GENDER, DROUGHT, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE (FMD), AND RESILIENCE IN SOUTHERN RHODESIA, 1947-1952

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ABSTRACT

This study uses the 1947-49 drought and associated outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreaks in Southern Rhodesia as a lens through which to examine African responses to colonial-era crises, both natural and manmade. It pays special attention to the gender differentiated challenges experienced by displaced people who migrated into the Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves' in the Umtali district of Manicaland Province after they were dispossessed of their land by the provisions of the Land Apportionment Act (LAA) of 1930, including those affected by the colonial government's Ex-Servicemen Land Resettlement Scheme in the late 1940s. Guided by a combination of oral interviews, archival documents, and a wide range of secondary sources, the article argues that residents of Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves' mitigated the effects of drought and FMD by restructuring economic and social life, strengthening kinship networks, and foraging. Mothers and girls deployed various coping mechanisms, including trapping crop destroying pests that damaged crops for food and searching for local temporary employment (*maricho*) in return for food. Meanwhile, men migrated to urban areas and European-owned farms, where they were employed as wage labours to secure cash. Others who owned stock were forcibly displaced to *madhanga* (enclosures), where they attended to their livestock, which were being quarantined and vaccinated against FMD by colonial state veterinary officials. Efforts made by residents of these reserves to mitigate the disaster's effects stimulated societal transformations, including changes in gendered division of labour.

INTRODUCTION

By the late 1940s, the prevailing socio-economic conditions in 'Native Reserves' in Southern Rhodesia had transformed a significant number of African men into low paid

migrant workers. The drought of 1947-49 and associated outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreaks then further devastated livelihoods and accentuated the out-migration of men in the Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves.'[1] Many trekked in search of wage labour in towns or in European-run farms or mines. Others, meanwhile, were forcibly displaced by the colonial state's veterinary officials' disease control measures to the southern half of the reserves in places that became known as *madhanga* (enclosures), where they attended to their animals, which were being quarantined and vaccinated against FMD.[2]

This article examines the gender-differentiated challenges prompted by these contexts in the Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves' in the Umtali District of the Manicaland Province in eastern Southern Rhodesia from 1947 to 1952. It pays particular attention to displaced households that migrated into the reserves after they were dispossessed of their land by the provisions of the Land Apportionment Act (LAA) of 1930, including those affected by the colonial government's Ex-Servicemen Land Resettlement Scheme in the late 1940s.[3] It examines how the spread of capitalism, increasing food scarcity, and the FMD epizootic affected women, men, and the physical environment, and how these historical agents withstood and recovered from them. It draws on recent developments in environmental history that call for nuanced approaches to historical disasters, and which move away from regarding them as 'natural,' instead incorporating the intricate interplay between natural and human factors in producing catastrophes.

The study argues that a complex interaction between human activity, principally via expanding European capitalism, and local climate variability was responsible for the tragedies faced by displaced people in the Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves' during the period from 1947 to 1952. As this study demonstrates, residents of these reserves mitigated the impacts of drought and FMD by reorganizing social and economic life, strengthening kinship networks, and foraging. Attempts made by people to mitigate the disaster's impacts stimulated transformations in the gendered division of labour and added more burdens to women. Mothers and girls became increasingly involved in roles

[1] National Archives of Zimbabwe (hereafter: NAZ), S235/519 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1947; NAZ, S235/520 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1948.
[2] NAZ, S235/520 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1948.
[3] Anthony John Christopher "Land tenure in Rhodesia," *South African Geographical Journal*, 53, 1 (1971), 43; NAZ, S482/11/43 Post war settlement on land for ex-soldiers,1943-1947; Mathew Ruguwa, "The social and cultural impact of post-war measures on the Zimunya and Bvumba communities, Colonial Zimbabwe, 1940s-1970s," *Journal of African Military History*, 7, 1-2 (2023), 133-140.

that society had hitherto perceived as men's, such as the clearing of new fields and the herding of cattle. Furthermore, mothers and girls deployed various coping strategies to alleviate the impacts of drought, including foraging and searching for local temporary employment (*maricho*) in return for food. By contrast, men primarily contributed to drought mitigation through cash obtained from wage labour. Most of those who owned stock experienced food shortages, as supplies became limited near to cattle quarantine areas.[4] Despite these challenges and changing roles, the family as an institution remained fairly resilient to drought's and FMD's effects.

Evidence for this study was gathered through a combination of oral interviews conducted in 2019 as part of the author's doctoral research, as well as from archival and secondary sources. Oral interviews were conducted with people in the Zimunya and Marange communities, including with officers at Mutare Rural District Council (MRDC). Oral interviews were useful because official records relating to the 1947-49 drought and FMD epizootic in the Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves' did not capture African experiences in detail. Moreover, this method enabled a reflection on everyday activities in Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves.' Oral interviews made it possible to tap invaluable information from non-literate people, who were also among the participants interviewed. Most of the informants ranged from 74 to 93 years. They belonged to different social strata, including traditional healers and ordinary villagers who experienced land expropriation and forced displacement.

DROUGHT AND LIVESTOCK DISEASES IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN HISTORY

Droughts and livestock epizootics bedeviled inhabitants of African societies from the pre-colonial through to the post-independent eras. However, these calamities were more acute in parts of southern Africa from the 1890s onwards, after colonial conquest and the arrival of European settlers.[5] In pre-colonial times, in the face of droughts and other adverse environmental conditions, people responded by invoking indigenous knowledge systems and deploying a wide spectrum of adaptive mechanisms. Settling in fertile and well-watered tracts, opening subsidiary riverine gardens where vegetables and fast-ripening

[4] Author interview with Farirai Marange, 2019.

[5] Elias Mandala, *The End of Chidyerano: A history of food and everyday life in Malawi, 1860-2004* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2005); Megan Vaughan, *The Story of An African Famine: Gender and famine in twentieth century Malawi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); William Beinart and Karen Brown, *African Local Knowledge and Livestock Health: Diseases and treatments in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2013); John M. MacKenzie, "Empire and the ecological apocalypse: The historiography of the imperial environment," *Ecology and Empire: Environmental history of settler societies,* eds. Tom Griffiths and Libby Robin (Edinburgh: Keele University Press, 1997).

crops were grown year round, storing surplus grain for future use, and irrigation were the main defenses against periodic pre-capitalist food shortages.[6]

The imposition of colonial rule and regulations limited African farmers' capacity to deploy such strategies. After the arrival of European settlers in southern Africa, farmers were increasingly forced to counter famine and food shortages by seeking wage labour.[7] Initially, households that owned livestock slaughtered some of their animals to avoid food scarcity during times of drought. During the 1925 drought, for example, the Native Commissioner (NC) of Umtali wrote that 'it is estimated that owing to shortage of grain 839 head of cattle, 6000 goats and 1000 sheep were slaughtered for food' in the Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves.'[8] In the long-run, however, this limited the supply of milk and decreased capital for locally-driven famine relief. Thus, over time, rural Africans became increasingly reliant on colonial relief measures.[9] In the 'Native Reserves' in Southern Rhodesia, these came in the form of public works, such as the construction of dirt roads and gulley reclamation. Those hired to work on these projects were regularly paid in food.[10]

In terms of epizootics, oral traditions in the Zimunya and Marange 'native reserves' suggest that before the arrival of European settlers, livestock diseases were infrequent and, whenever they occurred, people depended on local healing practices. These included the use of specific roots of trees and a variety of herbs, which they chopped and mixed with water to give to sick animals to drink.[11] However, several lethal diseases, such as Rinderpest, 'Rhodesian Redwater,'' Quarter Evil, Bovine Tuberculosis, Anaplasmosis or Gall Sickness, and FMD became more common from the 1890s onwards. Such epizootics represented what historian John M. MacKenzie referred to as an 'ecological apocalypse' associated with the imposition of colonial rule.[12] They also increased people's dependence

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[6] Mandala, *The End of Chidyerano*, 8-9; John IIiffe, *Famine in Zimbabwe, 1890-1960* (Gweru: Mambo Press 1987), 13-20; Baxter Tavuyanago, Nicholas Mutami, and Kudakwashe Mbenene, "Traditional grain crops in pre-colonial and colonial Zimbabwe: A factor for food security and social cohesion among the Shona people," *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 12, 6 (2010), 1-3; Judith Chidziya "A social history of fertility among the Jindwi people during pre-colonial and colonial periods" (Unpublished BA dissertation: University of Zimbabwe, 2007), 1-12; Gerald Chikozho Mazarire, "Reflections on pre-colonial Zimbabwe," in *Becoming Zimbabwe: A history from the pre-colonial period to 2008*, eds. Raftopoulos Brian and Mlambo Alois (Harare: Weaver Press, 2009), 1-38; David Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past*: *Shona dynastic histories and oral traditions* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1994), 30-6.

[7] Vaughan, *The Story of An African Famine*, 102-18; Muchaparara Musemwa "Climate and societal interaction in southwestern Matabeleland, colonial Zimbabwe: The drought of 1964-66 and its antecedents," *Climate and Societal Interaction*, 12, 1, (2019), 15.

[8] NAZ S235/203 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1925.

[9] Mandala, *The End of Chidyerano*, 47-51; IIiffe, *Famine in Zimbabwe*, 72-6.

[10] Author interview with Tendai Zimunya, 2019.

[11] Author interview with Edward Dinhira 2019.

[12] MacKenzie, "Empire and the ecological apocalypse," 219-20.

on services from the colonial state Veterinary Department, which was established in 1896 to control the spread of epizootics. From this period onwards, dipping became the major method of preventing tick-borne and tick-related diseases, such as FMD, East Coast Fever, anaplasmosis, and 'Rhodesian Redwater.'[13]

FMD is highly contagious and affects all cloven-footed animals.[14] The first occurrence of this disease in Southern Rhodesia was in 1931.[15] The colonial veterinary department's policy in response was one of quarantine, vaccination, and extermination. As a bi-product, these policies also threatened the country's dairy and beef industries, including in Umtali District.[16] When FMD broke out in April 1948, the veterinary officials gave orders to all livestock owners in the Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves' and those in the Native Purchase Areas (NPAs) to drive their animals to the Muromo and Mutsago isolation grounds or *madhanga* (enclosures) in the southern parts of the reserves, where cattle, goats, sheep, and donkeys were vaccinated against the disease.[17] While this measure successfully stopped the spread of this disease, it had far-reaching consequences on the socio-economic and environmental landscapes of these two localities.

ZIMUNYA AND MARANGE 'NATIVE RESERVES': GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves' were located in the Umtali district of the Manicaland Province in eastern Southern Rhodesia. Residents of these areas spoke *Chijindwi* and *Chibocha* respectively.[18] 'Native Reserves' were areas specifically created by European colonial states for African families in South Africa, Kenya, and Southern Rhodesia. They symbolised the colonial government's power and commitment to the development of settler capitalist agriculture, undermining African development at the same time.[19] The reserves were situated in isolated areas, away from main roads, railways, and markets, which offered settlers protection from competition from African peasant

[13] Wesley Mwatwara, "The east coast fever outbreaks 1901-1920: An assessment of the conflicting positions of the farmers and the Veterinary Department" (Unpublished BA Dissertation: University of Zimbabwe, 2005), 2-4.
[14] Peter D. Constable, Kenneth W. Hinchcliff, Stanley H. Done, and Walter Gruenberg, *Veterinary Medicine: A textbook of the diseases of cattle, horses, sheep, pigs, and goats*, 11th ed. (Missouri: Elsevier, 2017), 2059.
[15] Mwatwara, "The east coast fever outbreaks," 5.
[16] NAZ, TS/6/1/100 Tuberculosis in Cows 1928; NAZ, N9/1/14 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1911; NAZ, S235/203 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1925.
[17] NAZ, S235/520 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1948.
[18] Chidziya, "A social history of fertility," 1-2; Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past*, 30.
[19] Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia* (London: Heineman, 1977), 78-112.

farmers.[20] Located some 10 kilometres south of the border town of Umtali, the Zimunya reserve shared borders with territories of Chiefs Mutasa to the north, Chirara to the northeast, Mutambara to the south, and Marange to the west. The Marange reserve was situated some 80 kilometres southwest from the town of Umtali. It was the largest reserve in the district. [21] The boundary between the Zimunya and Marange reserves was the Odzi River. It is instructive to note that not all land under Chiefs Zimunya and Marange were designated 'Native Reserves.' The northern and eastern parts of Chief Zimunya's territory and the mountainous northern sections of Chief Marange's area were designated European lands by the provisions of the LAA (1930), which codified the racial division of land. The northwestern part of Marange and the central part of Zimunya were earmarked as NPAs, and these were the areas in which Mukuni, Rowa, and Chinyauhwera NPAs were located (see figure 1).[22]

Many indigenous people who originally lived in the so-called European areas were forcibly displaced into the drier southern areas that constituted the 'Native Reserves.'[23] The environment in Zimunya and Marange reserves was too arid to permit intensive agricultural farming. The areas receive an average annual rainfall of between 450-650mm, much lower than surrounding areas.[24] The Zimunya reserve was characterised by a high mountainous topography, but its location on the leeward side of Bvumba-Tsetsera massifs limits orographic rainfall there.[25] These factors contributed to most local farmers prioritising drought-resistant crops, such as finger millet (*rukweza* or *zviyo*) and bulrush millet (*mhunga*). Initially, only a few families, such as some living along the banks of the Odzi and Save Rivers and in the northern and central parts of Zimunya reserve, cultivated maize, which requires moderate or high rainfall and fertile soils to thrive.[26] However, maize became increasingly prominent over the course of the first half of the twentieth century in order for farmers to meet subsistence and the demands of the cash crop economy. Despite the adverse environment, cattle thrived in these two reserves, leading many people to call the areas, especially Marange, cattle country.[27]

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[20] Ibid.
[21] NAZ, S235/506 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual reports 1928.
[22] NAZ, S 235/519 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1947.
[23] Beach, Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past*, 35-7.
[24] Author interview with Godfrey Sithole, 2019.
[25] Gilbert Pwiti, Ancila Nhamo, Seke Katsamudanga, and Alinah Segobye, "*Makasva*: Archaeological heritage, rain making and healing in southern Africa with special reference to eastern Zimbabwe," *Zimbabwea*, 9 (2007), 103-11.
[26] Author interview with Godfrey Sithole, 2019.
[27] Author interview with Ngaite Nyakunu, 2019.

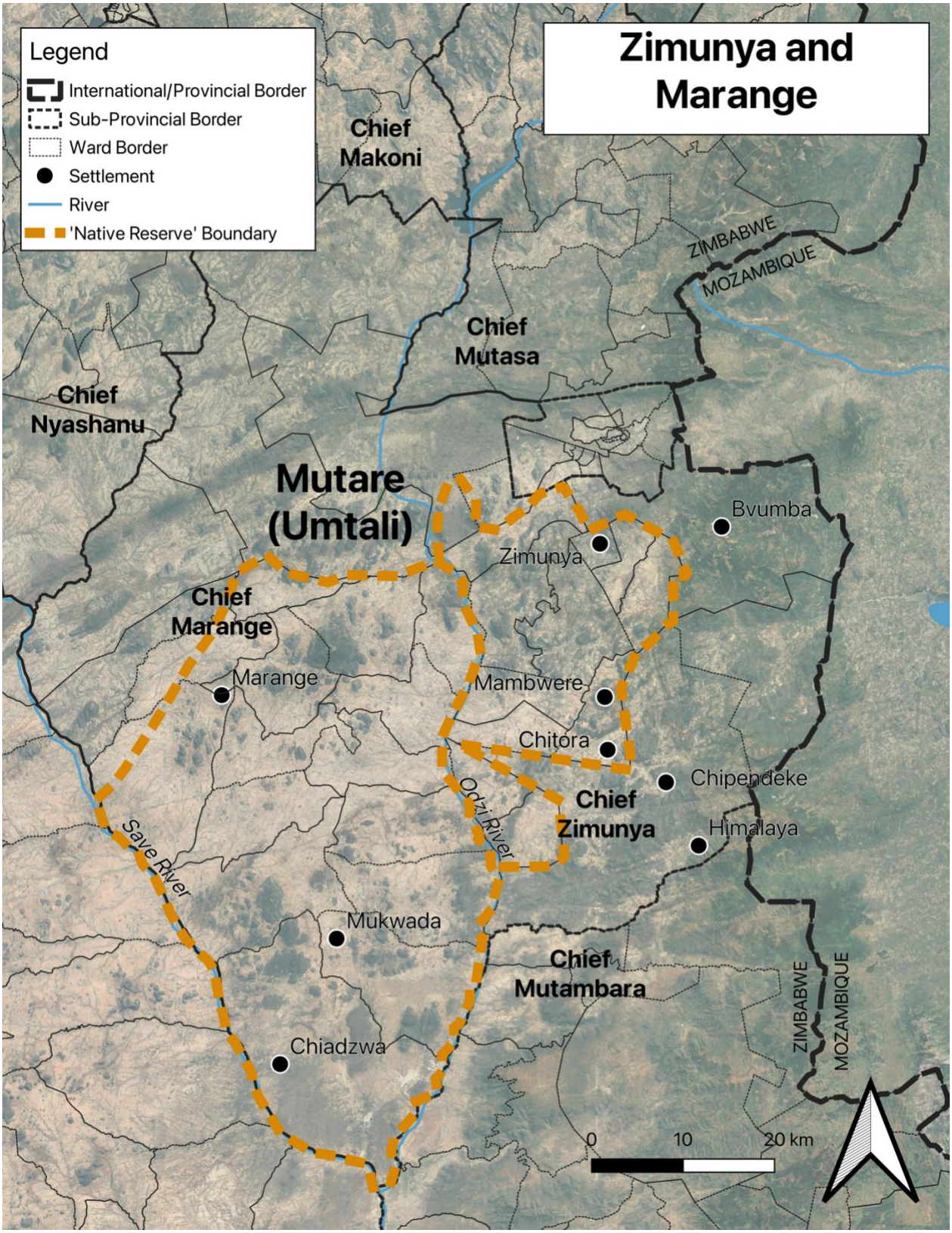

Figure 1. Map showing Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves.' Drawn by Philip Gooding.

UNDERSTANDING THE 1947-49 DROUGHT IN THE ZIMUNYA AND MARANGE 'NATIVE RESERVES'

The 1947-1949 drought and FMD epizootic combined to make what was arguably the most devastating environmental disaster that affected Southern Rhodesia.[28] Among the displaced households in the Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves,' this was perhaps, the worst calamity in their memory. However, the colonial government and Africans in the Zimunya and Marange reserves did not share a common understanding regarding the calamity. Available evidence about the etiology and control of drought illustrates that there was a blame game between these two historical actors.[29] Africans, who were not a homogeneous entity, generally associated repeated droughts, serious food shortages, recurrent locust plagues, disease outbreaks, and challenges they faced in controlling such misfortunes, especially after the 1890s, with the presence of European settlers in their society.[30] The settler government's perspective was that, while climatic irregularities were responsible for the drought, inhabitants of these areas were largely to blame for crop failure.[31] In his annual report of 1947, the Native Commissioner (N.C.) Umtali wrote that instructors (called demonstrators (*madhumeni*)), who moved around in the 'Native Reserves' and provided practical exhibitions of the new farming methods to Africans, warned African farmers not to plant too early in the 1946/47 season, but many 'ignored this advice and suffered accordingly when the expected dry spell came. Those who planted late had good yields.'[32] But other elements, such as the introduction of maize, were also major contributing factors. Some farmers who had planted drought tolerant crops such as bulrush millet (*mhunga*) and finger millet (*rukweza*) or (*zviyo)* had good harvests.[33] The causes of the disaster were multifarious.

There are, broadly speaking, three schools of thought regarding the causes of the disaster. The first 'mainstream' view emphasised environmental conditions. The bulk of this scholarly approach was produced during the 1970s -1980s, and the works stemming from it stressed the importance of environmental factors, such as rainfall patterns, climatic

[28] NAZ, S235/520 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1948; NAZ, S 235/ 519 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1947.
[29] NAZ, S235/519 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1947; Author interview with Wellington Mudhara, 2019.
[30] Author interview with Wellington Mudhara, 2019.
[31] NAZ, S235/519 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1947.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.

variability, and soil productivity.[34] The second school, which challenged the more mainstream approach, deployed Malthusian theory to present a declensionist argument about how a combination of human population expansion and 'primitive' farming and grazing methods contributed to the development of unsustainable agroecological regimes, disturbing the stability of the climate and creating drought and food scarcity.[35] The third school, which takes a liberal view and has come to the fore since the 2000s, seeks to understand disasters in Africa as a combination of human activity (the prevailing economic, political, and social conditions) alongside climatic variability.[36] It is within this more recent school that the following analysis is situated. It emphasizes the importance of colonialist policies in the context of wider climatic and environmental changes in understanding the droughts – arguing that the etiology and impact of the 1947-1949 drought upon the inhabitants of the Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves' can best be understood from the complex interaction between society and climate variability. Such climate-related calamities 'and associated suffering can no longer be cast as acts of God or nature. They are now at least partly linked to human agency and responsibility.'[37]

Climate scientists, geographers, and climatologists have all supported the scientific hypothesis underpinning the idea that human agency has played a role in African climate change in the Anthropocene age.[38] These academics have stressed a relationship between loss of vegetative cover and increased aridity and repeated droughts, especially around desert areas. Jule Charney, for instance, has argued that local land-use systems was a contributory factor to vegetative transformation which in turn disturbed the steadiness of the climate – leading to increased dryness and periodic droughts in the Sahel region.[39] This thesis can also accommodate day-to-day human activities that exposed soil in the Marange and Zimunya reserves. This includes the massive deforestation that supported settlement and farming purposes and trees cut for energy.[40] However, other academics

[34] See, for example: Joseph C. Miller, "The significance of drought, disease and famine in the agriculturally marginal zones of West-Central Africa," *The Journal of African History*, 23, 1 (1982), 17-61; IIiffe, *Famine in Zimbabwe*, 13-20.
[35] J.G. Charney "Dynamics of deserts and drought in the Sahel," *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society*, 101, 428 (1975), 193-200; Joseph Otterman, "Baring high-albedo soils by overgrazing: A hypothesized desertification mechanism," *Science*, 186 (1974), 531-3.
[36] See, for example: Matthew J. Hannaford, "Long-term drivers of vulnerability and resilience to drought in the Zambezi-Save area of Southern Africa, 1505-1830," *Global and Planetary Change*, 166 (2018), 94-106; Jesse Ribot, "Cause and response: Vulnerability and climate in the anthropocene," *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 1, 5 (2014), 667-705; Mandala, *The End of Chidyerano*; Musemwa, "Climate and societal interaction," 5-18.
[37] Ribot, "Cause and response," 667.
[38] See, for example: Ibid.; Charney "Dynamics of deserts and drought," 193-200; Otterman, Baring high-albedo soils," 531-3.
[39] Charney "Dynamics of deserts and drought," 193-200.
[40] Author interview with Joshua Marange, 2019.

have questioned such entrenched assumptions arguing that a declensionist paradigm distorts Africa's changing environments.[41]

Drought in the Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves' was aggravated by developments linked to the capitalist economy, an absence of mechanisms to support rainfed farming in times of prolonged aridity, and conditions provoked by the wartime economy during World War II. Repressive colonial policies, including the LAA (1930), forcibly displaced Africans from agriculturally productive land into 'Native Reserves' that had poor sandy soils and received low and unreliable rainfall. This reduced resilience to climatic extremes in the reserves, which themselves were becoming more regular owing to capitalist-inspired global warming from colonial metropoles. Additionally, the introduction of new crops, especially maize, and demands to produce surpluses for the market eroded people's defense against food insecurity during times of drought. Maize was the preferred crop under the market system owing to its high potential yield.[42] However, its lack of resistance to water stress compared to indigenous staples, such as bull rush millet, finger millet, and sorghum, eroded agricultural resilience.[43] By the early 1940s, the transition to maize, including in drought-prone regions with relatively infertile soils, made residents of this area increasingly vulnerable to the effects of drought.[44] These impositions from the colonial apparatus gradually eroded indigenous mitigative strategies against climatic fluctuations and extremes.

Concurrently, the colonial government failed to provide alternative resources that could build other forms of resilience to the effects of drought. There was a general lack of infrastructure that regulated the agricultural system during periodic droughts in the Marange and Zimunya 'Native Reserves.' There were few dams and irrigation systems, for example. In his study that focused on rural food security in Mutare District, historian Bernard Kusena argued that the colonial government neglected to plan for the effects of drought conditions, and 'any occurrence of a drought, such as the 1947 one, was bound to push the district to the edges of survival in terms of food security and nutrition because of lack of alternatives required to cope with the consequences.'[45] Both written and oral

[41] James Fairhead and Melissa Leach, *Misreading the African Landscape: Society and ecology in a forest savanna mosaic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); William Beinart and Joan McGregor, "Introduction," in *Social History and African Environments*, eds. William Beinart and Joan McGregor (Oxford: James Currey, 2003), 1-5.
[42] Vimbai Kwashirai, "Maize is life!: Maize production and environmental transformation in wartime Rhodesia: 1965-1979," *Global Environment*, 15 (2022), 526-30.
[43] Ibid., 526; James C. McCann, *Maize and Grace: Africa's Encounter with a New World Crop, 1500-2000* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 7.
[44] Author interview with Farirai Marange, 2019.
[45] Bernard Kusena, "Rural food security in Mutare District, Zimbabwe, 1947-2010" (Unpublished PhD Thesis: Rhodes University, 2019), 45.

evidence supports the Kusena's wider application of assertion the Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves,' and shows that in times of shortages, stock owners in these areas trekked to barter cattle for grain with people in the neighbouring Nyanyadzi area of Chimanimani (then Melsetter) district, whose agricultural activities benefitted from an irrigation scheme established in 1932.[46]

Other 'natural' factors also exacerbated food shortages leading up to the 1947- 49 disaster. Locusts and avian pests regularly undermined harvests during the first half of the twentieth century across much of southern Africa.[47] These gregarious crop-destroying pests are migratory. From the 1920s to the 1950s, the Red and Brown locusts, for example, invaded Southern Rhodesia from Portuguese East Africa, Bechuanaland, and Northern Rhodesia (present-day Mozambique, Botswana, and Zambia).[48] The Red-billed queleas sporadically raided from South Africa and Portuguese East Africa.[49] In the reserves under review (especially Marange), meanwhile, small flocks of local species of quelea birds and others, such as sparrows and doves, were probably a bigger hazard. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, they were always present, feeding on local grains, which are core to their diets.[50]

These conditions contributed to poor harvests in the Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves' in 1945- 46.[51] Then, when the crops failed in 1947, granaries were almost empty in many homesteads. During the 1946- 47 planting season, rainfall was fairly regular in October and November, and many people sowed seeds in their fields.[52] In December and early January, the crops looked promising, but the rain stopped in late January, causing them, especially maize, to shrivel in the fields. Those who grew maize in Zimunya reserve virtually harvested nothing. Only a few who had reserved a small portion of land for small grains, such as sorghum and bull rush millet, managed to produce a semblance of a harvest. Similar patterns pervaded Marange reserve, although a larger number of farmers grew small grain crops there, leading to fairly regular harvests for a number of

[46] NAZ, S235/519 Native Commissioner Umtali, Annual report, 1946; Author interview with Peter Mutsago, 2019.
[47] Peter Ward and Reginald Charles Rainey, "Rational strategies for the control of queleas and other migrant bird pests in Africa," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 287, 1022 (1979), 290-4; Peter Uledi and Godfrey Hove, "'A war of man against locust!': Locust invasions and anti-locust campaigns in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, 1918-1940s," *South African Historical Journal*, 70, 4 (2019), 689-707.
[48] Uledi and Hove, "'A war of man against locust!'," 690-5.
[49] Ibid., 689-707; Ward and Rainey, "Rational strategies for the control of queleas," 290-4.
[50] Author interview with Joshua Marange, 2019.
[51] See, for example: NAZ S235/519 Native Commissioner Umtali, Annual report, 1946; NAZ S235/519, Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1947; Author interview with Farirai Marange, 2019.
[52] NAZ, S235/519 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1947.

households.[53] Commenting on this pattern, the Native Commissioner of Umtali noted that, 'the 1946/47 season which showed an almost total failure of crops in many districts was not so severe towards the natives of the Umtali district. Parts of the Maranke Reserve had total failure, but some areas reaped fair crops especially *mhunga* [bull rush millet]. The yield was low in Rowa N.P.A. Chinyauhwera N.P.A and Zimunya Reserve.'[54] Essentially, those who resisted capitalist and colonialist demands for marketized cash crops were among those best positioned to maintain agricultural outputs during an extreme period of drought.

Meanwhile, the colonial government failed to enact effective relief measures. Many factors, ranging from a lack of adequate expertise to handle the problem of drought and crop-destroying pests, undercapitalization, capitalistic desire to make profits, and above all, racial segregation, contributed to the failure of the colonial government to limit food scarcity. European private traders exploited drought by selling relief grain at inflated prices beyond the reach of people in the 'Native Reserves.' Evidence suggests that during the late 1940s and 1950s, the price of a bag of grain was too high under the famine relief program to help the needy. While a bag of grain was priced between 23 to 25 shillings, farm and other workers were typically paid between 10-15 shillings per month.[55] This undermined the rationale of a famine relief program, since only a few well-off households could afford high prices. The vast majority, whose strategies of resilience to the effects of drought had been eroded by the European-settler state, did not have ready access to sustenance.

THE CHANGING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS OF WOMEN IN THE 'NATIVE RESERVES'

Drought coincided with the outbreak of FMD in April 1948. This accentuated the general trend of male out-migration, with the result profoundly transforming the socio-economic and cultural landscapes in the Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves.'[56] During the period from 1947 to 1952, one or more adult male household members were away from home as a migrant worker. By May 1948, male labour absenteeism was already an entrenched feature in the 'Native Reserves.'[57]

[53] Author interview with Tavengwa Chishakwe, 2019.
[54] NAZ, S235/519 Native Commissioner Umtali, Annual report 1947.
[55] Author interview with Jacob Muradzikwa, 2019.
[56] Author interview with Tavengwa Chishakwe, 2019.
[57] Author interview with Wellington Dinhira, 2019.

This out-migration accelerated transformations in the gendered division of labour. Women, in the absence of their husbands, were increasingly pushed to perform multiple, new, and heavy tasks that society had hitherto regarded as belonging to men. During and after the 1947-49 drought and epizootic, mothers and girls challenged the gendered division of labour that seemed 'to be rigid, [with] unchanging categories'[58] in the pre-capitalist era, and became increasingly involved in a variety of economic activities, such as constructing shelter, clearing new fields, and using ox-drawn ploughs to cultivate.[59] Women whose husbands were migrant workers when people in Pfuna (an area under the jurisdiction of Headman Nyakunu of the Zimunya chieftainship) were forcibly displaced by the Ex-Servicemen Land Resettlement Scheme in the late 1940s faced a difficult time doing all the taxing work needed to start new homesteads in the 'Native Reserves.'[60] A number of women, for example, *mbuya* (grandmother) Grace Mbiza and Lydia Makanda, mobilized resources required for building shelter. *Mbuya* Mbiza, who migrated from Pfuna during the 1947 harvest season, recalled how she performed temporary employment (*maricho*) in return for grain that she grinded and used to mobilize a work party (*humwe*) to help her build new shelter:

> In order to mobilize labour required to construct new huts, I worked for a week at a neighbour's field harvesting *mhunga* [bull rush millet] and *mapfunde* [sorghum] that survived the drought. I was given a sack full of millet as my pay – which I grinded to produce flour to brew beer. When the beer was ready, I called on neighbours to come and help me construct shelter. Many women and a few men came to help me.[61]

Temporary employment (*maricho*) was essentially a cultural expression of redistributing labour and food resources embedded in Shona society. Under this system, a person would carry out piece-work for neighbours and was usually paid in food. The practice was largely confined to women, and it became prominent in the Zimunya and Marange communities from the colonial through to the post-independence era. Although it was often practiced

[58] Elizabeth Schmidt, "Farmers, hunters, and gold-washers: A re-evaluation of women's roles in precolonial and colonial Zimbabwe," *African Economic History*, 17 (1988), 47.
[59] Author interview with Shorai Mukora, 2019.
[60] Soon after World War II, several African families in the so-called European areas were forcibly displaced from their ancestral lands by the Ex-Servicemen Resettlement Scheme. NAZ, S482/11/43 Post war settlement on land for ex-soldiers, 1943-1947; Ruguwa, "The social and cultural impact of post-war measures," 121-50.
[61] Author interview with Grace Mbiza, 2019.

at harvesting and planting time when there was a lot of heavy work, it was a particularly crucial survival strategy for mothers and girls throughout the drought of 1947-49.[62]

In some cases, women were also involved in the construction of shelters. *Mbuya* Lydia Makanda, who was a teenager around the late 1940s, explained that when her family relocated to the Mabvengwa area of the Marange reserve, her father constructed one hut only and then left for Bulawayo to search for work, while Lydia's mother, Lydia, and several neighbours constructed the rest of the huts.[63] From the late 1940s onwards, it also became common to see women clearing thorn bushes and cutting out small trees in their fields as they prepared for the new planting season. Several women and girls in families that had acquired livestock were additionally involved in herding animals and hitching oxen to a plough and tilling the land – roles uncommon for women before the 1940s.[64]

Day-to-day challenges experienced by mothers feeding their families deepened at the height of the 1947-52 crisis. Household members, especially children, counted on their mothers during meal times, yet granaries were bare. Shortages of food dramatically affected people's diet and the frequency of meals. Under normal circumstances, a typical Shona household depended on three meals a day. The main meal was usually consumed in the evening and, in many families, it consisted of thick porridge (*sadza*) and leaf vegetables (*muriwo*). *Sadza* was (and remains) the staple food.[65] It is cooked from fine flour obtained after grinding grains, such as sorghum, finger millet, bull rush millet, and (later) maize.[66] However, by December 1947, skipping meals was ubiquitous, especially among the poor, and several were unable to consume *sadza* daily.[67] One informant recounted how their female-headed household, which had relocated to the Mabiya area of the Zimunya reserve, spend three continuous days depending on forest produce.[68]

Nevertheless, oral evidence suggests that kinship networks and the traditional Shona concept of food sharing became an ever-deeper mechanism of redistributing food resources to alleviate the impacts of scarcity. This system stipulated that no-one was supposed to starve when somebody had a surplus of food.[69] It emphasized that a family should invite visitors and passers-by to join at the point of or when already consuming food. A household that yielded an unusually productive harvest and distributed part of

[62] Ibid.
[63] Author interview with Lydia Makanda, 2019.
[64] Author interview with Shorai Mukora, 2019.
[65] Author interview with Grace Mbiza, 2019.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Author interview with Lydia Makanda, 2019.
[68] Author interview with Jesca Mutepfa, 2019.
[69] Author interview with Kateria Matanhire, 2019.

their yield to neighbours who experienced bad harvests was always admired and respected by society.[70] Such a family was regarded as generous, and it was commonly visited by different people. Conversely, a household that was not ready to share food with other people was dishonoured. Constant food sharing was a crucial marker of Shona culture succinctly captured in the proverbs: *Muenzi mupfuuri haapedzi dura* (literally: A guest is just a passer-by he/she does not consume all food in the granary) and *Ukama igasva hunozadziswa nokudya* (Relationship is a half- measure which is filled by being given food). Their meanings are: sharing food was the hallmark of solidarity.[71]

Starvation, though, has the potential to subvert society's norms. Elias Mandala's study of the Mang'anja people of the Tchiri Valley of colonial Nyasaland (Malawi) argues that repeated food shortages eroded the traditional concept of *chidyerano*, in which meals were shared by different families within the same locality.[72] Thus, life histories gathered in this study indicate that some people were stingy as well. One instance of a parsimonious mother who pounded and ground grain at night in her hut as a strategy to avoid beggars was cited by three different informants in the Rombe area of the Marange communal area.[73] Other families pretended to be starving, yet they had food in their homes. Such reports suggest that not all people were willing to redistribute food to neighbours and friends in times of shortages, and that there was a degree of tension associated with redistribution. However, unlike among the Mang'anja people, complete erosion of redistributive practices did not take place. Indeed, for the most part, patterns of redistribution appear to have been strengthened as a collective response to the challenges of scarcity.

Foraging was another crucial coping strategy for women during the 1947-52 crisis. Gathering wild plants and insects was part of a series of mechanisms largely carried out by women before the arrival of European settlers.[74] Thus, the availability of a variety of edible wild fruits and insects in the Zimunya and Marange reserves provided an important supplementary food supply in times of scarcity.[75] The importance of foraging increased dramatically among many poor households. Almost all informants interviewed indicated

[70] Ibid.
[71] Mordikai A. Hamutyinei, *Tsumo-Shumo: Shona proverbial lore and wisdom*, vol. 2 (Gweru: Mambo Press 1987), 47, 219.
[72] Mandala, *The End of Chidyerano*, 14-15.
[73] Author interview with Mwaerenga Nenzema, 2019; Author interview with Paradzai Gamunorwa, 2019; Author interview with Julia Chitsiku, 2019.
[74] David N. Beach, "The Shona economy: Branches of production," in *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa*, eds. Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons (London: Heinemann, 1977), 40.
[75] Author interview with Tendai Zimunya, 2019.

that members of their family gathered forest products to alleviate the impact of drought at some point. Mothers and girls relied on their knowledge of the local area and frequently walked into forests to gather foodstuffs, including amarula (*mapfura*) uapaca kirkiana (*mazhanje*), and smelly-berry fingerleaf (*tsubvu*).[76] Residents of the Zimunya reserve regularly travelled to the Chingome and Chiadzwa areas of the Marange reserve in search for baobab fruits (*mauyu*) which were abundant in the thick forests.[77]

Moreover, despite destroying crops, locusts and quelea birds represented an alternative source of protein. Because the colonial government did not support people in the reserves in their fight against the menace of quelea birds and locusts for the benefit of agriculture,[78] women, young girls, and boys in the Zimunya and Marange reserves trapped them for food. They relied on indigenous knowledge to catch these highly nutritious pests, which were later cooked and served either as supportive food or stew during mealtimes.[79] For birds, trappers cooked a thin sticky liquid of sap tapped from the trunk of a tree known locally as *chisimbo* to prepare a gluey paste called birdlime (*urimbo*).[80] They then spread it on the branches of a tree near to the birds' day-roots, which were usually located in thick cover in the forest or riverbanks, and hid nearby waiting for birds to come. When the birds arrived and landed, they would stick immediately, and the trappers would come and catch them.[81] A combination of drought and quelea birds that regularly affected crops pushed residents of Zimunya and Marange to turn increasingly to the natural environment to earn a living during a time of crisis.

The simplest way to catch locusts was to wake up before sunrise and walk to areas, such as the plains, where they settled to rest at night and catch them before they were able to fly. *Mbuya* Kamuzhanje of the Masvaure area in Marange remembered how she would wake up at dawn and pursue locusts in the prairies:

> *Kubata ndongwe hufumira mwanangu!* [literally : In order to catch locusts, one has to wake up very early in the morning my son!] Young mothers in our village, myself, young girls and boys woke up in the early hours of the morning and walk to the grasslands and fields where we caught

[76] Kenneth Brockington Wilson, "Ecological dynamics and human welfare: A case study of population, health and nutrition in Zimbabwe" (Unpublished PhD Thesis: University College London, 1990), 69-79.
[77] Author interview with Jesca Mutepfa, 2019.
[78] Uledi and Hove, "'A war of man against locust!'," 693-695.
[79] Author interview with Witness Kamuzhanje, 2019.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Author interview with Shylet Matiza, 2019.

> *ndongwe*[locust]. We went there with about three or four empty sacks and came back with them full of *ndongwe*. We had to quickly move to these places before sunrise because at this time locusts are unable to fly due to cold weather. If you go to the plains after sunrise – when it is warm – hoping to catch these insects you will not get anything. At this time, they will be alert and if they hear any sound or sense any danger, they will quickly disappear.[82]

The Shona proverb used by *mbuya* Kamuzhanje in the opening sentence of the interview cited above means: timing is a crucial factor for one to be successful in doing a perfect job. Locust plagues were embedded in the history of inhabitants of these areas. People demonstrated that they were not passive historical actors who were constrained by an environment that experienced recurring droughts and frequent invasions by crop-consuming pests. They responded to these challenges by studying the habitat and behaviour of birds and locusts, and they creatively designed ways to catch and make a living out of them during periods of environmental stress. Although these pests were an important additional source of food during difficult times, their value was not equivalent to the crops they damaged.[83]

MEN AND MIGRANCY IN AND BEYOND THE 'NATIVE RESERVES'

Men who moved within and beyond the 'Native Reserves' did so at both short- and long-term scales. Those who moved for short-term reasons were among those who remained behind in the reserves to look after livestock.[84] Such men, however, were forced to temporarily migrate either to the quarantine areas (*madhanga*) or to barter and sell livestock for grains in other locations such as Nyanyadzi area of Chimanimani (then Melsetter) district, where farmers made use of an irrigation project and derived benefits, especially in times when rain-fed crops failed.[85] Men who migrated for long periods generally travelled to European-owned farms and mines and to urban areas. They were largely motivated by the need to provide cash for their households.[86]

Sekuru Muradzikwa, who was a boy when his family relocated into the Zimunya reserve in the mid-1930s, stated that he was not employed during the drought and

[82] Author interview with Witness Kamuzhanje, 2019.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Author interview with Mathew Nyabeze, 2019.
[85] Author interview with Peter Mutsago, 2019. See also: NAZ S235/519 Native Commissioner Umtali, Annual report, 1946.
[86] Author interview with Mathew Nyabeze, 2019.

epizootic of 1947-49. Hardship and the need to support his poor polygamous family, however, pushed him to join other men searching for wage employment in neighbouring European-owned farms.[87] Although the general living and working conditions for Africans employed in European-run farms and mines during this period were unpleasant, the majority of men working in such places came back home with money.[88] People needed this money to pay taxes, meet the costs of educating children, and purchase clothing and farming equipment, such as ploughs. Additionally, in seasons and years of poor harvests, it was especially important for purchasing supplementary food for the households.[89]

Several oral reports, however, indicate that the environmental conditions between 1947 and 1952 put stress on these arrangements. Some men returned empty handed, while others did not return at all.[90] For example, one man who was married to three wives in the Chipfatsura area of the Marange reserve, left his family in August 1948 and trekked to the gold fields of the Witwatersrand (South Africa) to look for wage labour, but he never came back. Elders in the area speculated that he was killed by thugs, while others said he committed suicide.[91] Another similar case from 1949 indicates that a father in the Hukuimwe area of the Zimunya reserve went to search for urban employment and failed to return to his family until his wife followed him. [92] *Mbuya* Chimuti who was a girl around the late 1940s, stated that her father went to search for employment in Mutare and stayed there for two years before coming back home. 'My mother,' she continued, 'later followed and found him cohabiting with another woman. They came back home together, and my father never attempted to go and seek for work again.'[93] The environmental crisis that took place during the period from 1947 to 1952 negatively affected the family institution. Some households never re-united with their family members who had moved beyond the reserves to look for wage labour, while other household members were only able to come together again after one or two years.

As the latter account indicates, there were some African women who were already residents of colonial Zimbabwe's urban areas by this time. Some were involved in informal relationships (*mapoto*) with men, who had left their wives in the reserves.[94] There

[87] Author interview with Jacob Muradzikwa, 2019.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Michael Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples: An ethnography of the contemporary Shona, with special reference to their religion* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 2004), 65-97.
[90] Author interview with Jacob Muradzikwa, 2019
[91] Author interview with Elijah Marange, 2019.
[92] Author interview with Hondo Chimuti (pseudonym), 2019.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Theresa Barnes, *"We Women worked so hard": Gender, urbanization, and social reproduction in colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, 1930-1956* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann 1999), 44-73.

were also cases of 'runaway women' who left the reserves and moved into the urban areas where they provided men with sexual and domestic services in exchange for shelter.[95] These kinds of relationships, of course, were not unique to cities in colonial Zimbabwe. They also took place, for example, in colonial Nairobi where several women perceived these types of relationships as a means of capital accumulation and escaping from challenges linked to patriarchy in the rural areas.[96]

Men who trudged with their animals to the Muromo and Mutsago cattle isolation grounds in 1948 faced different challenges. In making this journey, men responded to established cultural norms in Shona society that stipulated that all matters concerning cattle, including herding, hitching ploughs or sledges, selling, and monitoring, were under their charge.[97] The *madhanga*, though – in which they were obliged to reside for four months – were thick with forest, and there was no accommodation or resources that were used for everyday life.[98] Thus, bachelors and fathers constructed makeshift shelters where they slept during the night. To eke out an existence where food supplies were not easily accessible, they depended on indigenous knowledge to tap various food resources from the forest.[99] Thus, gathering wild fruits and edible insects – a task which society perceived as belonging to women's traditional sphere and which grew in prominence in the reserves during 1947-49 crisis – became a crucial survival strategy that men also resorted to in the forest. [100]

Additionally, oral sources indicate the importance to hunting wild animals. One informant, for example, indicated that stock owners who originated from the same village or from across larger geographical areas collaborated to hunt in the forest and on mountains, such as Makate and Dema.[101] While some people preferred the conventional method of using dogs to track animals, others preferred to hunt as individuals. *Sekuru* Nyabeze recounted that he used snares to catch small animals like dassie (*mbira*), rabbit (*tsuro*), and duiker (*mhembwe*).[102] After returning from a successful hunting expedition, men skinned the carcass of animals and sprinkled salt or ashes of specific plants (which were used in the absence of salt) to dry and preserve game meat. This they then stored and

[95] For more details, see: Diana Jeater, "No place for a women: Gwelo Town, Southern Rhodesia, 1894-1920," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 26, 1 (2000), 29-42.
[96] Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in colonial Nairobi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 2-34.
[97] Author interview with Mathew Nyabeze, 2019.
[98] Author interview with Elijah Marange, 2019.
[99] Author interview with Willard Matope, 2019.
[100] Author interview with Elijah Marange, 2019.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Author interview with Mathew Nyabeze, 2019

later took home as biltong for their families. During the 1947-49 environmental crisis, several households in Zimunya and Marange reserves benefited from biltong prepared by stock owners at *madhanga*.[103]

Finally, some men from more well-off households could travel to purchase food with cash and livestock. While the poor were not able to buy maize, a few well-off families countered food scarcity by purchasing it at (very high) prices from European traders. Such households also exchanged cattle for grain and slaughtered livestock for food.[104] *Sekuru* Mutsago's family, for example, bartered cattle for maize with people in the Nyanyadzi area.[105] *Sekuru* Jarati's family was one among those that relied on slaughtering goats and cattle to alleviate the effects of drought. He stated that when crops failed in the late 1940s and 1950s, his father, at different times killed a bull, a cow, goats, and sheep to feed his children and many relatives who lived with them, as well as other people who frequently visited.[106]

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Drought and FMD had far reaching consequences on Marange and Zimunya communities. Between 1947 and 1949, shortage of pasture and the epizootic contributed to the deaths of animals. Additionally, prolonged aridity lasting into the early 1950s prompted the water table to drop, meaning that water sources in the two reserves dried out.[107] Consequently, humans and domestic and wild animals faced challenges accessing water to drink. *Sekuru* Zimunya explained that instead of driving livestock to water holes in the villages where animals regularly drank, many, if not all, stock owners had to drive their cattle, donkeys, goats, and sheep to the Save and Odzi – year-round flowing rivers that were far away from many homesteads. [108]

In the 1940s, the implementation of the Natural Resource Act (1941) that coincided with the outbreak of FMD in the Zimunya and Marange reserves created a dilemma for the government.[109] The policy dictated that the number of livestock should be limited

[103] Ibid.
[104] Author interview with Peter Mutsago, 2019.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Author interview with Ranganai Jarati, 2019.
[107] NAZ, S235/519 Native Commissioner Umtali, Annual report 1947.
[108] Author Interview with Tendai Zimunya, 2019.
[109] Graham Child and Brian Child, "The conservation movement in Zimbabwe: An early experiment in devolved community based regulation," *African Journal of Wildlife Research*, 45, 1 (2015), 1-16; NAZ, S235/520 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1948.

according to the perceived carrying capacity of an area to avoid environmental degradation.[110] At the same time, the colonial government wanted to protect the dairy and beef industries, which were crucial sectors of the colonial economy. Thus, they desired to limit the area of African-owned livestock to avoid the spread of cattle diseases to white settlers' farms.[111] Against this background, during the 1948 FMD outbreak, the colonial government ignored its own environmental protection measures in reserves to control the disease. The colonial state veterinary officials set up a barricade across the middle part of the Marange reserve and a 'livestock free' belt to separate the quarantine areas from European farms located along the northern part of the reserves.[112] However, this effort of creating a *cordon sanitaire* had a limited effect on the disease's spread. European settlers' farms were also affected, and cattle were killed. [113]

Whether viewed as 'agents' or 'actants,' livestock confined to the quarantine grounds in the Zimunya and Marange reserves negatively impacted the environment.[114] Both written and oral evidence suggests that restricting infected animals to a small grazing area profoundly damaged the grassland and arboreal vegetation.[115] Confinement of livestock in the enclosures exacerbated the shortage of fodder that was already poor in quantity and quality due to drought. There was stiff competition for pasture at the isolation grounds. In addition to cattle, the place also accommodated donkeys, sheep, and goats.[116] Unlike cattle, which use their tongues to rip grass and leaves, sheep and goats use their teeth to bite fodder. They eat grass very close to the ground, with the result that the soil is easily exposed.[117] As livestock flooded over the quarantine areas, they grazed almost all grass and bush in these fenced spaces. When the veterinary officials terminated the system in August 1948, shrubs and grass in these areas were drastically reduced in height and density.[118] According to one informant, by the end of the quarantine program, 'a desert was already set in motion in the Mutsago and Muromo areas.'[119] Several cattle died due to a combination of shortage of pasture and the disease. *Sekuru* Marange explained that

[110] Child and Child, "The conservation movement in Zimbabwe," 1-4.
[111] NAZ, S235/520 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1948.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Animals are now recognized as historical 'agents' by some historians and as 'actants' by others. See: Philo Chris and Wilbert Chris (eds.), *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: New geographies of human-animal relations* (London: Routledge, 2000), 1-36.
[115] NAZ S235/520 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1948; Author interview with Elijah Marange, 2019.
[116] NAZ S235/520 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1948.
[117] For more details on environmental consequences caused by sheep, see: Elina Melville, *A Plague of Sheep: Environmental consequences of the conquest of Mexico* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
[118] Author interview with Elijah Marange, 2019; NAZ, S235/520 Native Commissioner, Umtali Annual report 1948.
[119] Author interview with Wellington Matereke, 2019.

he lost his cow, and *sekuru* Nyabeze stated that his ox died of the disease in the first week of his arrival at *madhanga*.[120] *Sekuru* Nyabeze further explained that when people were going back to their respective homes in August, he left behind his cow that was too weak to travel, probably due to both the disease and starvation.[121]

By contrast, the N.C. Umtali's position seemed to celebrate the quarantine policy for rescuing many animals from dying of FMD, while minimizing the short- and long-term effects on the environment: 'Cattle were moved back to their respective reserves in August [1948] but they [were] in quarantine until the end of February 1949. There were very few deaths from Foot and Mouth Disease… Considerable damage was done to grazing in Muromo and South Maranke but it has since recovered.'[122] Additionally, livestock in the quarantine areas did not suffer equally. While cattle were the most affected, sheep, donkeys, and goats were relatively capable of surviving under adverse conditions. [123]

CONCLUSION

The article has highlighted the effects of a drought and epizootic on Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves' in 1947-49. The range of evidence presented suggests that while a multiplicity of factors contributed to the disaster, those linked to anthropogenic activities, especially growing European capitalism, played a leading role. Attempts made by the displaced people in the Zimunya and Marange 'Native Reserves' to alleviate the impact of drought and FMD added to the transformations in the gendered division of labour, with the result that women and girls increasingly carried out tasks that pre-capitalist Shona society had perceived as belonging to men. Such roles included hitching oxen to ploughs to till the land, herding cattle, and the initial clearing of new crop fields. In addition to these roles, women continued doing their daily chores, such as cleaning huts, fetching firewood and domestic water, and preparing meals for their families. Foraging and trapping bird pests that damaged crops for consumption was also done by young women and children, while grandmothers and grandfathers kept guard in the fields so that neither stray livestock nor baboons and monkeys damaged crops in riverine gardens.

Men played an equally crucial role in coping with drought and FMD. A number of them migrated to European-owned farms and mines and to urban areas to seek waged

[120] Author interview with Mathew Nyabeze, 2019; Author interview with Elijah Marange, 2019.
[121] Author interview with Mathew Nyabeze, 2019.
[122] NAZ, S235/520 Native Commissioner Umtali Annual report 1948.
[123] Ibid.

employment. When FMD broke out in 1948, veterinary officials' disease control measures forcibly displaced male adults and their animals from households that owned stock to cattle isolation areas, where livestock were inoculated against the disease. At Muromo and Mutsago, where food supplies were limited, forest produce became a major pillar of survival. During their stay at this place, several men were involved in hunting activities and returned home with dried game meat, which they provided to their families.

Drought had a differential impact on society. The variation was dictated by gender, age, types of crops grown by people, and social difference. The poor increasingly depended on searching for temporary work, invoking indigenous knowledge to exploit forest resources, whereas a few wealthy people were able to purchase grain at high prices at the MCB and feed their families. The well-off also took advantage of their assets, such as cattle, sheep, and goats, to slaughter for consumption and counter the impact of drought. Although the colonial state's livestock quarantine method was successful in controlling the outbreak of FMD, it had devastating impacts on the environment. In addition to contributing to the death of cattle due to starvation, it ignored conservation measures and severely damaged vegetation at the quarantine areas.