconciliation, adjudication and other types of resolutions.

Chapter four: Effects of contestations over power and territory.

The fourth chapter looked at the impact of the contestations of Njanja chiefs over power and territory. Political, economic and social effects born out of competition among chiefs were brought to light. Lack of unity amongst houses, preservation of cultural heritage, scarcity of resources and the introduction of tough laws are some of the effects that was caused by contestations.

END NOTES

1. Traditional Leaders Act, Government Printers, Harare, 1998, p. 364.
2. I bid p.364.
3. I bid p.364.
4. D.N. Beach, *The Zimbabwean Past*, 1973, p74.
5. A.K.W. Weinrich, *Chiefs and Council in Rhodesia-Transition from Patriarchial to Bureaucratic Power*, Heinman, London, 1971, p.13.
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9. J. Alexander, *The unsettled land. State making and Politics of land in Zimbabwe 1893-2003*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2003, p.83-85.
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13. M. F.C. Bourdillon, *Where are the ancestors? Changing Culture in Zimbabwe*, University of Zimbabwe publications, Harare, 1979.
14. J.W.Chitotombe, Politics of inclusion and exclusion in governance of natural resources: The case of Buhera communal areas, Zimbabwe, *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance Volume 3.no, 3.Quarter iv 2012 ISSN: 0976-1195*.
15. C. Rautenbath, *Traditional Court as an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) - Mechanisms in South Africa*, SSRN, 290.

CHAPTER ONE

MAPPING THE NJANJA CHIEFLY GENEALOGY: A HISTORY

1. Introduction

This chapter highlighted the origins of the Njanja, how they got their chieftaincy and their expansion of power up to the Hera territory of Buhera. It also gave the history and the genealogy of Njanja including the descendants of Chief Makumbe of Buhera. It is of paramount importance to mention its rotational system because this is the source of conflicts in the succession system “The house system.”

1.1 The Njanja origin.

The Njanja are best known to the rest of the Shona for their alleged ‘Portuguese’ origin. There might be some truth in this, but in fact the most remarkable thing about them is their political structure. Anthropologists wrote of a ‘rotating house’ system of succession to ruling titles among the Shona, but it is practically impossible to find one that existed in practice. The Njanja are the main exception, and documents show that it really happened, at least around 1900.¹ A history of the VaNjanja compiled and collected from Official Records and Field Research shows that many generations ago, a man called Nemato who came from Basutoland settled at Bvumbura, a hill in Lancashire native purchase area. His son, Chirwa, set himself up as chief of the surrounding area, including the following regions: Rambamuru (Nharira), Magangara (an area south of Kwenda store St. Paul’s school), and Ziwhito (Lancashire south of the Nyazvidzi river). The Chirwa families were of Shiri tribe.²

The VaHera arrived on the scene about this time under the leadership of Masarirambi, also known as Mbiru. They settled in Chirwa's country and become related by marriage. Chirwa married Mungu, a daughter of Mbiru, who produced Mashawashe (some scholars like Davies in his article 'Odds and Ends' says the daughter of Chirwa was caused Chisamukadzi instead of Mashawashe).³ Some years later a band of six traders arrived from Sena (Portuguese East Africa) under the leadership of Kuveya, trading muzzle-loader, cloth, beads and bracelets, for gold and ivory. While at Chirwa's village one of the party traders fell so ill that his companions left him behind whilst they proceeded with their journey. Fortunately they left him an ample supply of goods to pay his way. It is not known whether this person was Portuguese, half-caste, or an African servant of Kuveya. His name is said to have been Muroro, a nickname given to him because he was unable to speak the local dialect and used "ro ro" in trying to make him understood.⁴

Also about this time, a group of Varozwi had arrived from the south under the leadership of Gwangwava, who is claimed to have been son of the mambo. They settled in Chirwa's territory, along the Mwerihari River in what is known as Nharira tribal trust land. The sick man Muroro, was instructed by Chirwa, a member of Rozvi tribe, then the overlords of this country to take care of the man until he was well. The task of nursing the stranger fell to Mashawashe, the daughter of Chirwa on the instructions from the passing official of the Rozvi Mambo.⁵ During his convalescence he took a fancy to Mashawashe and one day seduced her while the other members of the kraal were away at a *nhimbe* party. When Muroro was careless enough to make his nurse pregnant, his life was in jeopardy for a while because Chirwa intended on killing Muroro for his misbehaviour, but he was restrained by the Rozvi and Hera tribes, who advised Chirwa to demand payment instead. Thus, Muroro paid damages and later bride wealth, out of

his trade goods. The product of their union was Neshangwe.⁶ It was this union that the Njanja sprang. According to Beach, the trader Muroro adopted the Rozvi *Moyo* totem, but his praise, name *Sinyoro* was said to have been derived from the Portuguese Sena (*Senhor*).⁷

1.2 Chieftaincy and the expansion of Njanja

There is a lot of debate about the origins of Njanja people because the history was treated as skepticism, and talk in terms of parties of Njanja coming from Portuguese East Africa and settling because they realized the potentiality of the Wedza iron deposits.⁸ It is not clear whether the Njanja originated from this one common ancestor or from a rather larger party of immigrants. It is clear that iron cannot have been the original objective because the first Njanja settlement was unquestionably Nharira, well to the south of Wedza. However, before the century was out, the Njanja were already a considerable power, not only exploiting the iron successfully, but also creating a new dynasty. Muroro's great grandson, Neshangwe, was recognized by the Rozvi Mambo as chief.⁹

There are several reasons why Neshangwe became a chief, one being that Chirwa was extremely independent and refused to recognize the mambo as overlord. In consequence his people were dispersed and Neshangwe was recognized as chief instead.¹⁰ Another reason is that Chirwa had been in a habit of taking Neshangwe with him to the Rozvi court, and in consequence Neshangwe was better known there than Chirwa's own sons, so on Chirwa's death Neshangwe was recognized.¹¹ A third and more likely possibility is that through a combination of smelting skills and his own fecundity, Neshangwe had in terms of wealth become a power to be reckoned with.¹²

On his appointment as chief, Neshangwe feared for his safety and he appealed to the Rozvi for advice. They agreed to detain the sons of Chirwa so as to give Neshangwe time to reach home. He was also advised on some medicine to use against the Chirwas. When the Chirwa party returned they found their followers suffering some form of illness presumably dysentery, from which many died. The Chirwas, then apparently thoroughly disgusted and downcast, left the district in a direction of Shabani, leaving Neshangwe and his followers to their own devices. Odd members of the Chirwa tribe can be found scattered throughout Charter district and some in Buhera.¹³

There was some mystery over the name Gambiza, whether it was a Chidau of Chirwa, or if Chirwa was of the house of Gambiza, or whether Gambiza was the father or grandmother of Chirwa? However, Neshangwe became Chief Gambiza, who was termed the first in this research, for lack of earlier knowledge. As postulated by Beach, Neshangwe took the *Mutupo Moyo* from the Rozvi, and he used Sinyoro as his chidau, which presumably is a corruption of *senhor*, the Portuguese form of “mister”.¹⁴ The Njanja men are addressed as Sinyoro while their wives are addressed as Gambiza. One informer explained that as the Njanja (sons of Muroro) had no real totem, the women were referred to as the wives of Gambiza, which became their password. The tribe identified themselves as the VaNjanja, meaning: from the sea or the great lakes. It is thought that “is a corruption of “Nyanja” that has the above meaning.¹⁵

Neshangwe then became Chief Gambiza the first; he was succeeded by nine members of his lineage, eventually ending with Mugwenhi (son of Makumbe), who died as the tenth Gambiza and the last ever to hold the hereditary name of Gambiza. He was also the first and last chief Gambiza to be appointed by the administration. Gambiza 1 (Neshangwe) married many wives. According to Beach, Neshangwe had nine wives and many sons and they supplied with basis of

power.¹⁶The names of senior wives that came down are Chinanga, Chikono, Charwe, Donde and Marudya. Each wife's children and their descendants have formed separate house. Their law of succession was from one house to the other house. Gambiza chiefs were selected from houses of Chikono, Charwe and Donde with the exception of Zinyemba whose mother was not known, Zinyemba could have been a brother of Neshangwe.¹⁷Gambiza was like a paramount chief of the Njanja; this seat alternated between the main houses mentioned above. Gambiza had his sub-chiefs or *vachinda*, and it is believed that whoever held the position of Gambiza passed it on to his descendants on his death, a minor chieftainship subservient to the paramount.

It has been suggested that the Njanja were originally attracted to the iron of Hwedza Mountain, certainly by 1857 the Wedza iron field was well known and by 1890s the Njanja had developed a considerable iron industry and trade of hoes.¹⁸ According to Mackenzie the scale of operation was not through success in warfare but by remarkable entrepreneurship. Their economies of scale were achieved because they succeeded in overcoming the labour problem in a highly labour intensive industry and because they alone succeeded in establishing the industry on a supra-village level. Distance from Wedza itself was not an insuperable problem, though they did succeed, they were getting closer to the mountain. The ore which was mined from two mines, Gandamasunga and Chipangure was transported to Njanja country in large panniers on the backs of oxen. The ore was smelted in a furnace in a constant supply of charcoal.¹⁹Young men from neighbouring peoples like the Hera, the Mbire, the Rozvi and Shiri were encouraged to join Njanja to apprentice them as well as to learn the iron skills.

It was clear that the leading Njanja smelters were minor chiefs with considerable followings from men like Kwenda, Ranga, Tambaoga, Chivese, Svinurai, Mutengwa, Nemachena and Masendeke. The great expansion of these subchiefs seem to have come under the Njanja Chief

Nzuwa who was the chief in the early nineteenth century.²⁰ The entire Njanja genealogy of the nineteenth century was centred on Neshangwe. According to Beach, only some of Neshangwe's wives and sons were of political importance. The Njanja of today group themselves into houses descended from Neshangwe wives and this linked to their territorial expansion and the succession of Gambiza title. Chikono bore two sons of importance, Chivese and Makumbe who came to dominate south of the Njanja country. When Neshangwe died in the early nineteenth century, Chivese became the next Gambiza and consolidated his hold on the core of Bvumbura. His dynasty or house dominated most of the land south of Mwerihari River. His sons continued the Chivese title after his death but one of the youngest named Gunguwo, set out his own and settled rather to the south west, around the upper Nyazvidzi.²¹

Chivese's full brother Makumbe moved to the south-east, towards the heart of old Buhera. When he got to Dzarova River, his house ran into Nerutanga's Dziva people. Although Nerutanga obtained help from Gutu he was defeated and forced to let Makumbe settle on the Buhera side of the river.²² The Hera of Nyashanu were already regrouped around Marabada hills by this time²³ and there are no traditions of serious conflict between the Hera and the Njanja. Makumbe's people even occupied the land of Hera capital at Gombe Mountain and they were this far to the south-east at the time of the Ndebele raids of 1860s.²⁴

Beach argued that the Njanja and their Gambiza rulers were comparatively well known when the BSA Company arrived in 1890. Far less was known of the junior titles until the questions of tax collection and law enforcement arose. It then appeared that the Gambiza was genuinely unable to control even his own immediate followers, far less his junior rulers. Thus in 1892 Gambiza Svinurayi claimed to be unable to stop his son, Magaya, from raiding in the upper Save valley. In 1895 the Gambiza title went back to Chikono house of Makumbe's son, Ngwena/Mugwenhi.

The latter claimed to have control over his brother Marume who flogged some African messengers of the NC instead of paying them tax.²⁵ The weakness of the Gambiza confederacy was caused by the 1896 uprising because Chivese, Gunguwo, Kwenda and Ranga acted independently and there were nothing traced in terms of records and traditions. The Gambiza power did not perish overnight. As late as 1904, Gambiza Mugwenhi was credited for being able to influence all but Magaya and Kwenda who were against the increase of hut tax.

The effective independence of the rulers junior to the Gambiza marked the weakness of the Njanja confederacy in the 1890s because in the Chikono house for instance, both Chivese and Makumbe dynasties had risen to independent dynasties. In the twentieth century there was shortage of land in the Njanja due to many of the Mutekedza Hera and others who moved to their land. Some of the dynasties were given chieftainships by NC Taylor in the 1890s, some lasted, some were downgraded to headmanships and some were vanished. Chivese, Makumbe and Munyimi survived as chiefs, though the latter was renamed under the old title of Neshangwe. Kwenda and Makoroverwa became headmen, Ranga was reduced to a headman and Gunguwo's dynasty vanished after the land was taken by farmers. The Gwekwere dynasty was revived in 1919 but it was abolished in 1952.²⁶

1.3 The Vanjanja and the Makumbe Chieftainship of Buhera

The Vanjanja in Buhera are divided into two distinct groups: the Makumbe group alleged to have belonged to the house of Chikono; and the Chitsunge group, who belong to Donde. There has always been a lot of rivalry between the five main houses of Gambiza and it is significant to note the animosity that was between the Makumbe and Chitsunge factions. Chitsunge was placed,

subservient to Makumbe in 1951, and this has not improved relations.²⁷ This was because of the restructuring of chiefs by the C.N.C.

The fall of Gambiza title and the weakness of the Njanja confederacy marked the rise of Makumbe as an independent dynasty. The Makumbe chieftainship was successful due to the fact that it was helped by NC Taylor in the 1890s and it lasted. He moved from the Njanja area to the south-east towards the heart of Old Buhera. At Dzarova River his house ran into Nerutanga's Dziva people, he defeated Nerutanga and settled on the side of the river. The Makumbe people occupied the land around the old Hera capital of Gombe Mountain. This made the Hera territory split into two by a solid mass Njanja stretching from Save to upper Nyazvidzi. Delineation reports show that Makumbe moved from his father's home at Bvumbura (situated in Lancashire African Purchase Area) to Jecha where he died. His sons, much troubled by the Amandebele took sanctuary in the hills around Gombe and lived there for many years. Makumbe is alleged to have had 14 wives and many sons from those 14 houses. These houses were Mugwenhi, Ngombeyarara, Mudzamire, Chapwanya, Maburutse, Garamwera, Mbundire, Chatindo, Ngundu, Zenda, Marume, Munyira, Diki, and Ruzengure. As long as peaceful conditions reigned, the stronger houses ventured forth to establish their own *matunhu*.²⁸

A typical organogram of Njanja genealogy of Buhera District

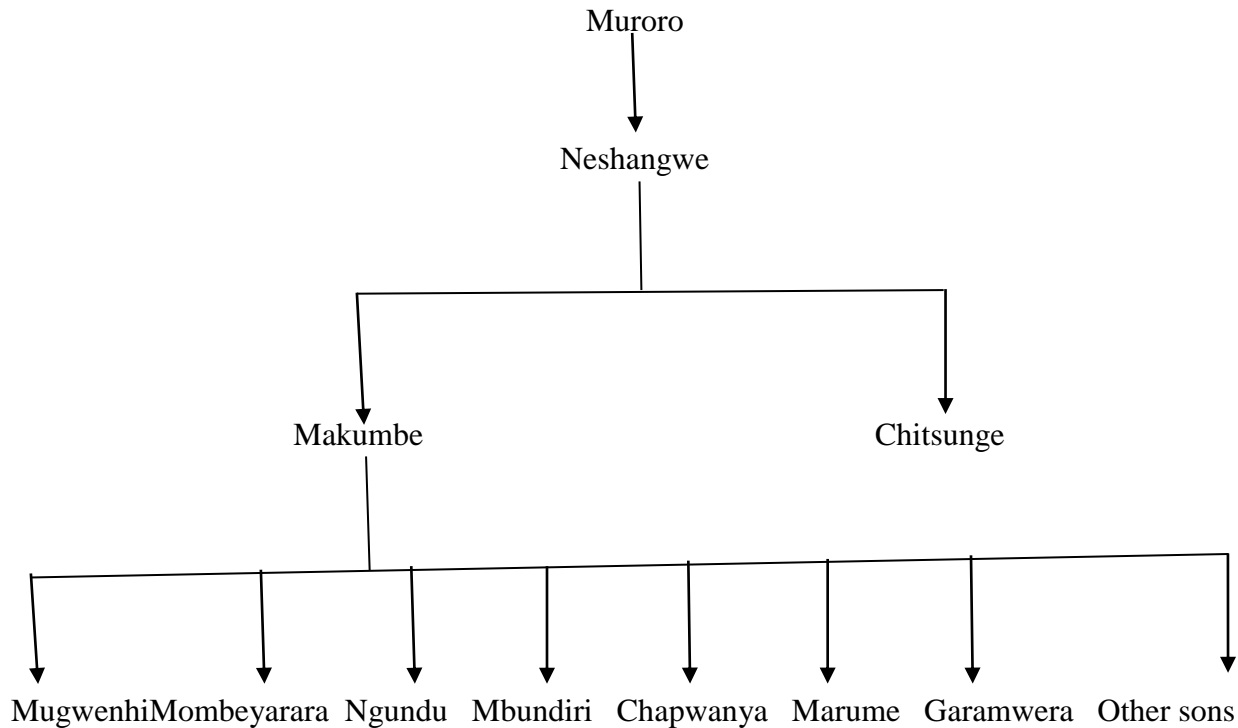


Fig 1: shows genealogy of the Njanja of Buhera District.

According to deliniation reports, Marume, Munyira, Chatindo, Mugwenhi and Ngombeyarara crossed the Mwerihari River to settle between the latter and Murove River. Mugwenhi occupied the northern portion as well as a portion between the river and Gombe Mountain. Matsweru and Diki left home and settled around Benji hill. Chatindo and Garamwera then went to settle near Mharabwe; Marume settled at Jerehanga hills. Garamwera and Chatindo were feuding so Marume the senior separated them by placing Garamwera on the western side of Dandavare range hills. Munyira and his brother then moved down to Chishayamavhudzi on Nzombe River. Mutasa was with Diki and settled under him as his nephew. Tsodzo and Makuvise settled on the western side of Chidzikisa River. Nerutanga bounds with Goramwera at Chidzikisa River. When the Njanja arrived; the Dzarova River was recognized as the boundary between them and the

Vahera. The Njanja crossed the river and the two tribes fought. Nerutanga of the Hera gave Gutu a daughter in return for assistance to fight the Njanja. Nerutanga was defeated, so he offered a daughter to the Njanja in return for settling rights. They were given Tsoma area.²⁹

Maburutse came from Range during Mr. Posselt's time and they were given the area of Dangarehwayi with Nenobvu as their recognized chief (recognized by Government). Their boundaries were agreed upon but they had to be contracted during NLHA implementation to allow some Nerutanga kraals to receive land. Their chieftainship was reduced in 1951. Chief Fish also entered the district in 1928 under orders of the administration and settled in his present area. Chapwanya first lived near Daramombe mission, on Lancashire estate. When he had to move, he settled near Matsweru who was finally placed between Garamwera and Mudzamiri. Hwata was living with Mugwenhi but he had to flee when he was suspected of killing Gambiza Mugwenhi. Hwata was given a small *Dunhu* by Matsweru and Diki. Some of Hwata's people had to move during NLHA implementation, so they lost their *Dunhu*.³⁰

Chief Makumbe had no true *Dunhu* of his own. He considered his *dunhu* to be the area of all his unrecognized headman and *masadunhu*. The chieftainship was bounded by external boundaries such that to the north, Makumbe bounds with the Charter district on the recognized tribal trust land boundary; to the east it bounds with Rusape on the Save River; to the west with Gutu district on the Nyazvidzi River; to the south with chief Nyashanu and headman Chingombe. The chieftainship's geographical area starts on the Sabi River, up the Honde River to its confluence with Matiraya, up the latter into Murove, up the Chikukurume, over its crest into the Mavhaire River, down the latter to the Mwerihari, up the later to the confluence of Dzarova, then from that point it goes in a straight line to Chishiri hill. It then follows the road to Marenga business centre,

then straight to Chirambadota rock. It then goes down the Zwipanga River to the confluence of the Mutoti vlei, up the latter to Depfuri vlei south of these hills and into the Nyazvidzi river.³¹

The Makumbe internal boundaries between the headman and *Masadunhu* are: Chitsunge –the Murove River which is the boundary between Chitsunge, Mugwenhi and Ngombeyarara. Mugwenhi and Ngombeyarara are bounded by Mwerihari River at Machiwa to Chivavarira hill, Ruwunze hill, then to Chikwidibire hill and down the Chemakute stream to Murove. Ngombeyarara bounds with Neshava on the Chikukurume and Mavhaire streams. The Mwerihari is the boundary between him and Matsweru/Zenda communities. Mudzamire bounds with Mbundiri on the Nyamatsanga which flows into the Mwerihari River, and with Chapwanya on a tributary rising at the farmer training center flowing into Nyamatsanga, from the training centre in the opposite direction it goes on a straight line to a beacon south of Mara hill on the Lancashire fence.

Chapwanya bounds with Garamwera on the Nyamatsanga to its source near Mapanzure rock, cross the main road (Chivhu-Murambinda high way) and down an unnamed vlei into Chidzikisa. He bounds with Nyerutanga on the Mapanzure vlei which flows into Chidzikisa, from the source of the vlei crossing the road to the tribal trust land boundary fence. Maburutse bounds with Nyerutanga on a line from the source of the Mapanzure vlei down the road to Maburutse business centre, then into the source of the Mutorahuku and down to the Nyazvidzi. Nyerutanga bounds with Garamwera and Marume on the Chidzikisa River.

Garamwera bounds with Mbundiri on Nyamatsanga tributary then Chishenje up to the mission road to Chizodza hill and then into tributary of Chiriga. Chiriga is the boundary between them and Chatindo as far as the Garamwera business centre, from where they bound with chief Fish.

(Gwebu report)³². They bound with Marume on a stream which rises south-west of Chishumba hill and flows into the Chidzikisa. Mbundire bounds with Chatindo on the Chiriga river. To the east, Chatindo boundary is Mwerihari River. They bound with Zenda on the Nyamangura, up the latter to Mitimikuru, then back to the Nyamangura at the Madenderume hills, up Nyamangura to Madadana confluence, up the latter to Chief Fish's boundary.

Ngundu bounds with Marume from Nyamatohora stream, following the southern foot of the Dandavare range to a tributary of the Nyaurungwe river, and down the latter, they bound with Zenda on the same river, that is the Nyaurungwe opposite the gum plantation then up a vlel to the plantation. Zenda bounds with Marume on a tributary of the Nyaurungwe, up to Mapodzi hill, then to Rambamukonzo hill and then into a tributary of the Suka and down the latter. Marume bounds with Ruzengwe on the Suka, up the same to the confluence of the Kukururu, up the same road, the mission road to the source of the Baradzamwa vlel, down the latter to Dzarova River. They bound with Munyira on the upper reaches of Dzarova to the Bridge road, across this road is a vlel that leads down into Nzombe, down the latter to Nyazvidzi.

Ruzengwe bounds with the Matsweru on the Nyaurungwe River up to the road near Nyanzira School and down the Musonza. He bounds with Diki on the Maringiri vlel which flows into Dzarova, he bounds with Munyira on the upper edges of Dzarova north of Munyira school. Munyira bounds with Diki on the vlel opposite the source of the Chiremiti River, which flows into the Nyazvidzi. Musonza River which flows into Dzarova bounds Diki and Matsweru at a diptank, down the Dzarova to Benzi hill and up the Mutorahuku to the bridge road, across the road is Gambinga vlel which goes down to Chirambadota rock on Zwipanga stream. He bounds with Mutasa from a point on the bridge road (at the source of the Chinemiti) then goes along the road to Mutasa School, then to the borehole and follows a tributary into the Zwipanga River.

There is a procedure followed on the death of a chief of the Vanjanja. Sengu asserted that, the person claiming to be the *Svikiro* of the Vanjanja goes to the dying chief's house. When he observes that the chief is in fact dying, he calls the next chief to cut the girth string in order to release the spirit of the dying chief. He does so and leaves. The people of Makumbe then come and mourn the deceased. They then leave.³³

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter traced the history of the Njanja from the origin of one ancestor called Muroro. It also touched on expansion from Nharira by Neshangwe(Gambiza 1) and his descendants who discovered iron ore in Wedza up to the fall of Gambiza title due to formation of independent dynasties. Independent dynasties such Makumbe and Chivese got chieftaincy that grew bigger and conquered the Hera territory (Buhera). This chapter showed the Njanja genealogy of Buhera under Makumbe chieftaincy as well as its internal and external boundaries. The chapter also talked about how the *Svikiro* appointed a chief when another died. The Makumbe chieftaincy was characterized by disputes over power and territory due to a broken tradition whereby some headmen became chiefs.

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27. Interview with Mugwenhi (Zhanje) secretary of Chief Makumbe, 5 December 2017, 2:00-4:00pm.
28. Interview with chief Nerutanga the Dziva chief in Buhera, 21 January 2017, 10:00-12:00am.
29. Interview with assistant officer of D.A in Buhera, 9 February 2017, 12:00 am-3:00 pm.
30. Interview with Mr. R. Govha one of the respected elder of the Njanja people. February 2017.
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CHAPTER TWO

NJANJA CHIEFS AND DISPUTES OVER POWER AND TERRITORY

2. Introduction

This chapter is going to talk about the Njanja chiefs and their disputes over power and territory in the Njanja area of Buhera district. These disputes were grounded by the effects of colonialism due to indirect rule. External influence of colonial administration created tensions in chieftainship because they affected the powers of chiefs since they took their land. Cultural decadence also caused detrimental effects to traditional leadership of the Njanja leading to chiefs' contestations over power and territory because traditional leadership clashed with democratic principles. In addition, corruption caused mayhem in the Njanja chieftainship and it created disunity among the people leading to contestations. Furthermore, external influence of the government of Zimbabwe created tensions in the Njanja due to the use of chiefs as puppet leaders of political parties. Of major concern, chiefs contested over power and territory because they were the custodians of the land who needed to protect traditional customs and natural resources.

2.1 Njanja chiefs and the influence of colonial administration

Colonialism impacted traditional leadership in a negative way in Zimbabwe. It disrupted chieftainship system and its legitimacy. The traditional way of rotational succession system was devastated. Colonialism replaced chiefs with Native Commissioners. According to Weinrich, the

replacement of chiefs by native commissioners as local rulers as well as the consequent decrease in prestige and power of the local chiefs had its origin in the suspicion and fear which Europeans had of the leaders of the two native uprisings in the 1890s. The extensive powers granted to the native commissioners were intended to limit the influence of chiefs among their people and to make Africans directly dependent on European administrators.¹ In 1913 the success of this policy was recorded in the Chief Native commissioner's Report:

Chiefs complain that they no longer control their followings as they did in the past and that the young people are gradually breaking away from tribal control...the increased powers granted to Native Commissioners materially assist in breaking up these tribal methods of control, and I am glad to say results have so far proved satisfactory.²

For administration to be effective, African chiefs were asked to register with the nearest native commissioners. However, several chiefs refused to present themselves, to the extent that some local leaders who were not recognized as chiefs by their neighbours, registered as chiefs.³ 323 men registered as chiefs by 1941 and the list of their names formed the basis for the subsequent tribal administration. The period of colonial rule, therefore, was a period during which African chiefs lost their power and prestige. They were effectively replaced by European bureaucrats and ordered to serve them as constables.⁴ In the history of Njanja of Buhera, there are chiefs who lost their power and prestige. Chief Chitsunge and Hwata lost their powers and most of their territory was divided and was given to the outsiders during the tribal trust lands.⁵

The system of indirect rule created a platform that used chiefs as their puppet leaders. In a successful way, the colonial administrators increased the powers of chiefs and abolished some chieftainships in the 1950s. According to Weinrich, during the colonial period Europeans in Rhodesia were economically uncertain. Africans were regarded with suspicion and fear, their chiefs were largely ignored by the administration but the last years of the period of internal

government were influenced by propaganda for a central African Federation in the northern territories of the proposed Federation awakened nationalism aspirations in Rhodesian Africans. Weinrich further noted that in 1950 the Chief Native Commissioner's Report stated for the first time that 'some self-seeking Native agitators' had visited African areas and that it would be advisable to increase the powers of chiefs.⁶ From the onward, as nationalism spread in African areas, government policy was to fortify the position of chiefs. The year 1951 saw a complete restructure of African chieftainships. Of the 323 chiefs who registered their chieftainship in 1914, 89 were abolished, 11 were pensioned off, and 37 lost rank altogether and the remaining were given salary increase.⁷ In the case of the Njanja chieftainship in Buhera District they were affected by this scenario, the removal of some chiefs marked the rise of contestations in these periods because all the chiefs removed claimed their power. Headman Ngombeyarara for instance, is contesting chieftainship of date that he lost in 1950s and also Mugwenhi is demanding his territory which was given to Chikomba district by the Native Commissioner.⁸

The use of chiefs as agents of colonial administration for nationalism spread as well as the increase of salary caused contestation of power. Michael Bratton confidently held that 'chiefs have lost claim to represent peasants because of their collective decision to join forces with settlers against Zimbabwe nationalism.'⁹ David Lan argued, 'Chiefs had acquired the authority to receive monthly salary, to collect taxes, to wear flamboyant uniform and little else'¹⁰ In 'Shona' areas they were legitimating power to guerrillas and nationalism committees.¹¹ According to Weinrich, in 1959 the chiefs sided for the first time openly with the government against the nationalists, then they petitioned the government through their provincial assemblies to ban nationalist meetings in their areas. The reason was that peasant dissatisfaction had increased the support for African National Congress, therefore men initiated looking for new leadership rather

than to their chiefs. Nationalists reacted to this prevention which had been legitimised, by condemning government of 'stealing' the chiefs from the people.

The Chief Native Commissioner became aware of the conflicting demands made by the chiefs and reported:

The position of chiefs is a difficult and ambiguous one; the very duality of their role as representatives or custodians of traditional authority, and at the same time, as agents in some functions of Government, makes them peculiarly susceptible to criticism of the most varied quarters.¹²

In 1960 the African Congress was banned, but immediately reorganized itself as the National Democratic Party. It continued to spread in the rural areas, its followers mocked and defied chiefs as well as government officials. Tensions between chiefs and nationalists increased. This gave the rise for contestations for chieftainship because some of the chiefs were agents of imperialism. In the context of the Njanja chieftaincy Garamwera and Munyira were regarded as agents of imperialism. These chiefs were sellouts and they were corrupt as a way of staying in power because they received salary from the colonial administrators.¹³

The Njanja chieftainship faced a great challenge in terms of boundaries. Many traditional land tenure boundaries were disrupted in the 1950s due to the policies of land reforms and resettlement. Lack of clear demarcations of boundary was a result of the impact of the colonial and post-colonial state's policies on the politics of land of the 1950s that created major problems in rural communities. The colonial policies of Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 (NLHA) and the Native land tenure system impacted rural communities. Urbanization caused change in settlement pattern and human activities. Natural hazards destroyed physical boundaries of chiefdoms thus causing contestations over territory.

According to Jocelyn Alexander the NLHA was promulgated with the World Bank's support in 1951. It was 'one of the most far reaching land reform measures in Africa', without a doubt; it provoked the most violent outbreaks of rural opposition since the first Chimurenga of 1896/7.¹⁴ Michael Bratton showed that the NLHA represented perhaps the best example of the consequences of colonial approach to rural administration. It resulted not only in a worsening of the economic position of the rural poor but in further alienation support from the settler state.¹⁵ Nicholas Govo et al noted that the NLHA, of 1951 was based on the premise that production in the African Reserves would be furthered through the system of private ownership of land rather than the command or customary rights to the land that existed before. Its implementation which included dropping the size of land units and the number of cattle an individual could hold; undermined the power of chiefs' control over land (the source of power). Furthermore, various conservation measures such as contour ridging antagonized the African rural population and provided a fertile recruiting ground for nationalist movements.¹⁶

The changing of African tenure system through denationalization of land ownership failed to address the problems of overcrowding and landlessness in the rural areas. According to Moyana, NLHA was a 'leap in a wrong direction' as it was a prescription for wrong illness'; because what the Africans in rural areas needed were not contour ridges, but more land to settle African population which was ever increasing.¹⁷ By 1960, the traditional land tenure was effectively destroyed. Accordingly, landless and overcrowding in the reserves made it difficult for the traditional land tenure system to suffice. In a process, traditional leaders were reduced and powerless in land matters, subsequently eroding their legitimacy in the eyes of the people.¹⁸ Hence, in that scenario many chiefs' boundaries were destroyed due to the disruption of traditional land tenure system which led to contest for the land due to overcrowding.

In Buhera communities, chiefs are still contesting for land because the Njanja community is overcrowded due to the reinstatement of people from Charter district and Ndebele people because of the NLHA. The implementation of NLHA in Mugwenhi and Mombeyarara caused the removal of physical features that marked the boundaries. Delineation reports show the boundaries of Mombeyarara and Mugwenhi that is: Mugwenhi bounds with Mombeyarara on a line passing through Chivavarira, Rukunze and Chikwidibire. According to the delineation officer, chief Makumbe does not recognize this boundary.¹⁹ Currently, the line passing Chivavarira hills is not recognised due to implementatation done by NLHA thus causing chiefs' contestation over a territorial boundary.

Resettlement, land reform, construction of roads and building of infrastructure in colonial government and post-colonial Zimbabwe destroyed the original boundaries in the Njanja area of Buhera. Many boundaries of chiefs were destroyed because of human activities. Holleman defined territory as an area with boundaries usually marked by physical features such as rivers, streams or hills tops. He went on to say that it is a regrettable fact that, although the existence of this unit in social and political structure of the Shona tribes has vaguely been known for a long time, its vital importance was not recognized until modern social research drew attention to it and its uncertain fate under the centralization programme.²⁰ The above physical features which showed boundaries were removed by climate, agents of denudation and human activities. The change of haphazard settlement to linear settlement especially in Njanja district of Buhera made it difficult to know the boundary of the chiefdom and tribal ward. This means that chiefs were contesting for redrawing of their territory that was destroyed by government

The boundary between chief Chivese of the Chikomba District and the Njanja chieftaincy was destroyed by the NLHA. Chief Chivese took advantage of this and took some of the villages in

the Njanja such as Musumha, Chikwature, and Gonamundiro to be under Chikomba in the 1950s. The Njanja boundary map and delineation report shows that they are part of Buhera District in Njanja community. Chief Chivese refuted that saying this is the Native Commissioner map not the traditional land tenure system of pre-colonial Zimbabwe. This showed that unclear demarcation of boundaries cause chiefs' contestations over territory.²¹

The chiefdom boundary was also disrupted by urbanization. The construction of Dorowa mine in the Njanja created havoc between the boundary of chief Chimombe (Rozvi) and chief Chitsunge of the Njanja. Dorowa mine is situated along Nyazura- Murambinda road at the hills near Save River. Mining activities and urbanization in Dorowa contributed to the breaking down of a traditional boundary between the two different chiefdoms.²² The construction of Murambinda by local authorities even created tension between the chiefs because there was no clear boundary between them. Chiefs are now contesting against municipalities over the land issues because the local municipality destroyed the traditional land tenure system and replaced it with local government for development. It is historically reviewed that in the colonial period chiefs' lost their power and territory that caused many problems resulting in the destruction of chiefdom boundaries due to land policies. According to Buhera district files, there was an endemic territorial conflict in Murambinda area of Buhera during the field work of Anderson in the 1990s. The same area which has a high population density in the well watered valley of Mwerihari River was the scene of intense and violent conflict during the implementation of NLHA in 1962/3.²³

2.2 Cultural decadence

The coming of Europeans with democratic principles distorted the traditional custom of Zimbabwe. The rotational succession system of the Njanja was eroded. There is no transparency in the succession system because the tradition was broken down. Democratic principles affected the traditional leadership in a social, political and economic way. Chiefs are contesting against these because their powers were reduced. Traditional customs clash with democracy principles because chiefs were told about what to do by the legislation. Traditional Leadership Act which shows the roles and duties of a chief, a headman, a village head was prepared by the legislation not by traditional leaders. No chief was called in the drafting of the Traditional Leadership Act. Democratic principles and the increase of modernization reduced the power of chiefs so that their role in the allocation of land was limited. Most of the power was given to the District Council. Hence, the chiefs tried to contest in a bid to revive their power. Of major concern, chiefs in the Njanja are contestating over land which was taken over by municipalities.

According to Nicholas Govo et al, the source of the problem is that traditional authorities constitute a form of local government in terms of indigenous laws. With the establishment of colonialism and modern forms of government, most of what used to be the entitlements of traditional leaders were taken by the state organs. The local government, through its municipalities took over the land rights and allocation powers, creating a myriad of problems in the administration of rural communities.²⁴ He further went on to say that the overall assumption is that the contestation between traditional authority and modern governance structures is a result of the perpetuation of the colonial legacy of exploiting traditional systems for political ends. This shows that as long traditional leaders do not own land, they are likely to influence their communities not to cooperate with the local government and other developmental agencies,

making it difficult to develop rural areas.²⁵ For instance the chief in 2011 influenced people in the community not to take part in the construction of telecommunication boosters on Gombe Mountain. The reason was that they were not given authority by the chief but by municipalities.²⁶

The discourse of land, power and politics in Zimbabwe's communal areas and resettlements need to be placed in the historical context of the pre-colonial land tenure system.²⁷ Beach noted that, amongst the Shona speaking people of Zimbabwe like other African communities, ultimate political control resided in the ownership of land, which was vested in the guardian spirits (*Mhondoro*) of ancestors, who passed it to chiefs and other traditional leaders as its custodians. Political authority was wielded by a chief who was the leading member of a patrilineal that claimed descent from the spirits who sanctioned rituals. Certainly, a traditional leader could not exist without land and a tribe, and land was the major basis of economic power.²⁸ Bourdillon argued that traditional leaders were the 'custodians' or 'guardians' of land and land was the property of the ancestors, parceled to the people who owned it and a traditional leader held it in trust on behalf of people.²⁹

Custom and tradition were clear in the indigenous law that a traditional leader be in control of land as the link between the sacred (spiritual world) and the people. The striking point is that the traditional land tenure system gave land to the traditional leaders who in turn oversaw its allocation and use in a way that every household had access to this 'niche' of the political economy. Indeed, the traditional land tenure system stressed communal activity in agriculture with some of the hardest work during the year being done by the working parties (*nchimbe*) in fields of each household in succession. Grazing lands and hunting grounds were also communally owned, giving member of community a responsibility in conservation of sustainable environmental management.³⁰ In the case of the Njanja of Buhera district, chiefs no longer have

power in land allocation. All the power of land allocation was taken over by the local municipalities, the grazing community and hunting grounds were put under Environmental Management Act (EMA). Chitotombe, in his article shows politics of exclusion and exclusion in governance of natural resources. In the case of Buhera communal land, chiefs contested as custodians of land since the colonial regime they were used through direct or indirect rule. She shows how modern institution overrides chiefs' authority in a bid to uphold the thrust of democratization thereby leading to the wax and wane of traditional authority. The Rural District Council (RDC) Act of 1988 gave power to the council over land and resources.³¹ All these things undermine the role of the traditional leaders as the custodians or guardians of the land and they keep contesting over land that was taken by the state.

2.3 Contestations over natural resources

Natural resources contributed much in the contestation of chiefs over territory. These natural resources are in the form of fertile land, pastures, rivers, mountains, sacred wells and trees. In the Njanja chieftainship, chiefs were contesting for these natural resources. Some of the chiefdoms do not have better pastures, fertile land and good trees for domestic use such as building kraals or for firewood. Moreso, chiefs wanted to have power on the environment, for example chief Mombeyarara and Mugwenhi were contesting over the Chikwidibire hill which is rich in trees and also Mombeyarara claimed that about a quarter of the Mugwenhi territory which is rich in natural resource should be shared equally between them. These natural resources are found in Mukoto village, Handikori Village, Manyere village, Chisora village, Mahoko village, and Taremba village. These villages were rich in pasture; fertile soil and some of rivers are perennial rivers for instance the Murove River which flows from Chisaira

Mountains, Chikomba District and cut across the Njanja country of Buhera and separate Chief Chitsunge on left side and the other two on right side³² The catchment area of Murove is rich in agricultural production. Most part of Chief Mombeyarara's territory is bare. It has few trees and hills therefore he contests for natural resources.

Additionally, the boundary which separates Chief Mugwenhi and Chief Chivese of the Chikomba district is rich in natural resources. It is a dense forest with big trees and many pastures. It is described in Shona as (*Makombo/Gombo*) due to the fact that it is a virgin land needed for resettlement. No one is allowed to settle there because it is a traditional boundary which separates two chieftainships. Last year, the Chivese people wanted to monopolise the boundary by contesting over all the riches belonging to their ancestors. The matter was solved by the District map from Buhera district which shows a traditional boundary pegged by the Native Commissioner. The chiefs in the Njanja community of Buhera were contesting for the protection of natural resources. For example the random cutting down of trees in the community, such as sacred trees, the Muchakata which is useful for drought relief, also the Mukute tree, which protects water and the Muonde was prohibited by the chiefs.³³

Any person who violated the traditional customary law is supposed to pay a fine in form of a beast to the chief. This is done due to the fact that traditional leaders are the custodians and guardians of the land; as noted by Beach, that the ownership of the land in the Shona was vested in the guardians' spirits (*Mhondoro*) ancestors, who pass it to the chiefs and other traditional leaders as the custodians. Also, chiefs were against the people who cause siltation in the river or cause the death of aquatic life due to human activities such as cultivating near the rivers. They wanted to protect their territory. Chiefs in Buhera were also in charge of the protection of sacred mountains. The Sanzunye Mountain, Gombe Mountain, Mharabwe Mountain and Pfende are

amongst the mountains in Buhera district that are believed to accommodate the ancestral spirits of the Njanja. Chiefs were trying by all means to have power and control of these natural resources.³⁴ They keep doing this against the Municipalities who challenge their power. Mountains were greatly used by the chiefs in the promotion of cultural beliefs and its values such as rain making ceremonies and other since these are duties of the chief according to Traditional Leadership Act³⁵

Again, in every development that takes place in the community, chiefs want to be the first to be consulted. Considering the construction of telecommunication boosters for instance, chiefs claimed that the constructors must start seek permission to them as the custodians of the land rather than the local authorities under the Ministry of Local Governance. Chiefs were contesting for the control of the sacred wells in Mharabwe Mountains, caves in Gwiranenzara hills and large pools in Mwerihari Rivers such as Nhedziwa, Cheshumba, Wasara and Chikute were protected thoroughly by the chiefs.³⁶ No one is allowed to do washing in these places. These wells gave people and animals water during drought periods. There are also wild animals in this area that the chiefs prohibited people from killing for instance, hyenas, jackals, baboons and bush picks. In 2006 these animals were killed randomly but after that there was an outbreak of unknown diseases that killed many domestic animals and great famine of 2007-2008. Chiefs contested about that and said this was caused by the sadness of the ancestral spirits (*Mhondoro*) owners of the land.³⁷

Chiefs were also worried about the extraction of minerals in Dorowa, mining done by the state which does not benefit the local people in the community of the Njanja. Nothing has been done so far from its operations since the colonial rule. Chiefs were contesting for their resources which were extracted without their benefit. There are no schools that either share ownership

with Dorowa mine or which were helped by the mine. The employment of Buhera community youths is rare. Chiefs therefore challenged the state about this problem faced by the community.

2.4 External influence of the post-colonial government to Njanja Chiefs

The reinstatement of chiefs in the post-colonial era caused contestations because the chieftainship system had been disrupted and most families claimed legitimacy to the chieftainship. The ZANU-PF government that replaced the colonial regime in 1980 discredited the institution of chieftainship. It further clipped the powers of chiefs, which were already adversely reduced by the colonial government.³⁸ According to Bhebhe and Ranger, at independence, the government adopted socialist policies that excluded the role of traditional leaders.³⁹ Lazarous Nzarayebani, then MP for Mutare south cited by Ranger, said:

At independence in 1980, we did revolutionary so well, ours was change; change in administration of our public affairs and public lives...some institutions where necessary must simply be allowed to wither away. One of the institutions might be chieftainship.⁴⁰

After eight years of independence ZANU-PF government made sudden shift regarding the way they related to the institution of chieftainship. In 1999, minister of Local Government John Landa Nkomo announced in 1999 the plan to create new ward and village assemblies that would be led by chiefs and headman. Chiefs allowances were increased from Z\$2,083 to Z\$10,000 per month. Headman allowances increased from Z\$680 to Z\$5,000 per month. A top ZANU-PF official reported that the promotion of chiefs at the time was necessitated by the birth of MDC. ZANU-PF having noted the influence of the chiefs in mobilizing support for the guerrillas during the war.⁴¹

In a bid to win the favours of the chiefs, the ZANU-PF government raised their social status by giving incentives, brand new trucks, seeds, ploughs, carts and fertilizer. In return, the chiefs were supposed to be loyal to the government. Most chiefs rendered their support to the ruling party unconditionally for fear of losing their privileges. The ZANU-PF government instructed them to expel from the chiefdoms members of the opposition party that were branded as ‘British puppets’ even chiefs were stripped off this regalia, for example Chief Makuvise of Buhera was stripped his regalia for supporting MDC,⁴² Also, Mugwenhi of the Njanja chieftainship was not allowed to be the next Makumbe paramount chief in 2015 because he was suspected of supporting MDC. This caused contestations over power in the Njanja of Buhera.⁴³

The change of constitution of Zimbabwe caused chiefs’ contestations over power and territory. A report from the Newsday showed that disputes clog High Court roll. Unsolved chieftainship disputes have flooded the high court roll, as the government delays the alignment of the Traditional Leadership Act with the new constitution. Attorney Prince Machaya said that it was difficult for President Mugabe to intervene in the disputes because the Traditional Leadership Act had not yet been aligned with the new constitution. Machaya said the government had aligned 154 laws out of 126 statutes that need attention and was working towards aligning the remaining Act with the new constitution. There are a lot of chieftainship disputes that have flooded the high court, when there is a dispute, the constitution says they should be resolved by the president, but the TLA says otherwise we need to align the Traditional Leadership Act with the new constitution. The Act should be in tandem with the constitution.⁴⁴ For the flooded chieftainship in the High Court there are many cases of the Njanja such as chief Chitsunge rape case and corruption, Mombeyarara and Mugwenhi disputes over territorial boundary and Chatindo and Mbundiri over the Makumbe watch.⁴⁵

2.5 Corruption of Njanja chiefs

Chieftaincy is not a stable institution due to the fact that it has a lot of corruption. In the Njanja chieftainship there is a lot of corruption. Many chiefs take advantage of their power and become corrupt. Bribery is the order of the day in the Njanja community. Many people who committed crimes paid *chiokomuhomwe* to the chief as a way to cover their crimes. This caused contestations over power and territory. In 2010, a man called Muradzvi had a dispute with Chiborenga over a fertile field and he killed Chiborenga's cattle. Aftermath, Chiborenga reported his matter to chief Mombeyarara but nothing was solved because Murabvi paid a token of appreciation to Mombeyarara.⁴⁶ This shows that there was a lot of corruption amongst the Njanja chiefs. According to the National Standard newspaper, chief Makumbe in 2002 barred food aid from being distributed to his starving folk charging that it was coming from MDC friends but, a week later he was selling that food at Marenga Growth point. Ranganai Mbudziyadhura, Nedziwa branch chairman said "*Chief vari kuguta nokuita uori isu tichinonga nhoko dzezvironda.*"⁴⁷

Another incident was of Chatindo who bribed for chieftainship in 2015. Chatindo took advantage of the ruling party as a larger to climb the chieftainship. He was helped by a top government official to buy the chieftainship but because of records he was not successful. He ruled less than two months and was removed since he had ascended through bribery.⁴⁸ Contestations in the Njanja family caused the Chatindo corruption to be revealed. Furthermore, chief Chitsunge practiced rampant corruption in his area of Buhera District. He forced people to pay unnecessary taxes in times of government food aid. In case of a funeral, people paid a fee of 21 dollars to report the funeral as a way of showing respect to the

chief.⁴⁹This caused some of the Buhera chiefs' to contest against him. Chief Mombeyara was accused by his family members of rampant corruption as well. He took public coffers for his own use and left his community suffering. Mbuya Mukondiomi said, "*Ndakatorerwa fertilizer yandakapiwa nehurumende naIshe Mombeyarara nokuti hanzi hauna simba rekurima.*"⁵⁰

According to Makamure, from the year 1982 onwards, following the introduction of VIDCOs in the Njanja of Buhera, the period was characterized by confusions especially between VIDCOs and traditional leaders. The local councilor did not have a list of people in his ward. He explained the situation by alleging that chiefs were withholding information regarding immigrants and other households. This was linked to accusations raised against some corrupt chiefs who were selling land to immigrants. Makamure argues that in Chibuwe VIDCOs played a marginal role. It also emerged that the traditional leaders are increasingly becoming weak and losing their legitimacy due to contestations.⁵¹ In addition, Njanja chiefs in Buhera have tendencies of chasing away people in their area because they want to sell that land to someone who has money. Such corruption was practiced in chief Mombeyarara and Chitsunge's area where there are disputes over land. The owner of the land was chased away and the land was given to someone.⁵²

2.6. Conclusion

The above chapter showed the Njanja chiefs' contestations over power and territory in Buhera District. The influence of colonial administration was the bedrock of all disputes because the colonial government removed the power of chieftainship and abolished some of the existing chieftainship. The chapter also talked about cultural erosion bringing to light that the chiefs

wanted to restore their dignity of traditional custom which was disrupted in the colonial period. They wanted the return of their power that was distorted by principles of democracy and education rather than of their traditional customs. In contrary to these the government of Zimbabwe impacted the traditional leadership because political parties wanted support from chiefs and their masses whilst on the other hand chiefs were not allowed to take part on the political matters. Additionally, chiefs in Njanja were corrupt because they took advantage of their power. All in all, there are a lot of contestations in the Njanja because of the many disputes over land and territory.

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CHAPTER THREE

DISPUTES RESOLUTION STRATEGIES AMONG THE NJANJA

3. Introduction

It is known that from 1950s to 2016 there was animosity in the Njanja community of Buhera due to chiefs' contestations over power and territory. Njanja Chiefs were attacking each other all these years due to unsettled disputes. This chapter shows disputes resolution strategies in form of traditional mechanisms of dispute resolution and modern day's disputes resolution in the Njanja community. These disputes resolution strategies are mediation, adjudication, reconciliation, arbitration and negotiation. Of major concern, these disputes resolutions have been effectively used in the traditional African societies.

3.1. Traditional mechanisms of dispute resolution

The University of Peace hypothesizes conflict resolution as a variety of approaches aimed at resolving disputes through the constructive solving problems and is multilayered. Traditional leaders such as chiefs and headman are there to promote the execution of peace with their communities through the cultural holistic approach where all parties are included.¹ Hwedie and Rankopo describe traditional dispute resolution as a structured political, judicial and arbitration mechanism.² The Panel Reform International says that justice offered by traditional justice systems is based on reconciliation and rehabilitation, hence it is referred to living in close-knit communities who must rely on continued socio-economic co-operation with the

neighbours.³Gwavaranda depicts the local courts as the foundation of law and ethnics amongst the Shona. The traditional systems in Zimbabwe start from the family level, village level, headman and the chiefs courts.⁴ The head of these courts obliges as the custodians of the customary laws and practice in the conservation of culture and settlement disputes through the dialogue which is inclusive promotes social cohesion and sustainable peace either in their respective communities.⁵

According to Dodo, Traditional Courts are also judged to be by the community's door step, fair, inexpensive, a culture destined to take more lenient and fair way of dispute resolution which is preferred by communities rather than going to modern and elitist courts. This system is pinpointed and it allows partaking governance. The chiefs' policies are reviewed through general meetings.⁶The traditional institutions of justice are open and promote reconciliation between disputants. They discourage fighting, tautness and suspicion. The traditional trials are inexpensive due to the fact that there is no legal representation such as democratic principles of using lawyers and modern systems. Matavire said that the chiefs discourage people from the infringement of the law. Since there is no custodial sentence, traditional court systems help to decongest the formal courts.⁷ According to Nyota and Mapara, The *Dare* can also be created for administering reconciliation as the basis for peace restoration and harmony in the community and the relationship is at heart of customary dispute resolution.⁸This means by reconciliation relations between the conflicting parties are restored, both the perpetrators of the victims are re-integrated into community.⁹

The use of family court as an endogenous approach in Zimbabwe buttress the notion that local methods help create a balanced cultural society. According to Matavire, the family encompasses uncles and senior members of the family, these help with the advice and direct family matters

thus helping to resolve issues so that matters are dealt with within a family level to maintain the family dignity and status.¹⁰ Dodo, Nyoni and Makwerere meant that there are however cases where traditional leaders have been manipulated by some political parties to torment their subjects, depriving them of their rights to political freedom, legal aid, medication after assaults and the rights to receive foreign visitors in their homes.¹¹ |In Buhera District for example, the Njanja chiefs are being used by political parties thus letting people suffer.

3.2 Mediation in the Njanja Community

Mediation is an old method of resolution surrounded by secrecy. It involves non-coercive intervention of the mediators called third party either to decrease, to further or bring the dispute to peaceful settlement. The mediators endeavoured that peace and harmony reigned supreme in the community at whatever level of mediation. Mediators are sought from the societies of parties concerned. Elders are respected as trustworthy mediators all over Africa because it is believed that they accumulate wisdom through experience. Their duties are backed by traditions' circumstances and personalities, accordingly. These duties include pressurizing, making recommendations, giving assessments, conveying suggestion on behalf of the parties, emphasizing relevant norms and rules, envisaging the situation if agreement is not completed.

Linking this to the Njanja community of Buhera, institution of elders was used as one of the vital institutions for conflict resolution. The council of elders for instance, solved the disputes of political parties which are ZANU PF and MDC at chief Makumbe's funeral in 2012.¹² According to the Daily News 2012, ZANU PF was disgraced at chief Makumbe's burial. There was a dispute at the burial of chief Makumbe in Buhera after his family removed the names of senior

ZANU PF officials lined up to address mourners, arguing that burial was not a political affair. Amongst the people who were removed from the list of speakers were ZANU PF Manicaland provincial chairperson Mike Madiro and other party leaders. The original programme which was allegedly prepaid by ZANU PF Manicaland Province had excluded MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai who eventually became the guest of honour.¹³The Njanja mediators first sat together before announcing the matter. They solved the dispute secretly with wisdom. The chief's advisors together with the elders had a comprehensive way of dealing with the matter. Also, due to experience, they followed the Traditional Leadership Act which does not allow chief matters to be politically oriented or supportive.¹⁴Before announcing the changes, family spokesperson John Mangwiro said:

There is a word I want you to understand. We are here to bury a chief who led every creature in his area. "All the people belong to the chief and everyone who speak, do not move away from the business here." He said. "This is not a political gathering. Anyone who speaks should speak only about the chief we are burying here."¹⁵"Everyone who is going to talk should not talk about political parties. If you want trouble and you do not follow procedure, we will call the police to look up." He said.¹⁶

The police which was referred to was *Chikonzi* chiefs' police. Tsvangirai, a nephew to Makumbe Njanja family, called for peace in the country and challenged traditional leaders to emulate the late chief Makumbe whom he described as a humble man who did not hesitate to speak his mind.

He said:

In Buhera, peace is not about politicians only. It is about people because we are related," he said. "I met President Mugabe and Deputy Prime Minister (Authur Mutambara) then we said no to violence. From the leaders there is one word, lets live in peace and the chiefs have roles to engage in peace, stability and to ensure development."¹⁷

Hence, in Buhera, traditionally, chiefs stayed away from political gatherings because they knew that it caused tension, contestations that became disputes in the community. Since that time when there was mediation of political parties at chief Makumbe's funeral, another incident emerged

between Chief Mombeyarara and headman Mugwenhi and was solved by mediation in the Njanja community. There was a dispute that was unsolved over about 20 years ago. Mombeyarara was very greedy that he took part of Mugwenhi's territory. This territory includes the Chivavarira and Chikwidibire hills, the villages such Handikori, Zvavamwe, Rima, Mukoto, Chawatama, Magwenzi and Chisora as part of his Empire. As time went on, Mugwenhi retaliated and caused mayhem proclaiming his power over the territory. The tension started to escalate and was reported to Chief Makumbe who used a mediation council of traditional elders which consisted of fourteen sons of Makumbe. Mombeyarara willfully surrendered these villages and hills in an out of court settlement to Mugwenhi.¹⁸ Traditional leaders used mediation as a mechanism to solve matters.

3.3 Adjudication in the Njanja community

In a traditional cultural society adjudication refers to bringing all disputants in a conflict to a (*Dare*) meeting usually in the compound of family heads, quarter heads. According to Olaoba the dialogue was nexus with the adjudicatory process in the tradition.¹⁹ In the Njanja chieftainship the dispute between Chitsunge and Mombeyarara over boundary issues was solved through adjudication. The conflict started with the Murove River. The Murove River is a long river which separated chief Chitsunge and Mombeyarara. It is a perennial river which most people depend on in terms of agricultural activities. Mombeyarara because of his greediness demanded the right bank of the river which was fertile, which was part of Chitsunge soils and claimed it to have belonged to him. This created a loggerhead between Mombeyarara and Chitsunge. The matter was resolved at Chief Makumbe's place, where there is a *Dare*. All the 14 houses of Makumbe family were there together with the paramount chief, Chief Makumbe who was the ad

judicator of the dispute. Mombeyarara surrendered all that he had claimed as his and the matter was smoothed.²⁰

Again, Chitsunge and Mombeyarara had a loggerhead over Rambanepasi area due to abundance of natural resources. Rambanepasi area is a forest full of huge trees, animals, honey, herbs and long grass. It is no man's land because it is at the boundary. The Njanja chiefs were fighting for the land because of scarcity of resources in the community due to population increase. People started to kill wild animals such as bucks and also did random cutting down of trees. This caused chiefs contestations over resources then the case was reported to Njanja family court as a dispute. The dispute was solved by sharing the forest at equal position by the means of adjudication but the forest was protected against human activities effects. Anyone who was caught destroying the forest was supposed to pay a fine to the chief.²¹

Another case which was solved by adjudicatory was between Mugwenhi and Chatindo. They disagreed in the rotational succession system. Chief Makumbe's death sparked the conflict because the question on who the next chief Makumbe was arose. According to records from the archives of Zimbabwe, Mugwenhi was to be due to the fact that some had rotated except him. Chatindo disagreed to this because he claimed that Mugwenhi was given the Gambiza regalia before encroaching Buhera and was the last Gambiza therefore was not suitable for the Makumbe regalia. The situation was dramatic and full of controversies, all the Makumbe sons failed to tackle this due to disagreements and division amongst the Njanja. The Njanja spirit medium (Sengu) was given the matter to handle and the dispute was taken to the palace court (*Dare*). The Sengu concluded that the Njanja family must cook traditional beer and ask the owner of the community the Njanja (Mhondoro) the spirit of the Njanja to choose the perfect next Makumbe chief.²²

3.4 Reconciliation in the Njanja community

Reconciliation is used in the Njanja community. The District Administrator was called for solving the case. By definition reconciliation this was the most noteworthy aspect of skirmish resolution. It is the finale product of adjudication. After the disputants have been convinced to conclude the dispute, concord was restored. This refurbishment of peace and harmony was always fixed on the principle of give a little and get a little. This impression ramparts the idea of disagreeing parties to give concessions. At least, as features of African tradition society, conflict resolution function is experienced by an authority figure that mediators amongst conflicting parties but is empowered to make binding rulings. The dispute of Chitsunge and Mombeyarara was reconciled by the District Administrator of Buhera District. The District Administrator produced a boundary map to show territorial boundaries and the conflict was resolved.²³

Furthermore, reconciliation was happened in many occasions. The dispute between Mugwenhi and Mombeyarara in the Njanja was solved by the authority figure. Chief Makumbe and the District Administrator solved the disagreement. Territorial map was released but it was concluded that the map was manipulated so there was a need to trace some of the records. The five villages for now were given to Mugwenhi as his chieftom (dunhu). Also the struggle for the Makumbe chieftainship successor the issue was given to authority figure but the issue was kept in reserve due to clash between traditional leadership act and the new constitution. The council of chief also reconciled the case of the Njanja because the Njanja community was became the battlefield due to contestations over power and territory. All the Makumbe sons Mugwenhi, Munyira, Mombeyarara, chapwanya, Diki, Mbundiri and other were advocating for the title Makumbe but the matter was eased by the chief council of Zimbabwe.²⁴

3.5 Negotiations in the Njanja community

Negotiations are the utmost basic means of calming down differences. It is back and forth communication between the parties involved in a conflict with the aim of trying to find a solution. Negotiations, 'the secret is to complement the interest of parties concerned' thus, even when the struggle involves a number. In the Njanja community peace was negotiated. Admission of guilt for wrongs done by individuals and the entire community was a feature of negotiations. In the Njanja community the issue of preserving culture was negotiated between chiefs and the people in the community. These include rain ceremonies, *zunde ramambo*, *nhimbe* parties and *chisi chamambo*. In addition, the protection of sacred places was negotiated within the community. Mountains such as Gombe, Mharabwe were not to be entered randomly because it was regarded as sacred.²⁵

Negotiations were also done in a bid to protect sacred trees such as *muchakata*, *mukute* amongst many other trees that are meant for drought relieving and protection of water respectively. Also, the November month chief Makumbe said:

*Mwedzi wambudzi vanoti haurorwi munhu nokuti zvinoera saka takaita nhaurwa muno muBuhera hamuroorwi munhu zvinokanganisa vadzimu vedu. Saka anenge atyora mutemo anoripa mhosva yake.*²⁶

This means in Buhera negotiations are being used as a dispute resolution strategy.

3.6. Arbitration in the Njanja community

In Buhera, arbitration is used as a proposal of a disputed matter to the arbitrator for judgment. It is an out of court settlement. The arbitrator panels the whole procedure. Traditionally the Njanja

elders of Buhera were used for dispute resolution. They followed the *Mashona* customary law. Dissimilar to the formal courts, the arbiters of elders in the traditional courts are not trained judges. Considering the incident that happened in the Njanja for example, the last few years show that the council of elders solved the matter as the arbitrators. A certain villager named Chambe had cut a large Musasa tree in chief Chapwanya's community yet there were prohibitions from cutting large trees in that community. When chief Chapwanya heard that, he got angry and called his elders together with the culprit and resolved the matter as arbitrators. Chambe was given charges for committing the crime.²⁷

Again, concerning the Gombe Mountain, there is a clash between the local authorities and the chiefs due to the establishment of network boosters of telecommunication. Local authority challenged the chiefs since they own the Buhera territory. Chiefs claim that "*inyika yedu iyi*" "we are the custodians of this land." The Gombe Mountain was full of sacred things of the Njanja so the local authorities went to construct some boosters without the chief's permission. This caused a dispute between the two authorities and they had to engage an arbitrator, the minister of local government comrade Ignatius Chombo at that time. The minister gave resolved the conflict as the arbitrator but he faced challenges because there was a question about who the owner of the land was.²⁸ The land question in Zimbabwe between the council and the chief becomes unsolved because it is affected by democratic principles.

3.7 Litigation in the Njanja community

The Njanja formal court for dispute resolution can be described as litigation. It is the engagement of judges and justice system to resolve lawful controversies. Litigation can be used to coerce an

opposing party to come up with a solution. In Buhera District many conflicts between chiefs are reported to courts. Chief Chitsunge's rape case was reported to high court and was stripped off his regalia after judgment. Chitsunge was given an underage girl by the girl's parents as a way of *Kuzvarira* to relieve poverty. He was reported to the high court by his neighbours for abusing that girl even though there was an agreement. There was also the case of chief Mombeyarara who committed adultery with another man's wife. Mombeyarara was caught red handed committing adultery with the woman.²⁹Conflicts over territories between many Buhera chiefs of the Njanja community were reported to courts. Most of the disputes were not solved because the president failed to solve these due to the fact that the traditional leadership laws clashes with the new constitution of Zimbabwe.

3.8.Conclusion

Traditionally, the Njanja chieftaincy tried to solve the disputes in many ways which are traditional mechanisms. These are the use of customary courts (*Dare*), use of elders and the chiefs. They also use District Administrators for conflict resolution. They use strategies such as mediation, adjudication, negotiation, arbitration and modern forms such as litigation which is the use of formal courts. It is argued that peace and harmony are the principles of stability in the society. Nevertheless, corruption, crimes and cultural distortion affect the community negatively.

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21. Interview with J. Rukanda the old grandfather in the community, 14 December 2016, 8:00-9:00 am.
22. Interview with headman Mugwenhi, 5 January 2017, 9:00 am- 11:00 am.
23. Interview with Muchiriri one of the Njanja family, 12 February 2017, 2:00-3:00 pm.
24. Interview with Mugwenhi (Zhanje) secretary of Chief Makumbe, 5 December 2016, 2:00-4:00 pm.
25. Interview with sekuru chivandikwa, 2 January 2017, 9:00- 10:00 am.
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29. I bid.

CHAPTER FOUR

EFFECTS OF CONTESTATIONS OVER POWER AND TERRITORY IN NJANJA CHIEFTAINSHIP

4. Introduction

This chapter deals with the effects of contestations over power and territory in Njanja Chieftainship of Buhera District. It looks at the political impacts, economic impacts and social impacts of these contestations.

4.1 Political effects

The Njanja chieftainship faces many political effects due to contestations over power and territory. These effects are both negative and positive. The lack of transparency and broken tradition in the legitimate rotational succession system created many rivalries in the Njanja chieftainship. There are divisions in the chieftainship and there is no unity. The Makumbe family on its own is not united because there is power struggle. The death of chief Makumbe who was the paramount chief in 2010 precipitated contestations that disrupted the once united house. According to the *Svikiro*, Makumbe's 14 sons who are Mugwenhi , Ngombeyarara , Marume, Chapwanya, Matsveru, Diki, Mbundire, Garamwera, Zenda, Ruzengure, Ngundu, Hwata, Mutirwara, and Munyengwa were against Mugwenhi's succession as the chief. They refused because Mugwenhi was given the Gambiza title before encroaching in Buhera.¹ Since 2010 up to date there has been acting paramount chiefs in Njanja of Buhera District because of the contestations.

Mugwenhi is supposed to be the true successor of Makumbe because he is the only son who was never given the Makumbe watch of all the sons in the Makumbe Chieftainship rotational system. There is a lot of debate amongst Makumbe's sons on who the successor of Chief Makumbe is. In 2014 Chatindo was chosen but within three months he was removed because it was argued that he was not part of the succession of the Makumbe watch but part of the headmanship of Marume.² Additionally, Mugwenhi and Ngombeyarara need a mediator to unite them because the rivalry between them is of great intense. Ngombeyarara once claimed part of Mugwenhi's territory as his. He also took all the crime tax, funeral tax, and other taxes that were supposed to be Mugwenhi's and that marked the beginning of their hatred up to this day.

During the colonial period, Chitsunge was placed subservient to Makumbe chieftainship in 1951 and this created tension between them since then and this has not improved their relations. To this day there is animosity between the Makumbe and Chitsunge factions.³ Disunity in the Njanja of Buhera is mainly the output of chiefs' contestations over power and territory because the issue of power struggle and land dispute is the order of the day. Another negative effect is that of political affiliation. The upheaval of political parties in Zimbabwe caused some chiefs to be affiliated to a particular political party and take advantage of that to be powerful. This caused centralization of power thus causing hatred of other chiefs in the community yet Traditional Leadership Act does not allow chiefs to belonging to a certain political party. Some of the Njanja chiefs have a tendency of affiliating to certain political parties to gain momentum than the others.

There is also lack of communication between the village head and the chiefs. The village heads in the Njanja are becoming disloyal to the chiefs because they saw the existing disunity among the chiefs. They are now disrespecting their chiefs and are no longer submissive. They want to create their own hegemony in the Njanja community of Buhera District. In 2011 village head

Matienga for example, did not report the five funeral cases in his village to the chief as the owner of the land. Also, headman Makuwa refused to respect (*chisi chamambo*) because he is not of the Njanja clan.⁴ This was caused by disunity amongst the Njanja chiefs of Buhera District.

Contestations of chiefs in the Njanja districts also have positive impacts in the community. There is high level of accountability in the system of chieftainship. The Njanja chiefs can now trace the route and history of all the Njanja family and its broken tradition due to contestations. Most documents that talk about the Njanja history were read. For instance the Njanja family in Buhera District found Delineation reports and a map that shows boundary demarcations at the National Archives of Zimbabwe chiefs and headman ⁵

Moreover, the Njanja of Buhera district due to contestations of power and territory are now able to resolve territorial disputes. For example boundary dispute between Mugwenhi and Ngombeyarara was resolved. Also the boundary dispute between Mugwenhi and Chief Chivese of Chikomba was resolved. Some chiefs in the Njanja did not recognize the boundary demarcated during the colonial period by Chief Native Commissioners but they wanted the boundaries that were used by pre-colonial traditional land tenure system. Even though there are cases of fake boundary maps as well as cases of bribery, some of the boundary disputes were solved smoothly by the Buhera District Officers.

Also, there is competence and firmness of chiefs in the office. In the Njanja of Buhera district, every chief due to contestations of power is competent because of fear of being removed from power. Crimes committed by chiefs are limited; also participation in politics was prohibited to the chiefs in the Njanja. Chiefs are now accountable to the people and are not above the law. Chief Chitsunge for example, in 2010 was removed as a chief because he committed a rape

crime. Other chiefs in Njanja stood firmly against him and made arrangements for his removal from power.⁶Contestations of power teach incompetent traditional leaders in the Njanja of Buhera District to be competent and firm. The Njanja chiefs are working hard to strengthen their chieftainship. Any chief who abused his chieftainship was labeled as someone who has abused the Njanja spirit. He would have humiliated the ancestors who control the land as the guardians of the community. Politically, due to contestations every chief is aware of not abusing the Njanja watch.

4.2 Economic effect

Economically the Njanja territory of Buhera suffers due to the contestations of chiefs. Scarcity of resources is amongst the problems that the people face in the Njanja community. However, land is now controlled effectively due to contestations of chiefs who caused the application of strict rules in the management of resources. People struggle for firewood, trees for building kraals and other domestic uses because trees are prohibited to cut down. Land for building and for sedentary peasantry has become scarce due to population pressure. Mountains are being protected as reserves for domestic animals. Chiefs are now equipped with the pre-colonial traditional tenure system that protected land effectively. The Gombe and Gwiranenzara mountains are protected effectively to avoid random cutting down of trees in that area. Reserves along the Mwerihari River are not allowed to cultivate along the river because it causes siltation. Environmental Management Act (EMA) destroyed the Gardens along the Murove River by fire in 2013 as a way of protecting the prohibited areas.⁷

There is high preservation of land from dangerous method of farming, land degradation as a result of informal mining, deforestation, also, the protection of rivers and its aquatic life from dangerous methods of fishing. Chiefs are being alerted of these unsupported activities in the Njanja community. Economically, the most significant mandate is the preservation of pastures and forests that feed domestic animals, provides people with oxygen and serves as habitats for wild animals.

Chiefs are prohibited from sharing resources with other chiefs and other people from other territories are not supposed to exploit others' resources. Cattle grazing lands are managed in a way that herds of cattle are not supposed to cross chieftaincy boundaries. For example cattle from Ngombeyarara were prohibited in the Mugwenhi area because of scarcity of grazing lands. In 2015 five Lorries that were carrying firewood from chief Chitsunge to chief Mombeyarara were hijacked by chief Chitsunge's people because they do not share resources.

Another economic effect of contestations is the striving for wealth. The contestations over power and territory in the Njanja cause some of chiefs to strive for wealth instead of good leadership. They have developed a tendency of acquiring wealth through public coffers such as taxes paid in form of funeral taxes, *chisi chamambo* and fines charged on people who commit crimes. They are now concentrating on self wealth building instead of benefitting the public. Corruption has become the order of the day in the sense that bribery is at its highest stage. There is injustice in chiefs' courts because they are concerned with wealth making because they have to make a lot whilst in office. They took some of the reserve land and sell to the other people even outside Buhera to get wealth. The Chinhoro reserve area under chief Chitsunge was sold to Chipinge people for resettlement.⁸

The Njanja community due to contestations, were positively impacted because they are now able to fairly distribute resources. Food from the government is shared equally amongst the people; infrastructure building from the government such as building of toilets, boreholes and roads is done on equal basis due to the instructions of the chiefs the owners of the land. Land is distributed equally because people are aware of rural production in terms of land projects to archive better life.

4.3 Social effect.

The Njanja community is facing many social effects as a result of chiefs' contestations over power and territory. There is a lot of prestige among the chiefs in Buhera district. Their social status was raised and they are not labeled as ordinary citizens. In 2008 the government gave the chiefs farming equipment, cars and other gadgets that raised their status as chiefs. Chief Ngombeyarara became more prestigious over his people up to the extent that he left many social problems unattended to in the area such as village boundary disputes and domestic violence. Also chief Ngombeyarara instilled fear in other headman and village heads in the community because of prestige. He used his (*Zvikonzi*) traditional policeman to instill fear in the people. For example he used his policemen Chemhere to instill fear in the people under Headman Mugwenhi to be submissive to him (Ngombeyarara).⁹

Contestations also give chance to other houses in getting power in Njanja area of Buhera District. Many houses in the rotational succession system are aware of getting the Makumbe title. For instance, the Mugwenhi house had the high chance of getting the position of paramount chieftaincy because he is the first born of Makumbe but he never got the Makumbe title yet he got the Gambiza title. Also Ngundu has the high chance of getting power because he is the

Makumbe last born and the most disciplined chief in Buhera community. Also, there are other houses that are not of the Makumbe title, but of Njanja such as Chitsunge who are in a position of getting power in the Njanja of Buhera community. Before the death of Makumbe as the paramount Chief, Chitsunge was against Makumbe chieftaincy because of the 1950s rivalries between them.¹⁰ The Makumbe community needs a chief with good qualities because there is disunity among the Njanja people.

Crime and bribery in the Buhera has become rampant because people take advantage of disunity amongst their Njanja rulers. Many people ignore the rulers of the Njanja and they commit crime such as cutting down of indigenous fruit trees that relief people in drought circumstances. Another problem is that they plough down across the river that causing siltation in rivers. Also, chiefs are being bribed and are taking advantage of it as a means of getting wealth from the people. They also overcharge them for their crime. In the Njanja history such malpractices never happened but were caused by contestations over power and territory. There also some crimes committed by chiefs such as rape cases because they use their power. In 2010 chief Chitsunge raped a girl whom he had employed as his house maid. Some people in the area claim that he was given the girl by his parents as *kuzvarira* in return of food package. He was jailed for such doing thus discrediting the Njanja of Buhera.¹¹

There is less socialization among the Njanja Chiefs due to family unity disintegration. Contestations brought many rivalries that broke unity amongst the people of the Njanja. Some non Njanja chiefs took advantage of this and on the other hand are the culprits that cause mayhem in the Njanja. Chief Chimombe of the Rozvi in Buhera for example has an influence in the Njanja chieftainship.¹² All the sons of Makumbe house are not in good books due to the fact that they conflict over power and have territorial dispute among themselves. The traditional

rotational succession system was broken due to bad relations amongst the Njanja people. Some of the houses have been manipulated thus creating confusion to the extent that there is disunity.

However, there are also positive social effects on the Njanja that are being brought by chiefs' and their contestations over power and territory. Chiefs play very significant roles in preservation of *mashona* tradition that has been deteriorating. They preserve cultural heritages. According to Traditional leadership Act, traditional leaders *inter alia*, are supposed to promote and uphold cultural values among members of the community under their jurisdiction, particularly the preservation of the extended family and promotion of traditional life family.¹² In the Njanja there is promotion of cultural values such as rainmaking ceremonies, cooperatives (*zunde ramambo*; *nhimbe* party) and other cultural ceremonies. Rain making ceremonies are prepared at sacred trees such as *musasa* and *muchakata* and they brew beer so that they talk to their ancestors who deliver the message to *Musikavanhu*. In that way, they receive an amount of rainfall that sustains the growth of crops up to harvest.¹³

Chiefs are in charge of field work such as *zunde ramambo*, this field helps refugees that visit the area. The *Zunde* is also ploughed to relief poor people when there is an outbreak of drought and famine. For example in 2016 the acting chief Makumbe helped many people who were facing food challenges in Njanja community of Buhera District.¹⁴ Also many headman compete in promoting traditional cultures in the community. It is historically assumed that traditional culture was promoted before colonialism but due to colonialism there was cultural decadence that eroded traditional culture of Shona ancestors. Hence now there is revival of these cultural values by chiefs.

There is also preservation of sacred mountains, sacred wells, rivers and caves in Njanja community of Buhera District. Big mountains such as Gwiranenzara, Gombe and Marabwe are preserved because they are inhabitants of wild animals such as baboons and hyenas. Also these mountains are historically known as the shelters of the Njanja spirit mediums who give power to the chiefs in the community. Wild animals such as baboons and hyenas are not supposed to be killed because there is a Shona perception that they cause great tribulations in the community. These great tribulations are calamities such as widespread of locusts, chicken pox and drought. Sacred wells in Mharabwe are preserved because they help people with water during dry periods.¹⁵ Large Rivers such as Mwerihari and Murove have large sacred pools such as Cheshumba, Nedziwa and Wasara where people are not allowed to do washing of clothes.¹⁶

Strict customary laws are also an effect of chiefs and contestations over power and territory. There are many customary laws that were put into place by the chiefs for them to be labeled the most competent leaders in a bid to inherit the paramount chieftainship of Makumbe. One of the measures that were put in place was of protecting cultural values as alluded above. Another customary law that was enacted was that of observation of *chisi chamambo*. This is whereby people are not allowed to work in their fields on a particular weekday as a way of showing respect to the owner of the land.¹⁷ The day that was chosen was Thursday, any person found working in the field on this day is supposed to pay a fine in the form of a goat for such misbehavior. Furthermore, when there is a funeral, the chief is supposed to be called on time as the owner of the territory as a way of showing respect to him. In the Njanja community, a funeral tax of five dollars should be paid before the burial of a person.¹⁸ Customary laws are also used in solving boundary disputes and power conflicts. Chiefs follow this tradition as a way of controlling their territory.

4.4 Conclusion

The above chapter showed the effects of contestation of power and territory in the Njanja community of Buhera District. Politically, there is disunity amongst the Njanja chiefs. Disunity has been necessitated by rivalries amongst the chiefs on who is supposed to control the whole area of the Njanja community. However on a positive note, there has been boundary disputes resolution in the community. This had been necessitated by traditional rotational system. Economically, there is scarcity of the resources which led to strict preservation of land. Land had to be protected because people were destroying the environment. However, socially, there is a high rate of crime due to the prestige of chiefs. Positively, there is preservation of cultural heritage and introduction of strict customary law.

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2. Interview with headman Mugwenhi, 5 January 2017, 9:00-11:00 am.
3. Delineation Report S2929/1/1 by C.W.Collet Delineation officer, December 1965, p.111.
4. Interview with headman Mugwenhi, January, 2017, 9:00 am-11:00 am.
5. Delineation Report S2929/1/1 by C.W.Collet Delineation officer, December 1965, p.110.
6. Herald report 2010.
7. Interview with P. Choga 2017, 29 January 2017, 9:00 am-10:00 am.
8. Interview with Churu a village Head, January 22, 7:00 am-8:00 am.
9. Interview with headman Manyere, 28 December 2016, 12:00 am-1:00 pm.
10. Delineation Report S2929/1/1 by C.W.Collet Delineation officer, December 1965, p.109.
11. Herald report 2010.
12. Interview with J. Rukanda, 14 December 2016, 2:00 pm-3:00 pm.
13. Interview with headman Mugwenhi, 5 January 2017, 9:00-11:00 am.
14. I bid.
15. Interview with Muchiriri one of the Njanja family, 12 February 2017, 2:00 pm-3:00 pm.
16. Interview with Mugwenhi (Zhanje) secretary of Chief Makumbe, 5 December 2016, 2:00 pm-4:00 pm.
17. Interview with sekuru chivandikwa, 2 January 2017, 1:00 pm-2:00 pm.
18. Interview with Buhera Officers, Buhera District office, 20 April 2017, 10:00 am-11:30 am.

CONCLUSION

In summation, according to the information written in this dissertation, the conflicting Njanja chieftaincy of Buhera District is a tribe with a Portuguese origin. Its tribe came from one ancestor by the name of Muroro, who borrowed the *Moyo* totem from the Rozvi and named it *Moyo weVanjanja*. His son Neshangwe was given chieftaincy by the Rozvi *Mambo* and expanded into the Njanja Empire with his sons from south Hwedza to Buhera where his son Makumbe found the Makumbe chieftainship. The Njanja chieftainship historically used the rotational succession system before the encroachment of the whites. During colonialism, the system was distorted thus causing disputes over power and territory. From 1950s to present day, the Njanja area has become a battlefield due to contestations. Chieftaincy of the Njanja has become unstable politically, socially and economically. Moreover, the chiefs have become greedy, corrupt and oppressive.

During the colonial period some of them lost their chieftaincy due to colonial administration policy which reduced the powers of chief and replaced it with C.N.C which uses the council. The perpetuation of colonial legacy dismantled the rural community due to introduction of the NLHA and other policies. Chiefs' boundaries were destroyed creating problems which led to disputes in the Njanja area. Traditional customary laws were disrupted because the traditional culture was replaced by democratic principles. Traditional leadership act is now enacted through legislation. Again Traditional Leadership Act clashes with the new constitution thus leading to the unsolving of disputes in the Njanja. Land was given to the council instead of chiefs who are custodians of the land or guardians of the land thus making chiefs contest for their territory. The use of chiefs as puppets by the political parties in modern day Zimbabwe perpetrated disputes in the Njanja

because people were manipulated into things they did not want whilst others contested against these.

Chiefs amongst themselves are contesting for resources because of population pressure in the Buhera community. Mountains, rivers, sacred trees, sacred wells and forests are the natural resources in the Njanja community that make chiefs contest for their territory. In the Njanja Chieftainship, there are disputes after disputes which led the elders to come up with resolutions strategies to minimize tensions because of disunity. As an African culture, they came up with traditional mechanisms such as the use of customary courts (*dare*), the council of elders and the use of Njanja clan in solving these conflicting disputes. They also use methods such as negotiations, mediation, adjudication, arbitration, reconciliation and the use of courts of justice which is called litigation. Some of the disputes were solved but some are in the process of being solved.

Effects of contestations over power and territory are political, social and economic. There is disunity in the Njanja due to unsolved disputes. In addition, due to broken tradition of the Njanja some matters were not solved fairly. Also there are strict customary laws that protect the Njanja area. Corruption was minimized due to the fact that chiefs are now afraid of abusing their office. Resources are strictly controlled, used effectively and efficiently. Traditional custom practices such as rain making ceremonies, *nhimbe* parties and *zunde ramambo* field work are also practiced.

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