Things Fall Apart, The Center <u>Can</u> Hold: Processes of Post-War Political Change in Zimbabwe's Rural Areas

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Wartime political mobilization led many observers to expect a radical redistribution of land and decentralization of political power in Zimbabwe. The government rhetoric of the early 1980s seemed to confirm these expectations. Despite the advances that have been achieved, however, the reality falls far short of the rhetoric. I will argue that the roots of this discrepancy lie in the processes of political mobilization during the war and in the constraints which a negotiated independence placed on economic and political transformation. Zimbabwe's negotiated independence ensured the survival of a powerful and centralized state. Rhodesian traditions of authoritarian and technocratic planning persisted while constitutional guarantees underpinned a largely unchanged economic system. Though guerrilla mobilization in the rural areas successfully sustained the war and set in motion radical challenges to existing power structures, it failed to produce new political organizations able to resist the manipulations of powerful bureaucracies. The government was able to `demobilize' the local level political party by excluding it from policy decisions and starving it of resources. Though many party leaders were elected onto local development authorities, these were dependent on government resources and expertise. In some areas, a traditional leadership which based its authority on pre-war power structures re-emerged. Traditional leaders, though often motivated largely by their own ambitions, gained support from a constituency alienated by the government's pursuit of modernizing policies and the marginalization of the local political party.

I. Debates on War-Time Mobilization

Wartime political mobilization challenged existing structures of authority and sources of legitimacy; it played an important role

in creating the possibility of a new basis for rural politics in independent Zimbabwe. Terence Ranger, David Lan and Norma Kriger have presented conflicting interpretations of both the methods and goals of rural mobilization and the social and ideological bases of rural support for guerrillas. I will briefly review their analyses and then discuss some of the implications they have for post-independence rural politics.

Lan has argued that civilian support for guerrillas in the remote Dande area was facilitated by the guerrillas' alliance with spirit mediums.[1] Chiefs had been discredited as a result of their collaboration with the colonial state and subsequently mhondoro mediums had become the "focus of political action."[2] According to Lan, the mhondoro, or lion, spirits are those of the chiefs of the past, they are the source of the land's fertility and of rain and rule over a specific territory or `spirit province'.[3] During the war, they legitimated the authority of guerrillas by incorporating them as the new `chiefs'. Guerrillas acquired the chief's prerogative to use violence:

> dead chiefs are the source of the fertility of the territory they are believed to have conquered when alive. By their very nature mhondoro are conquerors, warriors, killers. It is through their violence that the fertility of the earth is made available for the descendants.[4]

Their relationship with mhondoro mediums "made the acceptance of the guerrillas easier, quicker, more binding and more profound by allowing this new feature in the experience of the peasantry to be assimilated to established symbolic categories."[5] In exchange for logistical support, guerrillas gave "guarantees of access to land, of an end to taxation and of restored political and economic autonomy," in short, they guaranteed a return of the land's "fertility."[6] Guerrillas and

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[1] David Lan, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe*, (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985).

[2] Lan, p. 136.

[3] Lan, pp. 31-35.

[4] Lan, p. 152.

[5] Lan, p. 165.

[6] Lan, pp. 167, 148.

spirit mediums created a unified opposition by opposing the interests of all Africans as autochthons, and thus as the rightful owners of the land, to the interests of Europeans as `strangers'.[7] Guerrillas, with the support of mediums, subsequently handed political authority over to the ZANU-PF village committees. In Lan's analysis, land is a central symbol around which the guerrillas, mediums and support committees rallied.

Terence Ranger has argued that the people of Makoni District acted on the basis of their historical consciousness of grievances, most importantly land alienation and state intervention in agricultural production.[8] He traces the history of peasant consciousness and sees its culmination in support for the guerrilla war. During the war, a revival of support for mediums (as, Ranger argues, symbols of "the fundamental right of the peasantry to the land") was fused with support for ZANU-PF, thus producing a "composite peasant/guerrilla ideology." The `peasant/guerrilla' program sought the reconstitution of the `peasant option', a goal with three main planks: the return of alienated land, an end to coercive state interference in agricultural practices, and access to agricultural services.[9] Grievances related to land alienation and state coercion were central to the successful mobilization of guerrilla support committees.

On the basis of a study in Mutoko District, Norma Kriger has challenged both of these analyses. She argues that they ignore differentiation within rural society along gender, age, wealth and lineage lines and that coercion played a more important role than ideology in mobilizing peasant support committees.[10] Far from seeing support committees as the product of a harmonious confluence of shared grievances and goals, she argues that, where possible (and especially in the case of the

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[7] Lan, p. 172.

[8] Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe*, (London: James Currey, 1985).

[9] Ranger, pp. 182-3, 197, 212-213 and passim, Chapter 5.

[10] Norma Kriger, "Struggles for Independence: Rural Conflicts in Zimbabwe's War for Liberation," (Ph.D.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1985) and "The Zimbabwean War of Liberation: Struggles within the Struggle," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 2, January 1988, pp. 304-322.

sociological category of `parents'), committees were avoided or were used by less privileged groups to challenge elders, men, ruling lineages, the better off and the better educated.[11] Kriger interprets the patterns of violence in the relationship between guerrillas and civilians as indicating local social tensions rather than as part of the over-arching nationalist struggle. She sees the program of less privileged groups as more radical than that of the guerrillas who were, as a result of the lack of liberated areas, preoccupied with their own security above all else.

Lan, Ranger and Kriger's differences result in part from contrasts among their perspectives and methodology as well as from contrasts among the districts on which they focused. Lan and Kriger both relied on interviews. Kriger is a political scientist while Lan is an anthropologist with a strong leaning to structuralist analysis. Ranger, a historian, relied largely on archival material and the testimony of local activists. The three areas vary in terms of their experience of the war (both its intensity and its longevity), their geography, their political and religious institutions, and the nature and extent of their incorporation into the colonial economy and polity.

A few examples will illustrate the implications of these differences more clearly. Dande, where Lan worked, is characterized by its isolation, poor communications and its border with Mozambique. The area is unusual for its lack of land alienation and its high rate of labor out-migration.[12] It was an early area of guerrilla penetration and, historically, the office of the chief has been relatively weak while that of the <u>mhondoro</u> mediums has been strong.[13] Lan's structuralist

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[11] Kriger, 1985, pp. 276-413.

[12] Lan, p. 149, notes these conditions but fails to pursue the implications for his analysis. For example, if, as Lan assumes, 72.3% of the men of Dande were employed away from home, what effect did this have on the support committees which must have relied heavily on women? One might also ask why the appeal to the `lost lands' was so powerful in Dande when it is an area notable for its lack of land pressure (despite evictions of people into the area) and also unusual in terms of the relatively minor state interventions into agricultural production.

[13] M.F.C. Bourdillon, *"Guns and Rain: Taking Structural Analysis Too Far?"*, *Africa*, Vol. 57, No. 2, 1987, p. 270 points out that this was the case long before the outbreak of war. He takes issue with the causal connections Lan makes between the incorporation of chiefs into the settler administration, their loss of legitimacy and the increasing political authority of mediums.

analysis relies heavily on the normative constructs of his informants, especially one particularly articulate spirit medium, and fails to take note of the evidence of frequent divergences from his ideal model, most notably with regard to the failure of guerrillas to follow the rules of conduct established by mediums.[14]

In Mutoko District, Kriger neglected the role of Methodism in creating support for Bishop Muzorewa's UANC. Towards the end of the war, a strong UANC and auxiliary presence would have contributed to the level of violence and to the ZANLA guerrillas' pre-occupation with identifying sell-outs.[15] Mutoko lacked semi-liberated areas, in contrast to those established in areas such as the remote parts of Nyanga District where David Maxwell conducted research.[16] Kriger also neglects the history of political and social struggle before the 1970s; political violence and social struggle thus appear contingent upon the arrival of guerrillas and not as part of a continuum.

Makoni District, on which Ranger based his case study, was a pre-eminent example of successful peasant production undermined by state interference and land alienation. Guerrilla mobilization based on resurrecting the `peasant option' may thus have had a particularly strong appeal. Ranger rarely addresses the question of violence directed against civilians by guerrillas or violence among civilians. His analysis treats violence more as a necessary condition of war than as an indicator of social tensions. Ranger stresses the unifying power of the cultural-nationalist appeal; his reliance on government

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[14] See Bourdillon, pp. 263-274; Masipula Sithole, "Review", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 1987, pp. 697-701; Jean Comaroff, "Reviews", *Africa*, Vol. 58, No. 2, 1988, pp. 256-257.

[15] Discussions with Terence Ranger, July 1991.

[16] Kriger refutes David Maxwell's charge that Mutoko was especially violent as a result of its accessibility to security forces. She argues that proximity to Salisbury and tarred roads were less critical than proximity to army bases in contributing to pressure from security forces. Nonetheless, the areas of Mutoko where Kriger worked do seem to have been qualitatively different in terms of pressure from security forces than those in which Maxwell worked. Discussions with Maxwell and David Maxwell, "Christianity and the War in Eastern Zimbabwe: The Case of Elim Mission," Conference on the Zimbabwean Liberation War, Harare, July 1991, p. 24; discussions with Norma Kriger, Harare, July 1991.

archives and the testimony of local activists leads to a neglect of the divisions within rural communities.

A clear periodization of the war's intensification and of changes in the strategies of the guerrilla armies is an important omission in all three works. Such a periodization might reconcile some of the differences among these interpretations. First, despite their widely divergent experiences, most regions of the country experienced a deterioration in relations between guerrillas and civilians and increase in violence in the last years of the war.[17] Ranger addresses this issue in a later article on banditry in which he argues that the guerrillas suffered a `crisis of legitimacy' in 1978 and 1979. The growing pressure on guerrillas from auxiliary forces and their own increasing numbers, younger age and inexperience led to demands which their rural supporters considered `unreasonable'. Guerrillas became a debilitating drain on rural resources: their demands extended to alcohol and access to young women and they used violence more frequently against civilians.[18]

Second, the strategies of guerrilla leaders based outside the country affected mobilization strategies. Though it is difficult to establish how influential external changes in ideology and training were on guerrilla relations with civilians inside Zimbabwe, evidence presented by Sister Janice McLaughlin suggests that spirit mediums were used most extensively in mobilization and recruitment from 1972 to 1974. Subsequently, ZIPA took an overtly hostile attitude to religion in general and to traditional religion in particular. While there was a revival in the use of spirit mediums by some guerrilla groups after the demise of ZIPA, mediums appeared less able to place social controls on guerrillas. Christian missions came to play a more important role, especially as a source of logistical support.[19]

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[17] See, for example, N. Bhebhe, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe and the War of Liberation, 1975-1980," in *Church and State in Zimbabwe*, ed. Carl Hallencreutz and Ambrose Moyo, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1988), pp. 163-194 and the accounts in Irene Staunton, ed., *Mothers of the Revolution*, (Harare: Baobab Books, 1990).

[18] Terence Ranger, "Bandits and Guerrillas: The Case of Zimbabwe," in Donald Crummey, ed., *Banditry, Rebellion and Social Protest in Africa*, (London: James Currey, 1986), espec. pp. 386-90; also see Ranger, 1985, p. 212.

[19] See Sister Janice McLaughlin, "Jesus, Marx and Mediums: Interactions of Missions, Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums," unpub., 1991 and David Moore, "The Ideological

As David Maxwell has argued, in some areas missionaries not mediums were critical in mediating between guerrillas and civilians.[20]

Thus, distinguishing between different periods of guerrilla relations with rural communities, as well as considering economic, religious and geographical factors, allows at least a partial reconciliation of the pictures painted by Lan, Ranger and Kriger. The point which I wish to stress, due to its critical implications for the postwar period, is that new administrative, political and service structures were rarely established in the course of the war.[21] Instead, as Kriger's work shows most clearly, the organized mediation between guerrillas and rural communities was usually achieved through committees constituted specifically for logistical and security purposes.[22] That is, political organization served primarily military goals and was not used by the guerrillas themselves to achieve social transformation within rural communities. While this was in part due simply to the extreme military pressure brought to bear by the Rhodesian army, it was also a product of the strategies employed by the guerrilla leadership. In his analysis of ANC/SACP strategy, Howard Barrell argues that "political mobilization remained essentially subject to imperatives of military force."[23] There are some parallels in the thinking of ZANU and ZAPU.

In regard to ZAPU, Jeremy Brickhill argues "that the debate within key ZAPU leadership structures in exile had, from the mid-seventies, increasingly posed the political objectives of the

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Formation of the Zimbabwean Ruling Class," ISAS, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1991, pp. 472-495; Ranger, 1986.

[20] Maxwell, espec. pp. 17-25 and see Martinus Daneel, "Healing the Earth: Traditional and Christian Initiatives in Southern Africa," Conference on Healing, Ecology and Religion in a Post-Apartheid South Africa, Utrecht, September, 1991, pp. 17-20 on the role of independent African churches.

[21] Dumiso Dabengwa, "ZIPRA and ZIPA in the Zimbabwean War of National Liberation," Conference on the Zimbabwean Liberation War, Harare, July 1991, pp. 28-9; Fay Chung, "Education and the Liberation Struggle," Conference on the Zimbabwean Liberation War, Harare, July 1991, p. 7.

[22] Staunton's edited collection also illustrates the point.

[23] Howard Barrell, "The Historicist Conspirator, His Detonators and Bellows: The ANC of South Africa and the Political-Military Relationship in Revolutionary Struggle," Conference on Violence in Southern Africa, Oxford, June 25-27, 1991, p. 3.

party in terms of a strategy to seize power by force."[24] The so-called Turning Point Strategy formulated in 1978 built on Jason Moyo's 1976 analysis of the struggle. Moyo argued that "the enemy" was the "British government and the colonial settler regime in Salisbury" and the goal of struggle was to create a unified front against colonialism and imperialism in order to seize state power by force.[25] Thus the primary means of struggle was military and tensions which might divide opposition to the colonial state were repressed during the war rather than designated as sites appropriate for political struggle. ZANU similarly identified the colonial state as the principal enemy and military struggle as the means of capturing the state. With the exception of the brief reign of ZIPA which did propose establishing "a formal political structure in order to give better political direction to the armed body that is now fighting inside Zimbabwe" there was little effort to put political struggle on an organizational footing independent of the military.[26]

Nonetheless, as Kriger argues, the arrival of guerrillas in Zimbabwe's rural areas did have transformational effects which reflected a political agenda held by groups within rural communities, not guerrillas or their leaders. This agenda centered on the gender, generation, class and lineage struggles which divided rural communities. It was an agenda which existed alongside -- though it sometimes also undermined -- the nationalist aim of capturing the colonial state by force.[27] Women and young people tended to play a particularly active role in the war because of the nature of the support tasks, such

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[24] Jeremy Brickhill, "A Step Further: ZAPU Military Strategy, 1976-1979," Conference on the Zimbabwean Liberation War, July 1991, pp. 1-2.

[25] Brickhill, pp. 12-13.

[26] David Moore, "The Zimbabwe People's Army: The Struggle for Unity in Ideology," Conference on the Zimbabwean Liberation War, Harare, July 1991, p. 25. I would argue that the focus on military struggle was the result of an ideology of national democratic revolution and the repeated failure of negotiations to end the war on terms the nationalist leadership would accept rather than the result of a marxist-leninist historicism as Barrell argues for the South African case. See Moore's discussion.

[27] For example, Dumiso Dabengwa argues that towards the end of the war the problems guerrillas faced in settling civil disputes was undermining their ability to operate militarily. One of the reasons ZIPRA was trying to set up liberated zones was so that a civil administration could handle these disputes separately. Comments at the Conference on the Zimbabwean Liberation War, Harare, July 1991.

as cooking food and carrying messages, and because they tended to invoke less suspicion from government security forces.[28] The position which young people and women thus gained allowed them to challenge existing structures of power, setting in motion potentially radicalizing processes. However, these processes were contingent on the exigencies of war and were difficult to sustain subsequently. Once the war ended, the need for support committees fell away. Backed by a strong pressure for a return to `normality' after the trauma of war, traditional leaders -- and male elders in general -- reasserted their power.[29] Kriger argues for Mutoko that the only sustainable challenge to rural social structures was that posed by the commoner lineages because their organizational base, the lineage structure itself, was not dependent on the context of war.[30] In short, security pressures, military strategy, and the rapid conclusion of the war prevented the establishment of a civil administration which could institutionalize wartime challenges, particularly those relating to women and young people. "Partial victories" were achieved but these fell short of transforming "the system of oppression," as Isaacman has argued is characteristic of peasant protest.[31]

If post-independence rural communities were conflict ridden and the new basis of organization was weak, what of the inherited state and economy? The negotiated transition to independence failed to unseat the Rhodesian state bureaucracies. Important policy-making powers were left in the hands of civil servants strongly influenced by a modernizing and authoritarian ideology.[32] Moreover, the

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[28] See Kriger, 1985, Chapter 8 and passim, Section 2; Heike Schmidt, "Gender and Status: Implications for the Zimbabwean Liberation War," African Research Seminar, St. Antony's College, Oxford, 4/6/91; Fay Chung, p. 5.

[29] See Lan's discussion, pp. 212-213.

[30] Kriger, 1985, Chapters 7, 8, espec pp. 323-345. Even in the case of lineages, challenges remained dependent on local political constellations. Guerrillas supported and worked with royal lineages where they held numerical superiority and popular legitimacy. The guerrillas' interest in lineage disputes was "peripheral and stemmed from their concern to win support from the majority"; it stemmed not from a political program but from an overriding need to decrease their vulnerability. Kriger, 1985, p.345.

[31] Allen Isaacman, "Peasants and Rural Social Protest in Africa," Social Science Research Council, February 1989, p. 87.

[32] Michael Drinkwater argues this is the most significant legacy of the colonial period. See his "Technical Development and Peasant Impoverishment: Land Use Policy in

owners of Zimbabwe's wealth were left largely untouched: the rights of property owners were guaranteed for ten years under the Lancaster House constitution and, despite its marxist program, the new government was keen to assuage the worries of international and local investors.[33] The redistribution of resources was legally and politically constrained.

I will use Chimanimani District as a case study to illustrate the post-independence processes of political demobilization and consolidation of state power and then briefly draw several comparisons with Insiza District in Matabeleland South. I will argue that developments in post-independence rural politics were strongly affected by policy decisions taken by the centralized state with little or no local consultation. The government quickly undermined the autonomy of the local political party by coopting key groups, maintaining central control over development resources, and, in Matabeleland, by military and political repression. People in Zimbabwe's rural areas were largely unable to influence policy-making processes; instead, patronage, squatting and opposition by traditional leaders dominated rural politics. Far from empowering the disadvantaged through democratic bodies, policies reinforced patriarchal authority within communities, thus helping to marginalize women, the young and the poor. Older and relatively wealthy men form the leadership of rural institutions. They receive the majority of state resources and services directed towards the rural areas while, on the whole, women and youth are targeted for specific projects which tend to over-exploit already scarce labor and material resources.[34]

Zimbabwe's Midlands Province," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2, January 1989, p. 288.

[33] See, inter alia, David Gordon, "Development Strategy in Zimbabwe: Assessments and Prospects," and Ronald Libby, "Development Strategies and Political Divisions within the Zimbabwean State," both in Michael Schatzberg, ed., *The Political Economy of Zimbabwe*, (New York: Praeger, 1984), pp. 119-143 and 144-163, respectively; Ibbo Mandaza, "The State in Post-White Settler Colonial Situation," in Ibbo Mandaza, ed., *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition*, (Dakar: Codesria, 1986), pp. 21-74.

[34] See Sam Moyo, "The Zimabweanisation of Southern Africa's Land Question: Lessons or Domino Stratagems?" draft, Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies, 1990.

II. Post-War Politics in Chimanimani: "Who is Today's Government?"[35]

Due to its location on Zimbabwe's eastern border, Chimanimani District was an active area during the war, especially after 1976. Between 1976 and 1978, David Caute notes that 1,053 `contacts' were recorded, the number of functioning commercial farms was reduced from 105 to eight and, in 1978 alone, 24 homesteads were destroyed.[36] ZANLA and ZANU's presence was strongly established by the end of the war. After independence, however, the area quickly returned to peace. The Provincial Commissioner commented in June 1980:

> It is remarkable that the District most affected by the war should now be the most peaceful and normal in the Province. It is the district furthest away from assembly [of guerrillas] places and least affected by dissident elements.[37]

The rapid re-establishment of peace indicates how successful the process of post-war disarmament was, a disarmament that was literal for the guerrillas and metaphoric for guerrilla support groups.[38] Nonetheless, the district was rife with competing claims to legitimate authority and to resources, a legacy of the unresolved struggles of the war. Conflicts

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[35] The following sections are based on research conducted in 1988 and 1989 while I was a Research Associate in the Department of Political and Administrative Studies at the University of Zimbabwe. Interviews with `local leaders' in the political party, traditional hierarchy and development committees and councils as well as with district officials of the Ministries of Lands and Local Government were conducted in Chimanimani and Insiza Districts. Interviews with officials were also carried out at provincial and national levels. This research was supplemented with a review of district records and with archival research in Harare. For a fuller treatment of some of the themes presented here see my "Tradition, Modernization and Control: Local and National Disputes over Authority and Agrarian Policy in Zimbabwe," in *A Question of Perspective: Re-interpreting Environmental and Social Relations in Zambia and Zimbabwe,* eds. Michael Drinkwater and Ken Wilson, (London: James Currey, forthcoming) and "The Unsettled Land: The Politics of land Redistribution in Matabeleland South, 1980-1990," *Journal of Southern African Studies,* forthcoming.

[36] David Caute, *Under the Skin. The Death of White Rhodesia,* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983), espec. pp. 271-283. Also see David Martin and Phyllis Johnson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe,* (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), pp. 223-224.

[37] Provincial Commissioner, Mutare, to the Secretary for District Administration, Harare, 8/7/80.

[38] The metaphor of `disarmament' is from Howard Barrell, pers. comm., Oxford.

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emerged among government representatives, party leaders and traditional leaders over land, courts, law, taxation and local government.

In 1980, it was through the party's structures that new policies were introduced and popular demands expressed. The party's village, branch and district leadership controlled land allocation and courts in some areas, though often in cooperation or in competition with traditional leaders, some of whom were strong party supporters or party leaders.[39] The relationship between the new government and rural areas was strongly shaped by early interactions between party structures and government representatives charged with communicating and implementing policy.

In June 1980, Chimanimani's ZANU-PF steering committee, made up of the party district chairmen, though not including women, young people or guerrillas, was given the brief of explaining government policies and setting up a District Council. The decision to establish councils was taken by the central government without local consultation. The form the councils took was strongly influenced by the new state's desire to establish democratic and secular local government bodies and to re-establish an administrative presence in the rural areas. Local reactions to the central government's proposals were ambivalent in Chimanimani, as in other districts.[40] After a tour of the District, the ZANU-PF Steering Committee reported strong objections to any imposition of taxes and to the use of the word `council'. The questions addressed to the Committee during their tour indicated the nature of popular expectations following the war. People asked,

> Whether the District Commissioner was still there and what his role is now that the chairman for the district has been elected? When the money promised the people by Government to rebuild their homes, buy food and clothing shall be coming? When shall land be given to the people?... Why the present

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[39] Because some traditional leaders held party posts it is somewhat misleading to draw a clear distinction between the two. Nonetheless, and especially in the case of courts and land allocations, competition between the two groups was commonly noted and keenly felt. Also see Kriger, pp. 429-430.

[40] See Ranger, 1985, pp. 294-296 and Kriger, 1985, pp. 438-429, 446-448.

> government is still in use of the old Council Act, Warrant and
> Advisers which were used by the previous governments? Who
> is today's government? Why has it been found necessary by the
> present government to keep in employment the same
> Policemen and Civil Servants and to use the same government
> vehicles used by the previous government?

People wanted ex-guerrillas to sit on the commission and wanted government and party officials to hold regular meetings with village and branch committees in order to keep people abreast of policy changes.[41]

The party steering committee members complained of the "hard job they met" in explaining the government's policy of establishing councils and a taxation system when these had specifically been attacked during the war.[42] Despite popular objections, however, the establishment of the Council proceeded. Wards were delineated by ZANU-PF political commissars on the basis of wartime party districts and candidates were drawn from party ranks. The steering committee, almost wholesale, was elected as the new council.

An elder male fraction of the party seemed to have triumphed: through the council it had achieved legal control over development planning and land allocation. The party's success, however, needs to be qualified in a number of ways. Local level party leaders had failed to secure salaries, in contrast to chiefs and headmen who continued to receive stipends well in excess of even councillors. Despite party objections, chiefs had been included as ex-officio members on the council. The party had failed to win war reparations for its constituents or a quick and popularly controlled redistribution of land. Party members were further demoralized by a tedious reorganization process in 1982. And, though the party dominated the new district council, the council was dominated by civil servants.[43]

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[41] Third Meeting for the Formation of the Melsetter District Council held at the District Commissioner's Conference Room, Melsetter (Chimanimani), 15/9/80, appended sheet entitled, "Minutes of Trips Made Through Out the District to Brief People on the Formation of the Melsetter District Council".

[42] Minutes of the Second Meeting for the Formation of a District Council in Melsetter, District Commissioner's Conference Room (Chimanimani), 25-26/6/80.

[43] See Rukudzo Murapa, "Rural and District Administrative Reform in Zimbabwe," (Bourdeaux: Centre D'Etude D'Afrique Noire, 1986).

As soon as it was able, the government used the council, not the party structures, to communicate policy and channel resources.[44]

Where the party and council failed in their appeals to the government, people tried to realize the promises of the war by acting outside official channels. Though there was little which people could do about many of the government's policy choices -- such as the decision not to award war reparations or salary local party officials -- they could occupy land.[45] The successful occupation of former commercial farms in Chimanimani was favorably influenced by the availability of farms abandoned during the war. Occupations started before 1980 and picked up speed dramatically in 1981 and 1982. Land was often occupied with the authority of traditional leaders or party leaders, though the latter were often also under pressure to promote the official resettlement policy. Spontaneous occupations were also common. Many `squatters' were later accepted under the accelerated resettlement program, though rarely where functioning commercial farms were involved.[46]

Squatter occupations expressed not only a dissatisfaction with the speed of resettlement but also a profound and historically based distrust for the extensive bureaucratic regulation in the schemes.[47] In Chimanimani, confusion initially surrounded the resettlement program. It was not until mid-1981 that a civil servant revealed to the council the necessity of filling in resettlement forms. The councillors "were not pleased" and described the situation as "tense" because "the people's wishes

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[44] On the decline of the party also see Kriger, 1985, pp. 485-495.

[45] See Jeffrey Herbst, *State Politics in Zimbabwe*, (Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 1990), pp. 78-79 on the nature of land as a "political good".

[46] The dramatic case of the forced sale of a farm in Headlands was an exception to the rule. The evictions of squatters in Chipinge were more representative of government policy. See Ranger, 1985, pp. 305-6 on the Headlands case. For Chipinge, see especially Moven Mahachi's justification of the squatters' eviction in terms of the foreign currency earning capacity of coffee, tea and the dairy industry in *The Herald*, 23/12/83. Information also from interviews with the Provincial Planning Officer, Mutare, 24/11/88 and the Provincial Administrator, Mutare, 24/11/88.

[47] See B.H. Kinsey, "Emerging Policy Issues in Zimbabwe's Land Resettlement Programmes," *Development Policy Review*, Vol. 1, 1983, p. 190.

were not being fulfilled."[48] When the forms arrived they were treated with distrust -- only 1,400 of 8,000 forms were completed.[49] The relevant Local Government Promotion Officer commented:

> Some people refused to fill forms or move on the initial mobilization due to their fear of the permits being revoked and their loss of control on the schemes. Rumors were rampant on government's plans to take the crops grown on resettlement. They didn't trust the government and were suspicious of its motivations.[50]

People sought to avoid government regulations and retain their autonomy, thus expressing aims consistent with their wartime aspirations as well as the extent of distrust of the new government.

Objections to top-down legislation were also expressed with regard to the new court system. As with local government institutions, the post-independence policy called for the introduction of a democratically elected and secular institution.[51] The government's early initiatives on courts were directed towards dismantling the party's so-called kangaroo courts and undermining courts run by traditional leaders. Representatives of the Ministry of Justice attacked chiefs' courts, arguing that they had been corrupt and collaborationist, and the party's courts on the grounds that they were based on beatings, intimidation and lacked respect for the law.[52]
But the new courts were rarely successfully established for a number of reasons. First, the legal restrictions placed upon them were considered inappropriate. For example, some cases, especially in the early 1980s, arose from witchcraft accusations. A Ministry of Justice official sent to Chimanimani District in

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[48] Minutes of the Mabvazuwa District Council, Chimanimani, 27/5/81.

[49] Minutes of the Mabvazuwa District Council, Chimanimani, 30/7/81.

[50] Interview, Local Government Promotion Officer, Chimanimani, 31/10/81.

[51] See Kriger, 1985, pp. 471-473.

[52] See Bishop Joshua Dube's comments in Report for a Meeting held at Ngangu Stadium, Melsetter (Chimanimani), 9/8/80; attacks on `kangaroo courts' made in parliament, Parliamentary Debates, 3/2/81; and an attack on the chiefly institution by Minister of Lands Moven Mahachi in Minutes of a Meeting at the District Commissioner's Conference Hall, Melsetter (Chimanimani), 27/2/81.

1981 explained that these charges were illegal under the Witchcraft Suppression Act. His suggestion that it would be most appropriate for these cases to be referred to the Ministry of Health, which was now responsible for traditional healers, failed to satisfy his audience of councillors and party officials.[53]   Second, presiding officers elected under the new system were often unable to compete with traditional leaders who claimed that running courts was properly their function, regardless of whether they were elected. In practice, it was not unusual for traditional leaders to be elected to courts in the first instance.[54]

III. Demobilization, Bureaucratic Control and Local Alliances

After the first years of independence, local struggles over power and resources were strongly influenced by the re-establishment of a powerful state bureaucracy in the rural areas. Most important were the Ministry of Lands, the Ministry of Local Government, and, to a lesser extent, the Ministry of Community Development.[55]   Decisions concerning development policy and land reform were taken at the national level, well beyond the influence of district institutions, and the channeling of state resources to rural areas was controlled by centralized sectoral ministries with little sensitivity to or ability to assimilate grassroots demands.

Chimanimani's district council, though ostensibly designed to facilitate local participation in planning, lacked both the expertise necessary to formulate plans and the resources to implement them. In general, councils were almost entirely dependent on grants and on the resources and expertise of sectoral ministries. Village development committees (vidcos), established by a presidential directive in 1984, were intended to

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[53] Minutes of a Meeting with the Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Melsetter (Chimanimani), 21/7/81.

[54] Kriger, 1985, p. 473, notes that five of the eight headmen who survived the war in her study area were elected to court positions. I also found that many traditional leaders had been elected to run courts after independence and that, where they had not, it had only been a matter of time before the `official' court was undermined.

[55] See Colin Stoneman and Lionel Cliffe, *Zimbabwe: Politics, Economics and Society*, (London: Pinter Publishers, 1989), pp. 93-94.

further decentralize power. But they remained weak in many areas of Chimanimani in part because of the arbitrary nature of the unit itself: the vidco did not build on previous communities and affiliations but was based simply on the figure of 100 households. Vidcos, like councils, were starved of resources and deprived of an active role in policy-making. They were used largely to implement national level initiatives.

Chimanimani's local level party organization lay largely inactive at this time, save for its occasional mobilization for elections, rallies or the collection of membership fees. Party membership remained an important prerequisite to participation in other development bodies but the party itself no longer functioned as an independent voice. In addition, in 1988, the party was effectively shut down for over a year by the reorganizations attendant on the political unity of ZANU-PF and ZAPU. As a political entity capable of expressing local opinion on policy, it had been `demobilized'.

However, local leaders in Chimanimani's council and vidcos -- and this included many party leaders -- did benefit from the post-independence expansion of services: they were in a position to profit from the delivery of services and the direct allocation of state resources to rural areas. Councillors influenced the distribution of drought relief and food for work jobs, as well as the physical locations of schools and clinics and had access to government representatives responsible for services. Councillors and party officials were often relatively wealthy farmers and thus were able to take advantage of new opportunities to market produce.

An alliance emerged between local patriarchs and certain ministries and politicians which brought benefits to the rural areas. It was, however, a far cry from the aspirations of the war years and the radical rhetoric of the early 1980s. Rather than establishing a dynamic and participatory local government system, the central government set about reconstructing development bureaucracies capable of excluding local bodies from policy-making roles. The government turned from mobilizing people to managing them through bureaucratic control and local alliances.

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IV. The Challenge of Traditional Leadership

The political demobilization in Zimbabwe's rural areas is not unusual in comparison to other African countries. It reflects the difficulty which dispersed, poor, and internally divided rural populations have in influencing governments through political or bureaucratic institutions, especially when they find themselves in competition with other groups such as urban consumers and workers or an agricultural or industrial elite.[56] However, though a process of demobilization and cooption took place in Zimbabwe's rural areas, there was also a re-emergence of what I will broadly refer to as `traditional leadership'.[57] This leadership drew its power from an ideology and organizational strength made possible, in part, by the independent government's own policies and the divisive legacy of the war.

Traditional leaders had been widely attacked at independence and many commentators predicted their permanent fall from power. The legislation on land, courts, and local government specifically excluded traditional leaders except in an ex-officio capacity. Technical planning ministries attacked traditional leadership as an anachronism that stood in the way of progress.[58] Other analysts saw them as largely irrelevant. Lan depicted chiefs as entirely discredited by their colonial collaboration:

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[56] See Isaacman; Crawford Young, "Africa's Colonial Legacy," in Robert Berg and Jennifer Seymour Whitaker, eds., *Strategies for African Development*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Robert Bates, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

[57] The term is unsatisfactory. I am referring not only to the salaried chiefs and headmen and recognized village heads but also to the many who are unrecognized and occupy rungs lower or only loosely affiliated to the `official' chiefs and headmen. It is also problematic to use the term `traditional' because it denotes something which is timeless and unchanging when, in fact, the role of `traditional' leaders has changed dramatically through Rhodesia and Zimbabwe's history. I will use the term nonetheless for lack of a better shorthand.

[58] See Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rural Development, *Communal Lands Development Plan: A 15 Year Development Strategy*, (Harare, 1985).

> By accepting their lowly position in the government hierarchy, the chiefs had acquired the authority to receive a monthly salary, to collect taxes, to wear a flamboyant uniform and to little else.[59]

In 1982, Ranger wrote of contemporary Zimbabwe, "There is room for spirit mediums, some of whom receive ZANU salaries. But there is no room for the old political elite of chiefs and headmen."[60] Michael Bratton, writing in 1978, confidently predicted,

> One thing that is clear from recent Rhodesian history...is that chiefs have lost claim to represent peasants because of their collective decision to join forces with the settlers against Zimbabwean nationalism. Chiefs cannot be rehabilitated. No major administrative role awaits them in Zimbabwe.[61]

Why, then, did they emerge as important actors in independent Zimbabwe's local politics? And why did they increasingly receive recognition from the government?

Though criticism of traditional leadership and predictions of its ultimate demise were widespread, there were powerful resources and alliances on which traditional leaders could draw. The tendency to dismiss them as irrelevant at independence stemmed from an oversimplification and misunderstanding of their role before independence, especially during the war, and from the conspicuous collaboration of some chiefs and headmen. In fact, many traditional leaders had played a supportive role in the war, assuming party positions and working with guerrillas and spirit mediums.[62] In Chimanimani, district records described Headman

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[59] Lan, p. 146.

[60] Terence Ranger, "Survival, Revival and Disaster: Shona Traditional Elites Under Colonialism," paper presented to the Round Table on Elites and Colonialism, Paris, July 1982, p. 14.

[61] Michael Bratton, Beyond Community Development: The Political Economy of Rural Administration in Zimbabwe, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1978), p. 50.

[62] Local elected officials and civil servants certainly felt chiefs retained legitimacy and authority in many areas. Interviews, District Council Chairman, Chimanimani, 10/88; Senior Administrative Officer, Chimanimani, 20/10/88; Regional Agritex Officer, Chimanimani, 4/11/88. Also see Daneel, passim; Andrew Ladley, "Just Spirits? Chiefs, Tradition, Status and Contract in the Customary Law Courts of Zimbabwe," unpub., 1990, p. 8, fn 48. Lan and Ranger both cite examples of traditional leaders playing a supporting role.

Gudyanga as a supporter of the freedom fighters. He was elected as ZANU-PF branch chairman in 1980. The Mutambara Chiefs, following a long history of resistance to government intervention, also supported the war. Dandiwa Dandikwe, appointed as chief in the 1950s, was deposed in 1973 after a long non-cooperation campaign. His successor was deposed in 1977 on charges of supporting the war and died in 1978. The current chief, Samuel Mutambara, was jailed from 1974-1979 for aiding guerrillas and recruiting students to cross the border into Mozambique.[63] Certainly there were many collaborationist chiefs who opposed the war and lost credibility as a result. However, a significant group did not; nor was simply holding a government-recognized traditional office enough to merit condemnation as a collaborator.

One reason why chiefs have on the whole been portrayed as irretrievably collaborationist is the separation drawn between the chief and the spirit medium by writers such as Lan. Lan depicts <u>mhondoro</u> mediums as actors ultimately independent of contemporary lineage politics, deriving their legitimacy solely from long dead authochthons. They thus can transfer legitimate authority away from chiefs to other actors such as guerrillas or party committees. However, in many areas mediums of royal ancestors no longer exist while those of other ancestors are directly dependent on the living members of a lineage for patronage and power.[64] For example, in the south-

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[63] Ministry of Local Government PER 5 and PER 4 (Chiefs and Headmen) files, kept in the Chimanimani District Administrator's offices and Interview, Senior Administrative Officer, 20/10/88, Chimanimani. It is possible that the post-independence Ministry of Local Government has been overly generous in its descriptions of traditional leaders' war records in an effort to justify government appointments.

[64] In Chimanimani, mediums were not involved at all in confering office or tended to serve the purpose of approving selections made through the consultations of elders. For example, the Gudyanga headmanship does not require a medium to confer office. In the case of the Ngorima chieftaincy, the family of the conspicuously collaborationist previous chief was prevented from continuing to inherit the chieftaincy by a council of elders who nominated a popular nephew of the previous chief (a man who had been elected to the post of presiding officer and who had supported the liberation war.) In the case of the Mutambara chieftaincy, the question of collaboration, opportunistic use of mediums and disputes among the houses involved in nominating the chief was most pronounced. In the early 1970s, the incumbent, Dandiwa Dandikwe, fell out of favor not only with the government but also with other elders and contenders to the throne. Other elders challenged the medium who Dandiwa Dandikwe claimed represented the proper spirit and who also backed his claim to the throne. After the government removed him from office, his younger brother, Ngani James, became acting chief with the backing of the

central `Karanga' areas of Zimbabwe, B.B. Mukamuri found that <u>mhondoro</u> spirits had virtually died out while other spirits or aspects of `traditional' religion were exploited by competing lineages in their attempts to establish political hegemony and control over resources.[65] Ken Wilson notes that chiefs, mediums and ancestral guardians often all belong to the same shallow lineage and that <u>mhondoro</u> mediums no longer exist in the Mazvihwa area of Zvishavane District.[66]

Where mediums are dependent on a ruling lineage, or are members of that lineage, their use by guerrillas is not necessarily contrary to the continued power and prestige of traditional leaders.[67] I would argue that the spirit medium is more accurately seen <u>as part</u> of a traditionalist faction in rural areas. The office of medium interacts with that of the chief rather than replacing or rising at the expense of the chief.[68] Moreover, spirit mediums did not always support guerrillas nor were they necessarily discredited when they did not.[69] Reynolds sites a case of a man called Mande:

> As a spirit medium and a village headman, Mande was in contact with the comrades frequently throughout the years of the war. He did not help them because he believed his spirit hates bloodshed. He said, "The comrades were annoyed. My

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government, another medium and other elders. His younger brother Samuel's accession to the chieftaincy was secured after an agreement reached among the elders and sanctioned, after the fact, by a medium. See the Ministry of Local Government PER 5 and PER 4 files kept in the Chimanimani District Administrator's office. David Maxwell, pers. comm., has found in Nyanga that claimants to a chieftaincy are able to mobilize mediums on their behalf, indicating the medium's dependence on or at least intense interaction with the candidate.

[65] B.B. Mukamuri, "Rural environmental conservation strategies in south-central Zimbabwe: an attempt to describe Karanga thought patterns, perceptions and environmental control," (Harare: ENDA-Zimbabwe, 1987).

[66] Ken Wilson, "Research on trees in the Mazvihwa and surrounding areas," unpublished paper prepared for ENDA, 1987.

[67] Stella Makanya, pers. comm., a former ZANLA guerrilla who operated in the Mberengwa area, argues guerrillas simply relied on locally gathered information to establish which leaders -- be they mediums, traditional leaders or others -- were trustworthy and influential.

[68] I am indebted to Terence Ranger for his comments on the relationship between the offices of chief and medium.

[69] Bourdillon, p. 270 and see Pamela Reynolds, "Children of Tribulation: The Need to Heal and the Means to Heal War Trauma," *Africa*, 60 (1), 1990, pp. 1-38.

spirit does not allow killing and so I could give neither courage nor power to the comrades for killing."[70]

Nonetheless, after the war Mande played an important healing role by using his powers to `cleanse' people returning from fighting in the war or people who had participated in violence locally.[71]

The diverse histories traditional leaders brought to independent Zimbabwe were evident in the party leadership's ambivalence towards them. Though the Chimanimani ZANU-PF steering committee objected to chiefs sitting on the council, they directed their opposition at specific chiefs and not at the office of the chief itself. Party members affirmed the continuing role of the chiefs but seemed unsure of what it should be.[72] In discounting this half-embrace, some writers have miscalculated the potential for a revival of traditional leadership. The tendency to conflate the colonial state and traditional leaders and to assume a complete rejection of traditional leaders by the party committees and mediums is overly simplistic and can explain neither wartime alliances nor post-war developments.

Sympathies within the government also aided a revival of traditional leadership. Immediately after independence, former employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs lobbied strongly for a continuing role for traditional leaders on the grounds that their hasty departure "could lead to confusion if not anarchy in the communally occupied areas."[73] Ministers defended the continued role of chiefs and headmen, and their cost to government of around $1 million per year, on cultural grounds.[74] The Deputy Minister of Justice, on a tour of

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[70] Reynolds, p. 10.

[71] Reynolds, p. 13.

[72] See discussion in Minutes of the First Meeting Held for the Formation of a District Council in Melsetter, 11/6/80 and report by the District Commissioner, Melsetter, in his correspondence with the Provincial Commissioner, Manicaland, 27/6/80. Kriger, 1985, p. 448, notes that in 17 of 53 cases councils objected to chiefs sitting on the council. The number is surprisingly low if we assume chiefs had become totally discredited.

[73] District Commissioner, Melsetter (Chimanimani) to Provincial Commissioner, Manicaland, 27/6/80; Provincial Commissioner, Manicaland to Secretary for District Administration, Harare, 8/7/80.

[74] Kriger, 1985, pp. 475-479.

Chimanimani in 1981, stressed that, despite the new village courts, chiefs were "still required to officiate in their normal functions as spiritual agents."[75] Some nationalist politicians strongly backed the attempts of chiefs deposed during the colonial period to regain their offices. In 1981, then Member of Parliament Bishop Joshua Dhube initiated such a campaign in Chimanimani on behalf of `Chief' Saurombe, a move which garnered him local support.[76]

Another critical factor in the revival of traditional leaders was the demobilization of the political party and the authoritarian and modernizing ethic of the development bureaucracies. By formulating an agenda based on a populist revival of `tradition', traditional leaders were able to draw on a constituency which found itself threatened by certain of the new agricultural and legal policies. The traditional leaders' mobilization of tradition was not a rejection of all aspects of `modernization', especially not development policies which allowed better access to markets, but a reaction to the authoritarian implementation of policies which were felt to undermine their authority under the guise of a `modernizing' agenda. Traditional leaders appropriated a version of the past in a bid to challenge the authority of the state and local development bodies. In this project, mediums played a supportive ideological role by providing a critique of certain policies -- e.g., dams and villagization -- based on traditional religion. Though traditional leaders may have been partly or largely motivated by their own ambitions, their appeal to tradition gained support from a constituency which perceived state-defined `modernization' as a threat either to its autonomy, economic interests or social standing and which had no alternative institution through which to express its objections.

The government's first concession to traditional leaders was over the maintenance of their salaries, a move which offended party committees and councillors but which was probably "a small pay-off for a government that wanted to ensure that

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[75] Minutes of a Meeting with the Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Melsetter (Chimanimani), 21/7/81.

[76] See correspondence in Headman Saurombe's PER 4 file, kept at the District Administrator's Office, Chimanimani.

chiefs would not oppose it."[77] The second concession, the promise to return courts to traditional leaders, came in the election year of 1985. It stemmed from the failure of the new village courts to establish control in many areas and the desire to cultivate traditional leaders as a constituency. The courts were legally handed back to chiefs and headmen in 1990.

These moves undermined legislative initiatives intended to accord women new rights: traditional leaders in Chimanimani were unwilling to put into practice such legislation, despite training from the local Ministry of Justice official.[78] Attempts by the new government to put women on an equal footing were not carried out at the local level; instead, patriarchal power was bolstered. Mediums aided in this project as one of the "mainstay[s] of customary law and traditional culture."[79] Reynolds also notes the role which mediums and n'angas played in re-establishing a patriarchal social order through their cleansing and healing rituals.[80]

The concessions over courts were also important in strengthening traditional leaders' claims to power in other areas, notably land.[81] Traditional leaders frequently overstepped their legal powers with regard to land allocation both within the communal areas and on commercial and resettlement land. Within communal areas, the attempt to give land allocation powers to district councils was never very effective in part simply because of the size of wards. Land was usually controlled through lineage leaders and inheritance practices.[82] The role of traditional leaders as advocates of `traditional' tenure became increasingly important as a result of

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[77] Kriger, 1985, p. 479.

[78] Interview, Magistrate, Chimanimani, 3/11/88.

[79] Daneel, p. 5.

[80] Reynolds, passim.

[81] It should be noted that the government's concessions on courts did not preclude continued competition among traditional leaders for control of the limited number of official courts. Those excluded (because they were not recognized by government or because there was more than one claimant in a ward) tended to run a court anyway or encourage non-cooperation with other institutions in protest. This was one of the more serious causes of conflict among local leaders in Chimanimani.

[82] Kriger, 1985, p. 477, notes that, in some areas, the council at no point interfered in land disputes.

a shift in the focus of agrarian policy in the mid-1980s from `external' resettlement, meaning land redistribution, to the Communal Area Reorganization Policy. The policy emerged from debates within the technical planning bureaucracies. It draws on a long history of intervention in agricultural practices, most notably the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951.[83] The policy calls for the consolidation of villages, the demarcation of distinct grazing and arable lands and the establishment of limits on stocking levels and land sizes. It had the effect of polarizing the vidcos and councils, which were called upon to implement the policy, and the traditional leaders who resisted the policy by acting as populist proponents of locally controlled land access and communal tenure.[84]

With the marginalization of the local party, traditional leaders also became the most outspoken proponents of continued and popularly controlled land redistribution. Here again, mediums played a collaborative role by supporting the chiefs' claims to ancestral lands. Traditional leaders have used their claim to the right to allocate land to create constituencies among the land hungry and those who resent the bureaucratic controls on resettlement schemes. The Chimanimani District Squatter Control Committee has had repeated problems with traditional leaders who gave land to their followers in vacant and resettlement land, on commercial farms and on state land.[85] Traditional leaders, including mediums, have sometimes had the support of councillors and party leaders in their initiatives to claim land. In response, the government has employed a combination of heavy handed tactics -- such as jailing recalcitrant village heads or destroying squatter settlements -- and compromise.

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[83] See Drinkwater, pp. 187-305, espec. pp. 289-292 and 303-305.

[84] JoAnne McGregor's study of Shurugwi District provides a counter example. Traditional leaders adopted modernizing technology and practices largely, she argues, because they made economic and ecological sense in Shurugwi. She writes,"Shurugwi has the reputation of being modern and developed and people are proud of this, including the `traditional' leaders." See McGregor, "Local Management and Control of Woodland," unpub., 1991. Her study will soon be submitted as a D.Phil thesis to Loughborough University.

[85] Interviews, Senior Administrative Officer, Chimanimani, 20/10/88 and Regional Agritex Officer, Chimanimani, 4/11/88.

Compromises have been achieved through granting access to land bordering communal areas on terms set by the government. For example, the Dzingire resettlement scheme in the south of Chimanimani is on land that had been intermittently occupied with the authority of or by traditional leaders for decades.[86] The dispute was finally resolved, with government mediation, when the land owners agreed to turn over the contested 300 hectares for resettlement provided the settlers became tea out-growers on the estate and gave up their cattle holdings.[87] In another case, Chief Mutambara in the north of the district successfully gained at least temporary control of grazing land which he claimed on ancestral grounds on what was supposed to be a Model B resettlement scheme by negotiating with provincial officials.

These compromises have been dependent on the availability of at least some commercial land. As Chimanimani District neared the end of the first decade of independence, it was faced with a severe land shortage which threatened to provoke a crisis in relations between leaders and people in communal areas on the one hand and private land owners and the government run Squatter Control Committee on the other.[88] The use of commercial land as a way of controlling rural radicalism -- as a "reform sector" used to "defuse social tensions"[89] -- may falter in the context of land scarcity, a growing commitment to private land ownership and the rise of technical planning bureaucracies to the exclusion of patronage and political influence.

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[86] See the 1965 delineation report for the Dzingire area for an outline of the origins of this problem. "Report on the Dzingiri Community: Chief Muushu, Ngorima Tribal Trust Land, Melsetter District," in C.J.K. Latham, Senior Delineation Officer, *Delineation Reports: Tribal Trust Lands in the Melsetter District*, November 1965, Salisbury, pp. 19-21.

[87] See Minutes of the Squatter Control Committee, Chimanimani, 30/9/88; *Manica Post*, 3/2/89; *Chronicle*, 5/3/89; *Herald*, 2/8/90.

[88] Since 1985, the scarcity of resettlement land has presented a problem. Interview, Senior Administrative Officer, Chimanimani, 20/10/88 and *Chimanimani District Five Year Plan*, draft document, n.d. (1985).

[89] Alain de Janvry, *The Agrarian Question and Reformism in Latin America*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1981), p. 272. De Janvry, pp. 264-265, contrasts the reform sector to the "non-reform" sector which remains at the center of the economy.

In sum, the government successfully demobilized the party by depriving it of resources and influence over policy. Many party leaders took up posts on state-dependent development authorities with which government bureaucracies formed alliances in exchange for conceding limited control over development resources. The government attempted to keep the allegiance of traditional leaders by maintaining their salaries, by conceding power over courts to them and by making some marginal concessions on land demands. The groups most obviously left out of these power structures are women, young people and the resource-poor who are unable to take advantage of increased marketing opportunities and services or to make headway in the male elder-controlled land allocation processes. However, it should be noted that, where conflicts among leaders are severe, these groups are able to exploit the competing leaders' attempts to cultivate constituencies. For example, traditional leaders faced with strong challenges from vidco chairmen are more amenable to making land allocations as it creates a group of clients on whose allegiance they can draw.

V. Demobilization through Repression: Insiza District

The experience of the Matabeleland Provinces differs dramatically from the rest of the country. Insiza District, located in Matabeleland South, will be used as a case study to illustrate those differences which have affected local political and development structures and land redistribution. Two factors favored Chimanimani: first, in the early 1980s, local leaders achieved limited land redistribution through the actual occupation of abandoned farm land, thus forcing a then weak and largely sympathetic bureaucracy to increase the speed and scope of resettlement. Second, local institutions which were considered both loyal and legitimate gained access to development resources and services by influencing ministries and politicians.

In Insiza and much of southern Matabeleland, the large scale occupation of land by communal area residents was not common in the early 1980s. As a consequence of ZIPRA

military strategy, relatively few commercial farms were abandoned in the 1970s.[90] The squatter population was made up largely of former mine and farm workers who faced eviction.[91] Squatting was also less common because of the perceived shortage of grazing, rather than arable, land: communal area people sought to take advantage of vacant or state land by simply driving cattle onto it.[92] `Poach-grazing' did not prove to be as effective a means of claiming land because it did not involve the construction of houses or the planting of crops. Cattle can simply be herded off land or impounded. Moreover, in the early eighties, there was no alternative to the crop-production based resettlement model, Model A. Whereas Model A schemes were acceptable in Chimanimani, though state controls were resented, they were greeted with a wholesale rejection in Insiza.[93]

During the early and mid-1980s the quantity of state land and thus, potentially, resettlement land increased dramatically as `dissident' violence and drought drove ranchers from the land, much as the guerrilla attacks had in the 1970s war in Chimanimani.[94] This land was not settled, however, because of the `security situation' and conflicts over resettlement models. Instead, the land purchased in this period was given over to the state farm parastatal and leased to individuals -- many of whom were civil servants -- for cattle ranching.[95]

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[90] ZIPRA's `Southern Front', in which Insiza falls, formed part of a transit route through which casualties, supplies and recruits were moved to and from Botswana. ZIPRA deliberately tried to avoid drawing a heavy Rhodesian army presence into the area by not, for example, attacking white ranchers. Interview, Jaconia Moyo, former ZIPRA Security Officer, Bulawayo, July 20, 1991. Collet Nkala reported that only seven ranchers were killed on their land in the 1970's war in Matabeleland. "Peace returns -- but militias are now jobless," *Parade*, April 1989, p. 43.

[91] Interview, Resettlement Officer, Filabusi, 7/10/88. This pattern was also reported to hold true for Matabeleland North, *The Herald*, 31/1/89.

[92] See reports in *The Herald*, 22/10/81 and 26/10/81.

[93] Interview, Chief Vezi Maduna (former council chairman), Avoca, 14/4/89 and see reports of the Deputy Minister of Lands Mark Dube's tour of Matabeleland, *The Herald*, 4/6/82 and 5/6/82.

[94] For figures see *Matabeleland South Provincial Development Plan*, (Bulawayo: Provincial Development Committee, 1985); *Matabeleland South Provincial Development Plan, 1989/1990*, (Bulawayo: Provincial Development Committee, January 1989); *Matabeleland South Provincial Development Plan, 1988/1989*, (Bulawayo: Provincial Development Committee, May 1988).

[95] The policy was publicly defended by Minister of Lands David Karimanzira in The Herald, 10/12/88 after revelations appeared in the press concerning Matabeleland South

Because of the political conflicts which erupted soon after 1980, local party and traditional leaders could not effectively influence ministries or lobby politicians for patronage. Instead, local leaders were subject to harassment and violent attacks. Many were driven out of the rural areas, others were abducted, killed or forced to resign.[96] Councils made up of government `nominees' were imposed in many areas, including Insiza, and even these were subject to attack and did not function for long periods of time.[97] The negotiation for resources and the establishment of alliances common in Chimanimani was only possible to a very limited extent in Insiza.

The return of peace and relative political freedom following the Unity Accord of December 1987 enabled the revival of councils and the return of some ZAPU activists. Debates over access to land and development strategies started anew and brought the issue of unsettled state land to the fore. But the late 1980s differed dramatically from the early 1980s: local leaders faced well-consolidated development bureaucracies, and the political sympathies and high expectations of the immediate post-independence period no longer held sway. Political mobilization and negotiation with state institutions thus faced far greater obstacles in Insiza at the end of the first decade of independence than they did in the Chimanimani District of the early 1980s, though the availability of land and perceived need for client-building may lead to some compromises.

VI. Conclusion: Rural Politics, War and Agrarian Reform

Provincial Governor Mark Dube's use of a resettlement scheme in Beitbridge. See *The Herald*, 18/11/88. In Insiza, 13 farms were leased to 33 individuals and syndicates, including civil servants. Mberengwa Rural Council, List of Lessees as of 10 September 1987.

[96] Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights, *Zimbabwe: Wages of War, A Report on Human Rights*, (New York, 1986).

[97] The District Administrator was appointed as `manager' in Insiza in mid-1983. The council was entirely ZAPU when it was disbanded while the government claimed the new council was almost entirely ZANU-PF. See Minutes of the Provincial Governor's Meeting with the Insiza District Council and Representatives of Government Departments, Filabusi, 29/3/84; *Zimbabwe Project News Bulletin*, No. 28, Month in Zimbabwe, 3/6/83.

Zimbabwe's experience illustrates the difficulty of achieving agrarian and political transformation in the absence of a more positive disruption of the previous state and economy.[98] Though existing power structures in rural areas were challenged during the war, the conditions were not created for new structures to become firmly established. Women and young people, in particular, were unable to sustain the enhanced status they had achieved during the war. After independence, local party leaders found themselves and their claims pushed aside by bureaucracies that still wielded much of their previous power. Many party leaders were elected onto councils and vidcos. Though this allowed them access to patronage, they were put in the difficult position of having to implement policies which they played a negligible role in formulating. The party's program was strongly constrained on the central issue of land redistribution by constitutional protections for private property. The actual redistribution of land depended more on wartime attacks on white farmers and on squatter occupations than on claims made through political or development structures.

Perhaps the most surprising development in rural politics after the war was the re-emergence of the traditional leadership. Traditional leaders' increasing authority and their increasing recognition from the government calls into question both the extent to which they were discredited by their colonial collaboration and the extent to which patriarchal power was undermined during the war. Ironically, the modernizing agenda and authoritarian practices of the development bureaucracies helped to create a disaffected constituency upon which the traditional leaders were able to draw.

In sum, the post-independence state used the tactics of local alliance building, bureaucratic control, and, in the case of Matabeleland, military repression to manage wartime aspirations and post-war challenges to state authority. The measure of democratization and redistribution of resources that

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[98] For a comparison of the Zimbabwean and Angolan cases see Michael McFaul, "Southern African Liberation Movements and Great Power Interventions: Towards a Theory of Revolution in an International Context," (D.Phil: Oxford, 1991), espec. pp. 188-249, 315-355.

has been achieved falls short of the expectations expressed by party committees and nationalist politicians at independence. The Rhodesian legacies of centralized bureaucracies and economic inequality, in combination with the conflict-ridden wartime mobilization process, allowed the post-independence state to reassert central control.