



SIMON MUZENDA SCHOOL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, ARCHAEOLOGY AND  
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

SHANGWE CHIEFTAINSHIP: SUCCESSION DISPUTES IN THE NEMANGWE  
CHIEFDOM AND THE QUEST FOR LEGITIMACY cc 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>

BY

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MO41330

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE  
MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN AFRICAN HISTORY

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NOVEMBER: 2019

MASVINGO, ZIMBABWE

## DECLARATION

I, **Elvis Tsvangirayi Siziva** declare that “Shangwe Chieftainship: Succession Disputes in the Nemangwe Chiefdom and the Quest for Legitimacy cc 19th - 21<sup>st</sup> is my own work. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Elvis Tsvangirayi Siziva

**November 2019**

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late father Mabasa Tsvangirayi Siziva ,my Wife Dorcas Hwati,My mother Shuwayi Tsvangirai and my little children Allan Tsvangirayi Siziva and Ashylet Siziva

## ABSTRACT

The Shangwe under Chireya were not the first to settle on the Mufungabutsi plateau. The original Shangwe on the Mapfungabutsi plateau were the Karanga under Nyamusasa, Mubvuma, Mufunga, Mupare and Manyowi. According to oral traditions Nyamusasa was the paramount ruler while Mubvuma, Mufunga, Mupare and Manyowi were his sub rulers. These were the first to adopt the term Shangwe. Chireya and his people established themselves on the Mapfungabusi Plateau after conquering the local inhabitants who were the Karanga Shangwe. Chireya gave part of his territory to Nemangwe Kurikona during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus the Nemangwe chiefdom is a product of the demise of the Karanga Shangwe chiefdom under Mafunga. After the reign of Vhumakuregwa the Nemangwe chiefdom began to experience some chieftaincy wrangles. Some wrangles degenerated into violent conflicts. The wrangles were a result of defective succession systems, colonial distortions and political ubiquitous. However, some efforts were put to resolve some of the disputes by the Nemangwe jurisprudence and the contemporary but up to 2019 succession disputes remain a thorn in the chiefdom.

The focal point in the dissertation is the quest for legitimacy among the Nemangwe feuds. Throughout the dissertation the central question is to what extent did the Nemangwe feuds contest for the chieftaincy stool between the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The question attempts to problematize the causes of the succession disputes in the Nemangwe chiefdom and to interrogate the efficacy of some solutions to the disputes.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to the support, contributions, generosity and tolerance that different organisations and individuals extended to me at various stages in the production of this dissertation. However, the errors of content and analyses remain my own.

First, I would like to express a huge debt of appreciation to my supervisor Dr Ngonidzashe Marongwe for believing in this research, for his exhortation, for patiently and critically reading through and for providing meaningful and critical comments on all the numerous drafts. His critical comments challenged me to think deeply and in ways that have strengthened this dissertation. He also advised me on new sources, helped me to appreciate new analyses and to consider new methodologies.

Dr Renias Ngara provided useful conceptualisation hints at the start of the writing of the thesis. A heartfelt gratitude goes to my parents, my mother and my fiancée Dorcas, my children Allan and Ashylet and my aunt Naume Tiyeri whose everyday existence provided me with strong inspiration and encouragement. I wish too to thank them for their love, prayers and moral support. I received generous, useful and thought-provoking comments as well as intellectual stimulation from fellow masters' students. I would also like to express my gratitude to the kind assistance that I got from the staff at the following libraries: Great Zimbabwe University and Midlands State University.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the anonymous informants for their responses and insights that directed of research. Without their narratives that form the bedrock of this thesis, my interpretations and analyses would have been weaker.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DA- District Administrator

DC- District Commissioner

MDC- Movement for Democratic Change

SU- Support Unit

ZANU PF- Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front

## LIST OF MAPS

Map showing the Nemangwe area

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## Chapter One: General Introduction

Chieftainship wrangles remain a common feature in most of the chiefdoms in Zimbabwe despite the presence of clearly defined succession systems, spirit mediums and indigenous councils. Therefore, the essence of this thesis is to present a reconstruction of the chieftainship succession disputes that rocked the Nemangwe chiefdom between the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thrust shall be put on the genesis of succession disputes, their causes and the role of the indigenous jurisprudence and the contemporary institutions in dealing with succession disputes in Nemangwe. The first chapter shall provide the background of the study, its objectives, statement of the problem, research questions, and significance of study, limitations and delimitations. These shall guide the research methodology and presentation. The research shall be based on interviews and participant observations. There is no denial that the most important factor that leads to succession disputes in a number of chiefdoms is defective succession principles. However defective succession systems are compounded by other factors which include colonial policies and political atmosphere.

### Background of the study

The Nemangwe chiefdom is found in Gokwe South District. It is part of the Shangwe ethnic groups. The Shangwe people are the inhabitants of Gokwe. The Vashangwe, the original inhabitants of Gokwe prefer to identify themselves as Vakorekore, a mainstream Shona identity as a way of eluding the denigrative nature of the ethnic label applied to them.<sup>1</sup> The Madheruka who appeared in Gokwe during the colonial period because of land dispossession misrepresented the term Shangwe to mean backwardness.<sup>2</sup> As such the term Korekore, replaced the term Shangwe to avoid denigration. Nemangwe is one of the Shangwe chiefs in Gokwe. Nemangwe is answerable to Chireya. Basically Chireya is the paramount chief.<sup>3</sup> All other chiefs including Nemangwe pay allegiance to Chireya. Gokwe is found in the North-Western part of Zimbabwe. It is in ecological

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<sup>1</sup>NAZ, S2929/7/3, Delineation Report, 1963-1965

<sup>2</sup>P. S. Nyambara, *Madheruka* immigrants and the *Shangwe*: Ethnic identities and the culture of modernity in Gokwe, north-western Zimbabwe, 1963- 1979 (unpublished)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

region IV. This region experiences semi-arid and arid conditions with annual rainfall from 250-500mm. Its temperature vacillates at 40<sup>0</sup>C.<sup>4</sup>

There are basically three major chiefs in Gokwe that are Chireya, Nemangwe and Njelele. Other headsmen include Tjabi, Pashu, Nkoka, Mashame, Gumunyu and Nembudziya. It was largely occupied by the Shangwe.<sup>5</sup> Gokwe region was home to the Shangwe ethnic group and prior to the 1950s the region was sparsely populated.<sup>6</sup>

The Shangwe like any other Shona clan came from Guruuswa and they established the Shava totem confederacy which was led by the paramount chief Chireya.<sup>7</sup> Initially the Shangwe were part of the Rozvi community under Changamire. They were famous for growing and processing tobacco which they shaped like loaves or sometimes like cones.<sup>8</sup> The Shangwe however, seem to have been culturally and socially absorbed by other ethnic communities and their strong Rozvi language which was virtually extinct. Some Shangwe clans have been culturally incorporated into the Tonga or Kalanga or Ndebele of Matabeleland North and the Midlands province.<sup>9</sup>

The Shangwe under Chireya were not the first to settle on the Mupfungabusi plateau. The original Shangwe on the Mupfungabusi plateau were the Karanga under Nyamusasa, Mubvuma, Mufunga, Mupare and Manyowi.<sup>10</sup> According to oral traditions Nyamusasa was the paramount ruler while Mubvuma, Mufunga, Mupare and Manyowi were his sub rulers.<sup>11</sup> These were the first to adopt the term Shangwe. Before the term Shangwe was used the area that was occupied by Nyamusasa and his sub chiefs was simply known as Mapfungabusi. It is suggested that the term Mufunga is short for Mupfungabusi which means 'one who thought about the previous'.<sup>12</sup> When Chikuyochehuma settled in the tsetse infested plateau area of Gokwe he thought about their previous settlement. As

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<sup>4</sup>J. Ford, *The role of trypanosomiasis in African Ecology: A study of the tsetse fly problem*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1971

<sup>5</sup>P. S. Nyambara, *'Madheruka' immigrants and the Shangwe: Ethnic identities and the culture of modernity in Gokwe, north-western Zimbabwe, 1963- 1979* (unpublished).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup>D. N Beach, , *the Shona and Zimbabwe 900-1850: An Outline of Shona History*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1980

<sup>8</sup>S. G Ndlovu, *Rozvis Prevail over Swazi Warriors: In the Patriot April 27 2017*

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup>G. T Ncube: *A History of North-western Zimbabwe, 1850-1960*, Gweru. Mambo Press, 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Interview

such the plateau became known as Mupfungabusi.<sup>13</sup> This translates to the fact that Mufunga's real name was Chikuyochehuma. The Karanga Shangwe under Nyamusasa remained in control of the Mupfungabusi until the eighteenth Century when they were overcome by Chireya.<sup>14</sup> When Chireya destroyed the hegemony of the Karanga he ceded the southern part of his territory to Nemangwe.

When Chireya and his people came into the Mufungabusi area they also adopted the term Shangwe. After defeating the Karanga Shangwe Chireya established a political structure. He became the paramount chief and gave his brothers Njerere and Nemangwe some areas to rule.<sup>15</sup> The first Nemangwe chief was called Kurikona.<sup>16</sup> Chieftainship remains an integral part of the Shangwe tradition. Chieftaincy in Gokwe predates colonialism. Prior to colonialism the Nemangwe chiefdom had a well-established succession system. Since the Shangwe migrated from Guruuswa, they might have adopted Rozvi succession principles. The Shona collateral system of succession baton was handed from founder to his brothers and from the youngest brother to the founder's son and his successive brothers before going back to the eldest son's son.<sup>17</sup> Likewise the succession system of the Nemangwe was hereditary. The royal houses ruled in turns, *madzoro*. In pre-colonial period the royal elders from the successor house were responsible for selecting the successor with the aid of their spirit medium, *svikiro*.<sup>18</sup>

When Kurikona died he was succeeded by his brother Vhumakuregwa. This was in line with the Shangwe hereditary system. The installation of Vhumakuregwa was done by the elders with the aid of the incumbent Chireya and Nevana the spirit medium.<sup>19</sup> It has become a custom that Chireya should be involved in the installation of chiefs and headmen in Gokwe since he is the paramount Shangwe chief.<sup>20</sup> As such, no controversy arose against Vhumakuregwa since the collateral adelphic (tsaka/ house) system was respected. Elders were wise and therefore responsible and accountable. They were the archives of knowledge and the museums of chieftaincies.<sup>21</sup> The elders

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup>D. N Beach, *the Shona and Zimbabwe 900-1850: An Outline of Shona History*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1980

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Augustine Mavhunda 15 July 2019

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Joshua Nemangwe 10 July 2019

<sup>17</sup> M. Pekeshe, Chieftainship Succession: Let the Elders do their role, *The Patriot* October 15 2015

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Headman Nebumhu 11 July 2019

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup>M. Pekeshe, Chieftainship Succession: Let the Elders do their role, *The Patriot* October 15 201

ensured that the house that was supposed to take over power was accorded the customary and hereditary rights. As such prior to colonial period when elders had full authority over issues regarding chieftaincies minor succession disputes were recorded in Nemangwe chiefdom. It was after Nemangwe Marimbizike when the situation began to take another twist.

Marimbizike ruled until the colonial period. Consequently the Nemangwe chiefdom became characterised with succession disputes after the death of Marimbizike.<sup>22</sup> When Marimbizike died Matenganyika was appointed to be regent before the substantive chief was installed.<sup>23</sup> Matenganyika was supposed to rule until the reincarnation (magadziro\ kukomba) ceremony was held. According to the norm the new chief was supposed to be installed after the reincarnation ceremony so that the chief elect would be connected with his ancestors.<sup>24</sup> Though Matenganyika was a regent he was rubber stamped by the colonial regime to become the substantive chief.<sup>25</sup> As a result a dispute arose between Matenganyika and Kachavazungu. According to the hereditary law of the Shangwe ethnic groups, Nemangwe included, Kachavazungu was the legitimate successor to Marimbizike because he was his brother while Matenganyika was Marimbizike's son.<sup>26</sup> To justify his position Matenganyika claimed that Kachavazungu was an adopted son not Chirimumhako's biological son. Matenganyika was able to lead the Nemangwe chiefdom until his death. He died during the post independent era. To try and solve the dispute between the house of Kachavazungu and Marimbizike's house the post independent government installed Kachavazungu's son Herija Masungu Kachavazungu. This solved a problem by creating another problem. The solution created the current squabble between Mike Kachavazungu Nemangwe, Madomasi and Bango. Mike became the regent chief after his father Herija. He is now refusing to hand over the throne to the Bango house on grounds that Matenganyika ruled as a regent chief until his death.<sup>27</sup> It is now a tit for tat situation. Above all Nemangwe is being backed by some political heavy weights.<sup>28</sup> The researcher therefore endeavours to explore how such wrangles have shaped the history of the Nemangwe chieftainship. The research shall consider the relations

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Simba Kachavazungu Nemangwe 10 July 2019

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

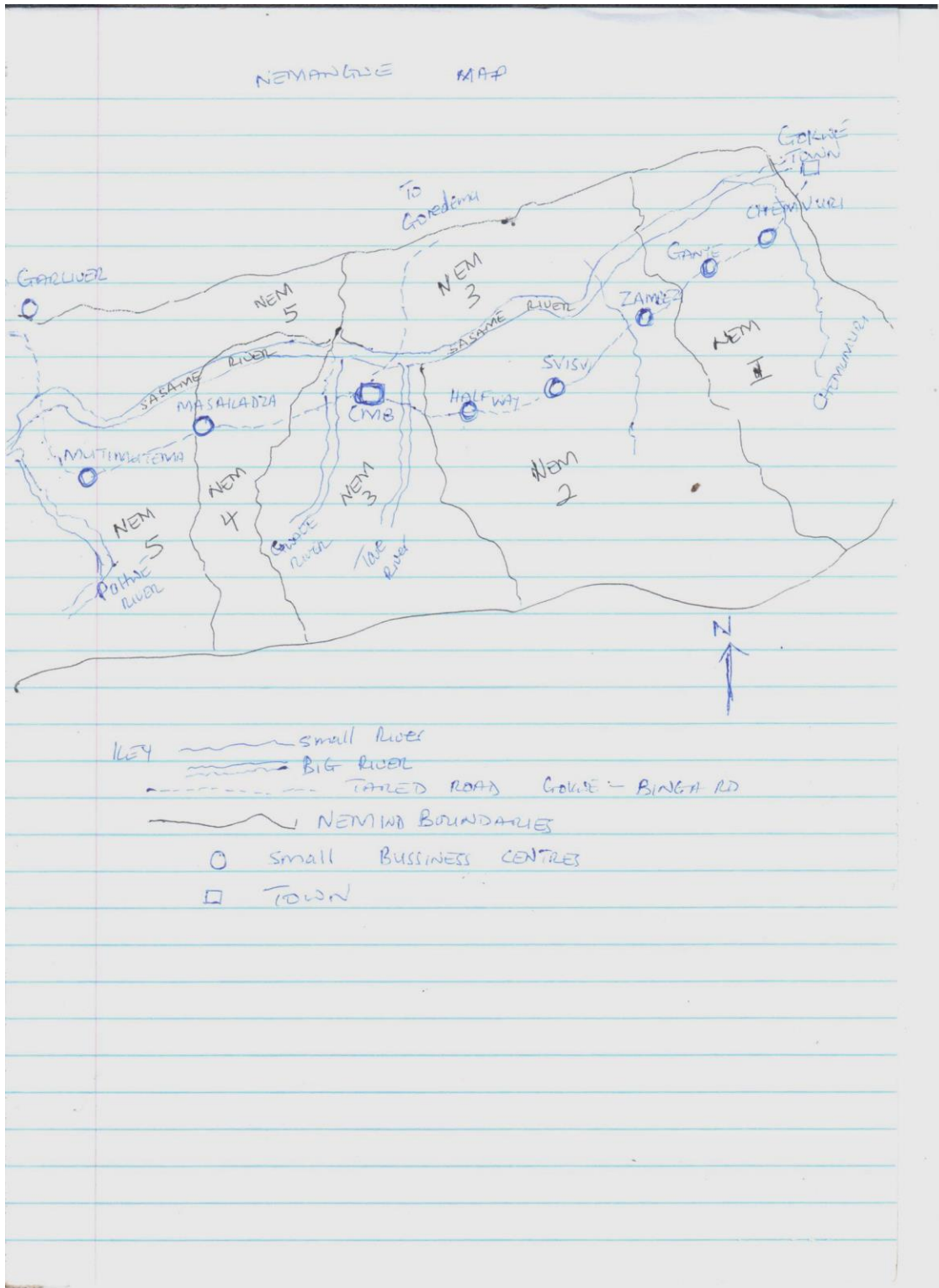
<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Interview with headman Nebumhu on 10 July 2019

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

between Nemangwe chiefdom and its neighbours and assess how these relations might have influenced the disputes that roamed the chiefdom over the years.



Map of the Nemangwe territory

## Objectives of study

To examine the rise of Nemangwe chieftainship disputes

To analyse the succession system under the Nemangwe chieftainship

To trouble the efficacy of the solutions to the chieftainship succession challenges.

## Research Questions.

Did the Nemangwe chiefdom have any established succession rules?

What triggered succession wrangles in the Nemangwe chiefdom?

Who were the people involved in settling succession challenges in the Nemangwe chiefdom?

What are some the solutions that were provided to solve succession disputes in the Nemangwe chiefdom

Did these solutions solve Nemangwe succession disputes once and for all?

## Statement of the problem

The purpose of this MA thesis is to examine the causes and impacts of succession disputes that have rocked the Nemangwe chieftainship between the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The Nemangwe chieftainship has been blighted by numerous succession disputes despite the fact that all Nemangwe chiefs are installed by Chireya the paramount with the help of Nevana the local spirit medium wrangles associated with chieftainship continue to be a thorn in the chiefdom. Nowadays the installation involves even government officials but succession disputes in the Nemangwe chiefdom remain prevalent.

## Significance of study

The study is of utmost importance to the members of the Nemangwe chiefly clan. It endeavours to rejuvenate the succession system of the Nemangwe chiefdom. The succession system will therefore provide the yardstick for solving succession wrangles. This will help the Nemangwe

elders, spirit mediums and government administrators who are involved in dealing with issues regarding traditional leadership to discuss the contemporary squabble in the Nemangwe chiefdom. The study will help the Nemangwe society as a whole to trace the emergence of succession disputes and how the disputes were dealt with. The people will have a clear picture on the causes and nature of the contemporary succession dispute. Given the chance to participate in the debates concerning the dispute people may be able to contribute significantly basing on the research dimensions. The study can provide solutions to similar cases in other chiefdoms. It can also become a basis for other researchers. It can be helpful to the study of history and heritage studies in schools. As such the younger generation will be informed in the traditional systems of leadership. The study will contribute significantly to nation building since it will problematise the involvement of the political figures and government in traditional leadership systems.

## Purpose of Study

Some historians have endeavoured to unearth the Shangwe past which is significantly deteriorating due to changing times. Historians like Nyambara, Ngara, Mberengwa, Ncube and Worby have tried to retrieve the Shangwe history. However, Shangwe's complex history, traditions and cultures are not fully represented in the corpus of canonical genres of literature.

The trajectory that has been taken by the Shangwe people to establish themselves in the area became known as Gokwe remains inadequate. Many aspects of the history of Shangwe are still hidden. Very little has been articulated in connection with Shangwe chieftainships, oral traditions, politics and economies during the pre-colonial period. As such the crux of this research is to rejuvenate the Shangwe past and unravel the history of the rise of the Nemangwe chiefdom as well as exploring the wrangles associated with the succession of the Nemangwe chiefs, the Mambos. As part of this endeavour the research shall explore the general politics of the Nemangwe and its economies during pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. As part of the exploration of the causes of succession disputes in Nemangwe chiefdom the thesis shall try to examine the religious practices of the Nemangwe people. This is because religion remains a crucial aspect in traditional politics since the traditional leaders are believed to be custodians of traditional religious beliefs and practices.<sup>29</sup> Like any other Shona societies religious leaders had a role in the installation

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<sup>29</sup> M.F.C, Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, Mambo Press 1976



of chiefs. As such there is no denial that some succession disputes would be dealt with religiously. The study therefore shall examine the role of religion in solving succession disputes in the Nemangwe chiefdom. Generally, the study intends to bring how the succession disputes have shaped the history of the Nemangwe chieftaincy since the pre- colonial period. The study cannot avoid exploring Nemangwe's relations with the neighbouring chiefdoms. Chireya's influence as a paramount chief of the Shangwe ethnic group is of utmost importance as far as Nemangwe chieftainship is concerned. The changes that have taken place in the Nemangwe chieftainship from pre-colonial period up to the 21<sup>st</sup> century shall be scrutinised.

Though various scholars had researched on the Shangwe ethnic group they did not focus on the Nemangwe chiefdom in particular yet it appears there is a long history to tell on the Nemangwe chieftaincy. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to unearth the history of the Nemangwe dynasty. Nemangwe history remains hidden. It has to be considered as an independent entity in the study of Shangwe history because the chiefdom has a notable history on its own. By and large the focal point of this research shall be succession disputes in the Nemangwe chiefdom.

## Theoretical Framework

The research will adopt the counter-power theory to investigate the causes and nature of succession disputes in the Nemangwe chiefdom. Counter- power theory evolves from the fact that all social systems are a tangle of contradictions, always to some degree at war with themselves.<sup>30</sup> The appointment and succession of chiefs in Zimbabwe has been characterised with a lot of squabbles that destabilise the social order. Succession disputes have been a source of common divisions.<sup>31</sup> Wrangles over chieftainship have polarised the Nemangwe chiefdom. Contradiction of social systems where by consensus-building is used to counter violence and helps to maintain society contestants engage in conflict, but the society is maintained in the end through consensus.<sup>32</sup> Conflicts in every society are inevitable. Power struggles are a common feature of chieftainships in Zimbabwe, Gokwe included. However, in most cases consensus is used to solve the disputes associated with chieftaincies. The research will use the theory to articulate the relevance of

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<sup>30</sup>D.Graeber, *Fragments of Anarchist Anthropology*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press 2004

<sup>31</sup> J.C .Bekker and C.C Boonzaaier, *Succession of women to Traditional Leadership: Is the Judgement in Shilubana V Nwamitwa based on Sound Legal Principles*

<sup>32</sup> Graeber, *Fragments of Anarchist Anthropology*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press 2004

consensus building in solving succession disputes. When a dispute arises people discuss the matter until a consensus is reached which makes people live.

## Hypotheses

1. The causes of succession disputes under the Nemangwe chieftainship and how they have polarised the Nemangwe society.
2. The effectiveness of the succession system in maintaining the legitimacy of the Nemangwe chiefs
3. Conflict management Strategies which have been put in place in trying to end the succession wrangles.

## Research Methodology

The dominant research approach shall be the qualitative method. Qualitative research is a philosophical interpretive approach which is concerned with how the social world is interpreted.<sup>33</sup> Qualitative research requires those who are studied to speak for themselves, to provide their perspectives in words.<sup>34</sup> The quantitative approach however can also be avoided. Quantitative research is explaining a phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods or statistically.<sup>35</sup> Both approaches are vital but the qualitative approach is more appropriate in historical researches than quantitative approach because history needs interpretation. Qualitative research is more applicable in exploring succession disputes. As such, the researcher employed the qualitative research and avoided quantitative approaches. The researcher used phenomenological study and its purpose was to interrogate the succession wrangles that rocked the Nemangwe chiefdom in the between the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the 21<sup>th</sup> century. By means of qualitative research devise, this study used a phenomenological method in gathering information which examined the succession disputes, their causes, impact and solutions. Participants in the study were traditional leaders namely Chiefs, Headmen, and Village Heads. Other participants were the District Administrator (DA) and some Nemangwe clan members mainly the elderly figures. Interviews were conducted with relevant people. An interview is a kind

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<sup>33</sup> C.Hughes, *Mystifying through coalescence: The underlying politics of methodological choices* in K. Watson, C. Modgil and S. Modgil(Eds) *Educational Dilemmas: Debate and Diversity, Quality in Education*, London cassell 1997

<sup>34</sup> K.E, Rudestam and R.R, Newton, *Surviving Dessertation*, Newbury Park: Sage

<sup>35</sup> M. Daniel, *Doing Quantitative research in Education with SPSS*, Sage Publications, London 2004

of conversation with a purpose.<sup>36</sup> An interview is a conversation for gathering information. It involves an interviewer who coordinates the process of the conversation and asks questions and an interviewee, who response to those questions.<sup>37</sup> Interviews can be conducted face to face or over the telephone. Thus internet becomes a significant tool for interviewing. To avoid loss of information recording is essential. Recording was done either electronically or through writing. It was done after some ethical considerations were made. The researcher did not record information given by the interview without seeking informed consent. Ethical considerations are of great significance in all interviews involving the participant and the interviewer.<sup>38</sup>This allows the interviewees to give information freely. The researcher will clearly outline the purpose of his research in order to remove a sense of suspicion from the informants. Ethics deal with individual behaviour and moral duty, which are perceived as good and bad, right and wrong with moral duty and obligation<sup>39</sup>. The researcher ensured the confidentiality of information gathered was maintained. The standard supposition in research

During the research process each respondent was given a research letter form before they entered in the research. The letter ensured the protection of participants' rights throughout data collection. The participants signed the informed consent form indicating that they were very aware of the recording or noting of the interviews.

Interview questions that suit the topic shall be crafted. The researcher was probing the interviewees for more information. Interviews allow more information and new ideas to be brought out during the interview by the interviewee.<sup>40</sup> As such the interview technique shall dominate the research process. About fifteen people were interviewed. The people were cooperating very well.

Another key technique that was used is observation. Observation is a systematic data collection approach whereby a researcher uses his or her senses to examine people in their natural setting.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>C Robson.*Read World Research*. Oxford: Blackwell Publications 1993

<sup>37</sup> M Easwaramoorthy & F Zarinposh, *Interviewing For Research*, Canada University Bureau 2006

<sup>38</sup> Gumbi

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>40</sup>P Mawanza, *Indigenous Knowledge systems and environmental management in Zimbabwe: Case of Bikita South*. Gweru: Midlands State University 2014 *Methodology*. Trans. H. M. Wright. Penguin Books

<sup>41</sup>J.Gould. and Siitonen L. *Anomalies of Aid*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki. 2007

Observation can be participant or non-participant. Participant observation is a situation whereby the researcher observes by making him or herself a member of the group he or she is observing so that he or she is in a position to experience what the members of the group experience.<sup>42</sup> The non-participant observation approach involves collecting data without interacting with the participants. Observation involves observing both verbal and non-verbal situations and recording them. It is the feeling of the researcher that observations shall also be very helpful in his research. The researcher observed some indigenous ceremonies like reincarnation and rain making. At these ceremonies the Shangwe people in Nemangwe communities sing songs that have to do with chieftaincy succession disputes when performing ceremonies for example;

Vana vangu wee	My children I beg you
Kana mapedza hondo	If the war has come to an end
Vana vangu wee	My children I beg you
Mundidzorere pfumo	Return the spear to me <sup>43</sup>

This song entails that the chief fought for chieftainship and won the war and as such he is urging the children to return the spear.<sup>44</sup> This song is a testimony that succession wrangles were experienced in the chieftainship before. As a result, by observing some traditional ceremonies in Nemangwe society one is bound to become informed in terms of succession disputes.

Interviews need population sampling. A sample should be selected from the target population. A sample is a selection from the population.<sup>45</sup> When sampling you have to consider the topic under study. Sampling involves careful thought, taking into consideration relevance between the issue or phenomena under study and the group chosen to be observed. The researcher therefore shall have selected a relevant sample, for example one Shangwe chief Chireya, his headmen, three headmen

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<sup>42</sup> I M Crawford, *Marketing Research and Information Systems*, Food and Agriculture Organisations of United Nations 1997

<sup>43</sup> R .Ngara, *The Selection and Installation of Shangwe Chiefs in Gokwe North and South Districts of Zimbabwe: An Applied Ethnomusicological Dimension towards Violating an Indigenous Model* , University of Pretoria, 2018 (Unpublished)

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Douglas Kamhiripiri 17 July 2019

<sup>45</sup> C Robson. *Read World Research*. Oxford: Blackwell Publications 1993

from Nemangwe chieftainship and five elderly members of the Nemangwe clan. If these methodologies were applied accurately and the researcher obtained information that enabled, him to produce a superb master piece.

## Limitations

The researcher encountered some challenges during the course of his research activities. Lack of logistical funds was one of the major challenges the researcher faced. The study required the researcher to travel some distances that are not accessible by road transport such as the Mafunga area. The researcher had to go there on foot or riding a bicycle which is hectic and tiresome. The area is not easily accessible from the researcher's home area. Travelling on foot is extremely tiresome and hectic. Some of the people to be interviewed are from faraway places where transport is needed. Above all some places have poor roads such that transport is expensive. People like chiefs, members in the District Administrator's office, the District administrator and other high profile were difficult to access since they are ever committed. For that reason, I could not get in touch with Acting Chief Nemangwe. Some targets were suspicious and reluctant to give information about chieftainship since currently there are some conflicts between the incumbent chief and Bango.

Some aspects of the Nemangwe society have some transcendental phenomena which may not be easily accessible and also difficult to verify using scientific means. There are some mysteries associated with chieftainship of the Nemangwe. Since the study deals with a distant past very few elderly people are available to unravel the history of the remote past. This means the researcher has to make a thorough search of such elders. Again this is notoriously difficult. Time can also be a major challenge since the researcher is a full time civil servant. He was committed most of the time. However, he tried to utilise every opportune moment to carry out his research. It seems some interviewees misconstrued the research to political activities. These days some chiefs are appointed on political grounds. Some chiefs and headmen may not be legitimate leaders therefore the research may be a threat to them. All the same everything should be done to make ends meet.

## Delimitations

The delimitations of the study are in three categories that are historical, conceptual and geographical delimitations. Historically the study focuses on the pre-colonial, colonial and post-

colonial Nemangwe chieftaincy. The study period is between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century. The study pays particular attention on the Nemangwe chieftainship. It specifically looks at the succession disputes in the Nemangwe chiefdom. A variety of dimensions could be taken on Nemangwe history such as their culture, their general political set up, their economies and their religion. Some these aspects can only be mentioned in passing for example part of their culture that has to do with chieftainship can be examined briefly. Though the Nemangwe people are part of the Shangwe ethnic group not everything about the Shangwe shall be explored. The aspects of Shangwe that shall be articulated have a link with Nemangwe chieftainship. For example, the study shall delve in the history of Chireya slightly because Chireya influenced the chieftainship of Nemangwe. However, a lot could be said about Chireya. Geographically the study is confined within the boundaries of Nemangwe. Nemangwe covers the area between Chomumvuri River which closer to Gokwe town and Sasame River in the West, just after Mutimutema business centre. Though some Shangwe people were absorbed in some areas such as Binga, Nkayi and Sanyati, the study will be confined in Gokwe particularly Nemangwe area.

## Chapter Outline.

Chapter one is the research proposal. This chapter consists of the research aim, its objectives, background of study, statement of the problem, purpose of study, Limitations and delimitations, brief outline of the methodology, chapter outline, and significance of study, theoretical framework, hypotheses formulation and the references. This chapter carries the intentions of the researcher. The researcher proposes his study area and how he intends to carry out his research. Chapter two is the literature review. In this chapter related literature shall be explored. Shangwe history is represented by many scholars such as Beach, Ncube, Ngara and Mberengwa among others. Such literature has to be examined in order to reflect the gaps in the area of study.

Chapter three articulates the demise of Mafunga and the genesis of succession disputes in the Nemangwe chiefdom. In this chapter mysteries associated with the fall of the Karnga Shangwe shall be outlined. Chapter four shall be entitled: The quest for legitimacy among the Nemangwe feuds. It deals with how the Nemangwe clan members contested for leadership. This chapter shall explore the succession disputes that roamed the Nemangwe chiefdom and how these disputes have influenced the Nemangwe chieftaincy. Chapter five: This chapter shall also interrogate the solutions that were made in the attempts to solve the wrangles in Nemangwe chiefdom

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction

A literature review is a compilation, classification and evaluation of what other researchers have written on a particular topic. The purpose of reviewing is to gain an understanding of the already

existing researches and debates relevant to a particular topic or area of study. Through literature review one can synthesise knowledge in his or her field.

## Chieftainship succession systems among the Shona

Prior researches have explored succession disputes in various chiefdoms. Dodo observed that traditional leaders were in existence since time immemorial in Zimbabwe and Africa as a whole.<sup>46</sup> Gumbi also reiterates that traditional leadership is as old as history.<sup>47</sup> When people started to organise themselves into villages some clans assumed leadership. Thus Kingship and chieftainship emerged with the formation of villages. Chieftaincy or chieftainship is a political institution where indigenous leaders are granted office by their clansmen following the customary succession system applicable to that particular community.<sup>48</sup> In many African countries the institution of chieftaincy is thought to be reflecting long-established social structures.<sup>49</sup> The institution of traditional chieftaincy represents the pre-colonial prevailing indigenous form of local governance throughout southern Africa.<sup>50</sup> The emergence of the chieftaincy institution led to the rise of succession disputes. As such elaborate succession rules were put in place to make sure legitimate candidates were installed. Chieftainship happened to be the traditional government set up of different tribes.<sup>51</sup> This institution initially performed societal, political, economic and religious duties for local communities<sup>52</sup>. The term 'chief', *ishe* or *vashe* in Shona and *induna* in Ndebele, refers to an individual who, by virtue of ancestry, occupies a clearly defined leadership position.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>O. Dodo, Traditional Leadership Systems and Gender Recognition, Zimbabwe International Journal of Gender and Women Studies 2013pp 29-44

<sup>47</sup>N. Gumbi, Traditional Leadership Succession and Appointment processes in Zimbabwe: A Case of Masvingo Province, Midlands State University 2014 (Unpublished)

<sup>48</sup>G. Bishi, The Colonial Archive and Contemporary Chieftainship Claims: The Case of Zimbabwe, 1938 to 2014, University of Free State 2015 Unpublished

<sup>49</sup> Ibid

<sup>50</sup>T. Makahamadze et al, The Role of Traditional Leaders in Fostering Democracy, Justice and Human Rights in Zimbabwe, The African Anthropologist Vol 16 Nos 1&2 2009 pp 33-47

<sup>51</sup> J. DOUNGEL, The Role and Working of the Lai Autonomous District Council, Mizron, PHD Thesis, Manipur University 2003 (Unpublished)

<sup>52</sup> J. Dusing, Traditional Leadership and Democratisation in Southern Africa: A Comparative Study of Botswana, Namibia and South Africa, London, Transaction Publishers 2001

<sup>53</sup> T. Makahamadze et al, The Role of Traditional Leaders in Fostering Democracy, Justice and Human Rights in Zimbabwe, The African Anthropologist Vol 16 Nos 1&2 2009 pp 33-47



In the event of death of a chief succession depends on the succession principles of that particular chiefdom. Succession systems were not the same throughout all Shona ethnic groups. This idea gave the researcher the zeal to scrutinise the unique features of the Shangwe succession systems. Chieftaincy is either of pre-colonial origins or a colonial and post-colonial creation.<sup>54</sup> As such, the succession systems also depend on the epoch in question. Such literature is relevant to the research since it talks about succession systems. Therefore, the researcher will use it to interrogate the succession system(s) followed by the Shangwe at different points in time.

Bourdillon noted that at the death of a chief numerous people claiming legitimacy to the chiefly throne may emerge. As such the established succession system of the community in question was used to determine the legitimate successor. In most Shona societies the prominent succession system is the collateral where the founder is succeeded by his brothers. Pekeshe has it that the Shona succession systems meant that the baton was handed over from founder to his brothers and from the youngest brother to the founder's son and his successive brothers before going back to the eldest son's son.<sup>55</sup> It becomes a cycle, following houses of the chiefly. It is about house turns, *madzoro* and genealogical seniority.<sup>56</sup> This is articulated by Mutasa in his novel *Nhume Yamambo*. He says,

Umambo madzoro hunoravanwa. Hunoenda nedzimba. Nhasi uno huri mumba maDyembeu muzukuru waChangamire Dombo. Dyembeu mwana wamambo Rupandamanhanga, Dyembeu mukuru kuna Chirisamhuru. Itsika yepi yokuti munin'ina anotangira mukoma kugara humambo.<sup>57</sup>

Kingship is rotational. It is about house turns. Currently it is in the house of Dyembeu the nephew of Changamire Dombo. Dyembeu is the son of King Rupandamanhanga, Dyembeu is older than Chirisamhuru. Culturally a younger brother cannot usurp power before his elder brother. This literature is significant as it points towards succession. As such, I will use it to examine the extent to which the Shangwe followed the system it explains.

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<sup>54</sup> A. Harneit-Sievers, Igbo Traditional Rulers: Chieftaincy and the State in South Eastern Nigeria in *Africa Spectrum*, Vol 33 NO 1 1998pp57-59

<sup>55</sup> M. Pekeshe, Chieftainship Succession: Let the Elders Do thjeir Role, *The Patriot* October 15 2005

<sup>56</sup> Ibid

<sup>57</sup> N.M. Mutasa, *Nhume Ya Mambo*, Gweru Mambo Press 1999 p111

Mudenge also observed that the collateral adelphic succession was the mode of succession in the Mutapa.<sup>58</sup> However it was only the guiding principle, the framework within which succession had to be decided but the ultimate arbiter was force.<sup>59</sup> Mudenge did not disclose the reason why force became the ultimate arbiter in the Mutapa state. However, Mudenge's assertion assists the researcher to assess the extent to which the Shangwe used force to usurp the throne.

The Mangwende Chieftainship employs a system of collateral succession which alternates between two houses of the dynasty. The two houses of Chieftain lineage are Mhotani (Bokoto) and Hundungu (Chitopi) houses. Bourdillon gathered that the Shona employed collateral system (which rotates among family), the Primogeniture (a chief begets a chief or Induna iyazali Induna) and the matrilineal system (from uncle to cousin) as the succession and appointment processes used to appoint traditional leaders.<sup>60</sup> Mudenge also noted that collateral adelphic succession was the mode of succession in the Mutapa state.<sup>61</sup> The adelphic succession system was common in the majority of Shona chiefdoms. Among the Korekore the complex rules of chiefly succession combine primogeniture with collateral adelphic succession in a given generation in a way that allows for different opinions on who the successor should be; the rules are often complicated by the history of the dynasty in which certain houses are said by some to have forfeited their right to the chieftainship, a point which invariably gives rise to dispute.<sup>62</sup>

Most Shona groups believe that senior spirits of the chiefdom, speaking through the local mediums should decide which of the candidates should succeed the deceased chief.<sup>63</sup> Religious leaders play a significant role in the selection, appointment and installation of chiefs in most traditional societies. Traditionally, chiefs were installed by the most senior headmen in the area in consultation with the spirit-mediums of the chiefdom.<sup>64</sup> This procedure was meant to curb any possible dispute that might arise from the people. The involvement of the ancestors in the choice

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<sup>58</sup>S.I.G, Mudenge, A Political History of Munhumutapa c1400-1902, Harare Zimbabwe Publishing House 1998

<sup>59</sup> Ibid

<sup>60</sup> M. Bourdillon, Religion and Authority in Korekore Community, Africa 49, 1979 pp172-181

<sup>61</sup>S.I.G, Mudenge, A Political History of Munhumutapa c1400-1902, Harare Zimbabwe Publishing House 1998

<sup>62</sup> Ibid

<sup>63</sup> M. Bourdillon, The Shona Peoples: An Ethnography of Contemporary Shona, with Special Reference to Their Religion, Gweru, Mambo Press 1976

<sup>64</sup>T. Makahamadze et al, The Role of Traditional Leaders in Fostering Democracy, Justice and Human Rights in Zimbabwe, The African Anthropologist Vol 16 Nos 1&2 2009 pp 33-47

and appointment of the chief made him an important religious functionary.<sup>65</sup> The spirits are supposed to protect their appointee from all enemies, especially from the jealous witchcraft of rivals that the office is presumed to inspire. Immediately after his appointment, and periodically when he is in office, the chief has private séances with the possessed mediums of the senior spirits of the chieftaindom, during which it is presumed that they are providing him with 'medicines' to protect him and to keep him strong.<sup>66</sup> In the rituals of succession, the dangerous position of the chief and his need for protection is emphasized by rites over the graves of the chief's predecessor.<sup>67</sup> Traditional chiefs could stay in office until death as long as they obeyed the precepts of the ancestors. The Shona proverb, '*Hakunazuva rinobuda rimwe risati radoka*' (There is no sun that rises before the other).<sup>68</sup> The medium acted as the voice of the ancestors in the whole process of the installation.<sup>69</sup> This literature is of utmost importance because it articulates the role of spirit mediums in the succession systems of Shona chieftaincies. As such, the researcher shall use it to explore the role played by spirit mediums during the installation of a new chief.

Makaudze also believes that on issues of succession, election and installation of traditional leaders, Shona religion played a very significant and indisputable role.<sup>70</sup> It was the guidepost for it provided the dos and don'ts<sup>71</sup>. For as long as religion was accorded its rightful place, issues like brutal killings, butchery, cruelty, self-centeredness, and lawlessness would not prevail.<sup>72</sup> To instil sanity, Shona religion always presented checks and balances. Among the Shona, it is the spiritual world that had the final say in the appointment of a king or chief.<sup>73</sup>

No one's reign could prosper or last long if it did not have the blessing of the spiritual world.<sup>74</sup> Being the general overseer and guidepost, Shona religion regulated and determined the fate of any leadership.<sup>75</sup> It appears the role played by religion in the installation and succession of chiefs had

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid

<sup>66</sup>M. Bourdillon, Religion and Authority in Korekore Community, Africa 49,1979 pp172-181

<sup>67</sup> Ibid

<sup>68</sup> Ibid

<sup>69</sup> Ibid

<sup>70</sup> G.Makaudze, African Traditional Leadership and Succession in the Post-Colonial Novel, Journal of African Literature Association, Routledge 2017 pp210-222

<sup>71</sup>Ibid

<sup>72</sup> Ibid

<sup>73</sup> Ibid

<sup>74</sup>J. Gombe, Tsika Dzava Shona. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Harare College Press 1998

<sup>75</sup> Ibid

been over emphasised. Despite efforts by religious leaders to avert succession disputes, succession wrangles remain a common feature in most Shona chiefdoms. This influenced the researcher to delve into a study concerning chieftainship succession disputes.

## Interrogating the causes of succession disputes in Shona chiefdoms

Succession disputes form an integral part of the history of traditional leadership in southern Africa.<sup>76</sup> The conflicts which has emanated from the succession and appointment of traditional leaders have culminated into squabbles and at the end it has influenced many scholars and students to dig deep investigating the subject matter. Chieftainship remains the core of Shona traditions. Succession disputes are a source of community divisions.<sup>77</sup> Chieftainship wrangles polarised various chiefdoms in Zimbabwe since time immemorial. These disputes emanated from a barrage of reasons. A number of scholars have made some researches on the causes of chieftaincy disputes. Some of the scholars include Michael Bourdillon, Bekker and Boonzaiaer, DN Beach, Ageyman-Aduah, Mudenge, Mamdani and Godwin Makaudze. The chieftainship disputes may occur among the members of the chiefly clan or may be perpetrated by other ethnic groups besides the eligible houses.<sup>78</sup> Such literature is essential in that it guides the researcher not to confine his researcher to the clan members only in order to assess if there are non-clan members who are perpetrating disputes in the Nemangwe chiefdom.

Chieftaincies conflicts are inter-twined with inter and intra- ethnic conflicts that mainly revolve around the quest for chieftaincy. Mudenge recorded a succession dispute between Negomo Mupunzagutu and Chipute. Negomo succeeded his father Chivere around 1560. His succession was a violation of the adelphic collateral system of succession. As a result this aroused Chipute to assert claims to the Mutapa throne.<sup>79</sup> Beach also articulated the succession crisis that rocked the Rozvi chieftainship after the death of Changamire Chirisamhuru.<sup>80</sup> In the early 19th century Beach suggests that Chirisamhuru's death led to the succession wrangle over Rozvi chieftaincy.

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<sup>76</sup> J.C.Bekker and C.C. Boonzaiaer , Succession of Women to Traditional Leadership: Is the Judgement in Shidu bona V Nanmtwa based on Sound Lectures

<sup>77</sup> Ibid

<sup>78</sup> M. Bourdillon, The Shona Peoples: An Ethnography of Contemporary Shona, with Special Reference to Their Religion , Gweru , Mambo Press 1976

<sup>79</sup> Ibid

<sup>80</sup> D.N.Beach, A Zimbabwe's Past: Shona Dynastic Houses and Oral Traditions, Gweru Mambo Press 1994

81By the time the Ndebele entered Zimbabwe some Rozvi houses teamed up with the Ndebele against other Rozvi houses.<sup>82</sup> Despite clear succession systems followed by many Shona chiefdoms the Rozvi plunged into succession disputes until the Kingdom was destroyed by the Ndebele. Agyeman- Aduah for example discovered that irregularities in the nomination processes used in different tribes have made it difficult to come up with policies to reduce conflicts.<sup>83</sup> He noted a lot of factors that have triggered chieftaincy succession disputes. The causes include disputed claims to the stool, rivalry between, or among families over the right of succession, corruption that is the use of money or influence to "buy" the stool and politicisation of the process.<sup>84</sup> Agyeman-Aduah also observed that many of the chieftaincy disputes emerge because of the lack of public information and knowledge about who has the right to stool or skin.<sup>85</sup>Unscrupulous claimants to the stool or skin have exploited the public ignorance to create confusion and unrest.<sup>86</sup> Equipped with such literature I will use it to explore the causes of succession disputes in the Nemangwe chiefdom.

Chieftaincy conflicts had a variety of causes ranging from colonial influence, improper definition of succession principles, to personal ambitions, among other factors.<sup>87</sup>There is little doubt that most of the present ambiguities and ambivalence surrounding chieftaincy in Africa were created during the colonial period<sup>88</sup>.Political succession troubled many states throughout history.<sup>89</sup> Politicising chieftaincy succession led to defective succession systems. Defective succession systems results in bloody warfare and fragmentation to the state.<sup>90</sup> A study of chieftaincy disputes revealed that historical contests often “spilled over” into modern arenas and fused with conflicts of interest more directly traceable to the legacy of colonial rule. Chiefs were used by the colonial administration the principle of divide-and-rule was employed to destroy the solidarity that existed

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid

<sup>82</sup> Ibid

<sup>83</sup> B.Agyeman-Aduah, Chieftaincy and Land Conflicts: Traditional or Modern Mechanism , Publication of the institute of Economic Affairs, Accra-Ghana Vol 3No 2, October 1992

<sup>84</sup>Ibid

<sup>85</sup> Ibid

<sup>86</sup> Ibid

<sup>87</sup>T.C. Eden, When the Chieftaincy Stools become a Source of Disputes in the Banyang Polity, Imperial Journal of Interdisciplinary Research Vol 3No10 2017

<sup>88</sup> Ibid

<sup>89</sup>S.I.G, Mudenge, A Political History of Munhumutapa c1400-1902,Harare Zimbabwe Publishing House 1998

<sup>90</sup> Ibid

among the traditional leaders.<sup>91</sup> With the surfacing of colonialism it ushered a new dispensation in terms of appointments, succession and authority of traditional leaders.<sup>92</sup> Beke asserts that there was random selection of individuals by colonialist not following, procedures.<sup>93</sup> Gumbi also noted that some traditional leaders were imposed without traditions of chieftaincy.<sup>94</sup> Colonial masters introduced managerial structures and governmental laws that diverted the function of traditional leaders to that of management officer.<sup>95</sup> Traditional leaders were no longer accountable to ancestors in issues pertaining to day-to-day activities in their chiefdoms but rather to colonial administrators.<sup>96</sup> As such succession disputes remain a thorn in African chiefdoms. Hobsbawn and Ranger coined the top down instrumentalist invention of tradition which posits that state recognised chieftaincies are colonial bureaucratic inventions that transformed traditional leadership into despotic autocrats charged with a plethora of non-traditional functions, to bolster the state's legitimacy.<sup>97</sup> Consequently it is argued, traditional leaders have become alienated from their followers since colonial indirect rule and codifications of custom, the traditional legitimacy of chiefs has been replaced by state-sanctioned authority; and the negotiated, pre-colonial practices of chieftaincy have been substituted by largely authoritarian rule in service of the state.<sup>98</sup> Tradition and custom are harnessed by the state to ensure the subjection of rural populations under an essentially "state-enforced customary order"<sup>99</sup>. Makahamadze and Tauvuyanago believe that this experience has been employed to explain post-colonial state recognitions of chiefs.<sup>100</sup> Colonial

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid

<sup>92</sup> Ibid

<sup>93</sup>Beke, D. (1999). "Modern local administration and traditional authority in Zaire: Duality or Unity? An Inquiry in the Kivu." In E. A. B. van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal and R. van Dijk eds., *African Chieftaincy in a New Socio-Political Landscape*. Münster-Hamburg-London: LIT Verlag

<sup>94</sup>N. Gumbi, *Traditional Leadership Succession and Appointment processes in Zimbabwe: A Case of Masvingo Province*, Midlands State University 2015

<sup>95</sup> Ibid

<sup>96</sup> Ibid

<sup>97</sup>Ranger, O.T., 2001, 'Democracy and Traditional Political Structures in Zimbabwe 1890 – 1999', in Bhebe, N. and Ranger, T., eds., *The Historical Dimensions of Democracy and Human Rights in Zimbabwe, Volume One: Pre-Colonial and Colonial Legacies*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, pp. 31-52.

<sup>98</sup>M.Mamdani, *Citizens and Subjects: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Princeton University Press 1996 p54

<sup>99</sup> Ibid

<sup>100</sup>T.Makahamadze et al, *The Role of Traditional Leaders in Fostering Democracy, Justice and Human Rights in Zimbabwe*, *The African Anthropologist* Vol 16 Nos 1&2 2009 pp 33-47

administration appointed traditional leaders to be the intermediaries of imperialism.<sup>101</sup> Mahmood Mumtaz in his book *Citizen and subject* asserts that traditional leadership during the colonial period was some form of decentralised despotism.<sup>102</sup> It reproduces colonial despotic rule and continues to position rural people as subjects, rather than as de facto citizens, because it prevents the emergence of an active civil society.<sup>103</sup> However Sklar noted that traditional leaders, despite being reshaped by colonial and post-colonial state interventions, have retained legitimacy rooted in a culture and tradition that derives from the pre-colonial past and follows a different logic than that of the modern state.<sup>104</sup> Matavire also gathered that the institution of African jurisprudence has been polarised by politicians who at times influence the selection of traditional chiefs. The result is that chiefs selected clandestinely do not command the same respect and legitimacy with those chosen through customary means. Some chiefs are known to canvass bribes from offenders so that they will judge in the offender's favour. Traditional customs are intentionally abused by those who want to derive benefits from it.<sup>105</sup> Such behaviours by clandestinely elected chiefs have culminated into conflicts. The roles of the spirit mediums in electing and installing traditional leaders were also eroded. The NC introduced the ballot system in electing even new headmen or chiefs. Just after the death of Chief Chimuriwo of Mutasa, the NC for Umtali called for elections to replace him.<sup>106</sup> Though scholars above have articulated the influence of colonial and post-colonial governments on traditional leadership they did not articulate how they have caused succession disputes on a number of Shona chiefdoms, Nemangwe included.

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<sup>101</sup>A. Thompson, *African Politics*, London and New York, Routledge 2010

<sup>102</sup> M. Mamdani, *Citizens and Subjects: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Princeton University Press 1996 p54

<sup>103</sup> Ibid

<sup>104</sup> Ibid

<sup>105</sup> M. Matavire, *Interrogating the Zimbabwean Jurisprudence and the Position of Women in Conflicts Resolution: A Case of Muzarabani District*, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* Vol 2 No 3 2012

<sup>106</sup> T. Makhamadze et al, *The Role of Traditional Leaders in Fostering Democracy, Justice and Human Rights in Zimbabwe*, *The African Anthropologist* Vol 16 Nos 1&2 2009 pp 33-47

## **Troubling the efficacy of some solutions to chieftainship succession disputes among the Shona**

There is plenty of literature on the ways in which Shona chiefdoms have tried to solve chieftaincy succession disputes. Chieftaincy conflicts are serious conflicts as control over chieftaincy means control over land, natural resources, and other properties within the community.<sup>107</sup> Van Warmelo and Phophi point out that succession to chieftaincy was in the past frequently accompanied by bloodshed.<sup>108</sup> They maintain that succession was a private matter which was dealt with by the ruling group.<sup>109</sup> Succession matters were not discussed arrived openly, and the successor was not mentioned until the right time. If anyone initiated a discussion around succession, that person would be reprimanded.<sup>110</sup> Every political system has its own mechanisms for resolving conflicts.<sup>111</sup> Prior to colonialism and way beyond the advent of slave trade, African societies had institutional mechanisms as well as cultural sources to uphold the values of peace, tolerance, solidarity and respect for, and of, one another. These structures were responsible for peace education, confidence-building, peace building, conflict monitoring, conflict prevention, conflict management, and conflict resolution.<sup>112</sup> These mechanisms were effective in handling and managing conflicts among the people, it was largely because they reflected the socio political orientation of the African people, addressing all the social, political and economic conflicts among a people who lived a communal way of life. Thus, it was customary for people to sit down informally to discuss and agree on important issues. Bukari reiterates that in African societies, conflict is habitually dealt with according to laid down tradition ways.<sup>113</sup> For Bukari disputes have

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<sup>107</sup>K.N. Bukari, A Concomitant of Conflict and Consensus. A case of a Chieftainship Succession in Ghana, *Peace and Conflict Studies*: Vol23 no 1 Article 2, 2016

<sup>108</sup> Ibid

<sup>109</sup> Ibid

<sup>110</sup>P.Nkwi, *Traditional Diplomacy: A Study of Inter-Chiefdom Relationships in the Western Grassfields, North West Province of Cameroon*. Yaounde, Cameroon: Publication of the Department of Sociology, University of Yaounde, 1987 p. 64.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid

<sup>112</sup> Ibid

<sup>113</sup>K.N. Bukari, A Concomitant of Conflict and Consensus. A case of a Chieftainship Succession in Ghana, *Peace and Conflict Studies*: Vol23 no 1 Article 2, 2016



always emerged in the process of selecting chiefs, but they are quickly resolved and all challenges to the elected chief are dropped.<sup>114</sup> This is because the re-establishment of peace, its sustainability and social concord are most important for the well-being of the whole society.<sup>115</sup> Traditional leadership forms a 'social uniting force' which continues to be significant in the procedure to be followed when resolving of conflicts.<sup>116</sup> While there is no denial that some chieftaincy succession disputes can be resolved quickly, some degenerate into conflicts that take long to resolve. This literature directs the researcher into examining whether succession disputes in the Nemangwe have degenerated into violent disputes or not.

Although chieftainship disputes often present some complex situations spirit mediums try to use their religious authority to handle issues regarding chieftainship succession disputes.<sup>117</sup> Spirits of ancient members of chiefly lineages are believed to be responsible for the chieftainship and the affairs of the chiefdom. The senior of them are often responsible for settling, through their mediums, disputes over chiefly succession.<sup>118</sup> . Mbiti in his book entitled *African Religions and Philosophy* observed that the earth Priest features prominently in the installation of kings and making of chiefs. Consequently the new chief is brought into a peculiarly close relationship with the royal ancestors.<sup>119</sup> Hence forth, he becomes the legitimate intermediary between the people and their royal ancestors without whose protection and aid misfortune will befall the community.<sup>120</sup> The installation rites therefore bring about the sacralisation of the chief.<sup>121</sup> From the moment that the chief is installed, his person becomes sacred.<sup>122</sup> The involvement of the spirit mediums in the selection of chiefs was meant to avoid and solve succession wrangles. Although

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid

<sup>114</sup> Ibid

<sup>115</sup> Ibid

<sup>116</sup> Ibid

<sup>117</sup>M. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples: An Ethnography of Contemporary Shona, with Special Reference to Their Religion* , Gweru ,Mambo Press 1976

<sup>118</sup> Ibid

<sup>119</sup> K.N. Bukari, *A Concomitant of Conflict and Consensus. A case of a Chieftainship Succession in Ghana*, *Peace and Conflict Studies*: Vol23 no 1 Article 2, 2016

<sup>120</sup> Ibid

<sup>121</sup> Ibid

<sup>122</sup> Ibid

in theory spirit mediums were supposed to have the final word concerning succession in practice his decision may be disputed.<sup>123</sup> People would accuse him of pretending and speaking with his own voice rather than the spirit.<sup>124</sup> Dissatisfied candidates may spread rumours that spirit medium has been bribed or they consult another medium on the same issue.<sup>125</sup> This had a ripple effect of creating havoc between the mediums. When this happens spirit mediums concerned are in cooperated into the succession dispute.<sup>126</sup> Chieftainship succession disputes remain an integral part of most Shona chiefdoms despite the efforts by spirit mediums to create a peaceful environment during the installation of chiefs. Such literature is relevant to the research in question because it helps the researcher to problematize the efficacy of traditional institutions in solving succession disputes.

## Conclusion

Though there is salient literature on succession disputes a lot can still be researched on the same topic. Every succession dispute is unique. It depends on the society and the period in which the dispute is occurring. Literature that delved on succession disputes did not clearly articulate the efficacy of the solutions to succession disputes. As such the researcher endeavours to explore the effectiveness of solutions to succession wrangles and to establish reasons why chieftainship succession disputes remain a thorn in many chiefdoms today.

## Chapter 3: The demise of Mafunga and the genesis of succession disputes in the Nemangwe chiefdom

### Introduction

The crux of this chapter is to trace the trajectory that had been taken to establish the Nemangwe chiefdom on the Mapfungabusi Plateau. Prior to the Korekore Shangwe Mapfungabusi Plateau was home for the Karanga Shangwe under Nyamusasa.<sup>127</sup> Nyamusasa ruled from Zambezi to

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<sup>123</sup>M. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples: An Ethnography of Contemporary Shona, with Special Reference to Their Religion*, Gweru, Mambo Press 1976

<sup>124</sup>Ibid

<sup>125</sup> Ibid

<sup>126</sup> Ibid

<sup>127</sup> G.T, Ncube, *A History of North-western Zimbabwe, 1850-1960*, Gweru. Mambo Press, 2004.

Chirongamhahwe an area beyond Hwee-Hwee River. Hwee-Hwee is present day Kwekwe.<sup>128</sup> In the East he stretched from Rimuka in present day Kadoma to Binga.<sup>129</sup> The Korekore Shangwe arrived in the Plateau area in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century from Guruuswa area.<sup>130</sup> Guruuswa was one of the Rozvi provinces which translates to the fact that the Korekore Shangwe were part and parcel of the Rozvi Kingdom under Changamire Dombo before migrating to North Western Zimbabwe. Chimera led the Korekore Shangwe from the Guruuswa to the Mapfungabusi Plateau.<sup>131</sup> This chapter therefore endeavours to articulate how Chimera and his followers were able to establish their hegemony over the Karanga Shangwe of the Mafungautsi Plateau. Oral tradition has it that Chimera moved with his brothers Kurikona, Vhumakuregwa, Chipashu and Nemasakadza.<sup>132</sup> Kurikona became the founder figure of the Nemangwe chiefdom.<sup>133</sup> As such this chapter also aims to articulate how Kurikona emerged to become chief of the Mapfungabusi area which became known as Nemangwe.

## The migration of the Korekore Shangwe from South-Western Zimbabwe to the Mapfungabusi Plateau.

Around the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries there were Rozvi dispersals which saw the Rozvi Shangwe migrating to North-Western Zimbabwe.<sup>134</sup> During that period succession disputes rocked the Rozvi Kingdom.<sup>135</sup> The Nguni incursions also created a hostile environment in the Rozvi state.<sup>136</sup> Consequently many groups deserted the Kingdom.<sup>137</sup> It seems Chimera was also a victim of these situations. From Guruuswa Chimera and his followers moved to Buhera where he settled briefly. At Buhera Chimera encountered other groups who posed some threats to his position. As such Chimera vacated the area. Other chiefs who also fled with him were Dandawa, Njerere,

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<sup>128</sup>Interview with Joel Mateisanwa Mudzimiri Village 24 September 2019

<sup>129</sup> Ibid

<sup>130</sup> G.T, Ncube, *A History of North-western Zimbabwe, 1850-1960*, Gweru. Mambo Press, 2004.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid

<sup>132</sup> Interview with Joel Mateisanwa Mudzimiri Village 24 September 2019

<sup>133</sup> Ibid

<sup>134</sup>L.H, Machiridza, *Material culture and dialectics and power: Towards a historical archaeology of the Rozvi in South-Western Zimbabwe*

<sup>135</sup> Ibid

<sup>136</sup> D.N Beach

<sup>137</sup> Ibid

Nemakonde, Nembudziya, Nkoka, Neuso, Zvimba and Sayi.<sup>138</sup> From Buhera they moved to Chegutu and later proceeded to Chinhoyi. Along the way Zvimba developed swollen legs. His colleagues tried to nurture the ailment but they failed to assist him. Zvimba was left between Chegutu and Chinhoyi where he established his chieftaincy.<sup>139</sup> When the group arrived in Chinhoyi Nemakonde was also able to establish his chiefdom there. Chimera and Neuso clandestinely consulted Nehowa the spirit medium seeking advice on how they could establish themselves without interference from other Rozvi groups. The two were given a cock each. They were advised that if they approached a territory and the cock crows then one would establish his settlement at that particular territory.<sup>140</sup> From Chinhoyi Chimera and his counter parts followed Mupfure River going back to Chegutu. At Chegutu Neuso's cock crowed and he established his chiefdom as instructed by the spirit medium. Chimera moved to Mapfungabusi Plateau and his cock also crowed.<sup>141</sup> Finally, Chimera had reached his destination according to Nehowa. Chimera became Chireya meaning the one who twisted to avoid pursuit.<sup>142</sup> Chimera's breakaway from the Rozvi Changanire Kingdom is believed to have been promulgated by a succession wrangle that escalated at Kunahuwa /Gunubugwa sometime in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Kunahuwa which is a mountain that was located within the Rozvi state. The succession dispute resulted in Chimera's defeat. As such Chimera fled northwards where he established the Shava confederacy on the Mapfungautsi plateau.<sup>143</sup> Chireya moved with his army generals including Kurikona, Vhumakuregwa, Chipashu and Nemasakadza.<sup>144</sup> Chimera and his group approached the Mapfungautsi sometime in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>145</sup> By that time there was chaos in the Rozvi state. Civil wars and succession disputes were rampant in the Rozvi Kingdom for example, the dispute between Chirisamhuru and Dyembeu.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Interview with Joel Mateisanwa on 24 September 2019

<sup>139</sup> Interview with Garamukanwa 24 September 2019

<sup>140</sup> Ibid

<sup>141</sup> Ibid

<sup>142</sup> G. T Ncube: *A History of North-western Zimbabwe, 1850-1960*, Gweru. Mambo Press, 2004.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid

<sup>144</sup> Interview with Joel Mateisanwa 24 September 2019

<sup>145</sup> G. T Ncube: *A History of North-western Zimbabwe, 1850-1960*, Gweru. Mambo Press, 2004.

<sup>146</sup> S.I.G, Mudenge, *A Political History of Munhumutapa c1400-1902*, Harare Zimbabwe Publishing House 1998

After the death of Changamire Dombo, his successors failed to keep the kingdom intact. Breakaways became a common feature.<sup>147</sup> Succession disputes weakened the Rozvi Kingdom. The kingdom was further weakened by the Nguni groups including Nyamazana and Mzilikazi who attacked the kingdom. Actually the Rozvi hegemony was destroyed by the Ndebele in the 1840s.<sup>148</sup> As a result Chimera fled from Guruuswa to North Western Zimbabwe where he established his hegemony over the local inhabitants, the Karanga Shangwe. He conquered Nyamusasa and his sub chief Mafunga.

## **The mysteries associated with the conquest of the Karanga Shangwe and the rise of the Nemangwe chiefdom.**

The original inhabitants of the Mafungabusi Plateau were the Karanga Shangwe under Nyamusasa, Mubvuma, Mufunga, Mupare and Manyawi.<sup>149</sup> Some traditions suggest that Nyamusasa was the paramount ruler of the Karanga Shangwe while Manyawi, Mubvuma, Mufunga and Mupare were his sub rulers.<sup>150</sup> When Chimera and his followers crossed the Munyati River they got into Mupare's domain. Mupare was also known as Mvumba because he fought bravely during the fafi and Ngondoma battles against Nyamakwena a Tonga chief who tried to raid Nyamusasa's chiefdom before the coming of Chimera.<sup>151</sup> Chimera and his people were following tracks that were created by elephants. When they arrived at Mupare's domain they were obsessed by the desire to destroy Mupare and his people.<sup>152</sup> Mupare realised their intentions and begged not to destroy his territory. Instead Chimera and his people were given boiled maize (mangai). While the strangers were busy eating the meal Mupare gathered his people and vanished.<sup>153</sup> Mupare used his magical powers and disappeared into the ground together with their animals and crops. At this place cries of people and animal sounds could be heard.<sup>154</sup> The place became known as Gombarehere, a pit

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<sup>147</sup> L.H, Machiridza, *Material culture and dialectics and power: Towards a historical archaeology of the Rozvi in South-Western Zimbabwe*

<sup>148</sup> Ibid

<sup>149</sup> G. T, Ncube, *A History of North-western Zimbabwe, 1850-1960*, Gweru. Mambo Press, 2004.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid

<sup>151</sup> Interview with Mambo one Mudzimiri Village 25 September 2019

<sup>152</sup> Interview with Augustine Masunda Zumbika Village 20 July 2019

<sup>153</sup> Interview with Joel Mateisanwa Mudzimiri Village 25 September 2019

<sup>154</sup> Ibid

of cries.<sup>155</sup> Reasons for their disappearance remain unclear. It even suggested that the incumbent Chireya was advised not to use the mvumba road because it passes through Mupare's territory. It is alleged that once Chireya uses the road he will die instantly.<sup>156</sup> The mysterious disappearance of Mupare's family was followed by the emergence of the legendary drum known as Chivhunduka.<sup>157</sup> The drum had magical powers. It guided Chimera and his people to Zambia where they were defeated by the Lozi people and repulsed back to Mapfungabusi Plateau. Chimera and his people were hunters.<sup>158</sup> When they returned to Mapfungabusi from Zambia they rested near Ume River in Nyamusasa's chiefdom. Here they met Nyamusasa's daughters Zvuke and Mundiya.<sup>159</sup> Zvuke and Mundiya were extra ordinarily beautiful. The girls could arrest the feelings of every normal man. Again they decorated themselves with expensive jewellery.<sup>160</sup> Two of Chimera's soldiers established an intimate relationship with the two girls.<sup>161</sup> These soldiers went to Nyamusasa's homestead. They were given salted meat.<sup>162</sup> That is how they learnt of the Bari salt pans. They brought some of the meat to Chimera their leader.<sup>163</sup> Nyamusasa was in control of the Bari salt pans. As such Chimera developed a strong desire to take over control of the salt pans.

It is alleged that Nyamusasa had a legendary cow that produced salt. The cow had three distinct colours brown, black and white.<sup>164</sup> Nyamusasa's daughters advised Chimera that their father would enter into the stomach of the magical cow so that the beast would produce the Bari salt in form of cow dung.<sup>165</sup> The magical cow would leave other beasts in the grazing area and return back home. When the beast drew near home Nyamusasa's wives would ululate while the cow moos. Then the wives would bring some bowls to collect the cow dung which they used to manufacture the salt.<sup>166</sup> Equipped with such information Chimera devised a strategy for assassinating chief Nyamusasa and take over his territory. Chimera and his people remained hidden on the fringes of

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid

<sup>156</sup> Interview with Elifaskufa 20 September 2019

<sup>157</sup> G. T. Ncube, *A History of North-western Zimbabwe, 1850-1960*, Gweru. Mambo Press, 2004.

<sup>158</sup> Interview with Mambo one Mudzimiri Village 24 September 2019

<sup>159</sup> Ibid

<sup>160</sup> Ibid

<sup>161</sup> Ibid

<sup>162</sup> Ibid

<sup>163</sup> Ibid

<sup>164</sup> Ibid

<sup>165</sup> Interview with Joel Mateisanwa Mudzimiri Village 24 September 2019

<sup>166</sup> Ibid

Ume River while monitoring Nyamusasa's movements.<sup>167</sup> When Nyamusasa entered the legendary cow as per custom Chimera killed the beast together with Nyamusasa. Nyamusasa's forces tried to fight Chimera but they were quickly overrun.<sup>168</sup> Nyamusasa's chiefdom became Chimera's domain. Before Nyamusasa died he was advised by one of his wives about the strangers who intended to marry his daughters. He became very sceptical of these people. He told his wives that these people wanted to kill him. Nyamusasa advised his wives that upon his death they should cover the stomach of the legendary cow with a big bowl because if they do so salt, cloths and beads will be available in his place.<sup>169</sup> The Bari salt is still available in Chireya,s domain.<sup>170</sup> It is alleged that the vultures that ate the meat of the legendary cow produced some salt through the stools.<sup>171</sup> Motivated by his victory against Nyamusasa Chimera became very ambitious. He wanted to dominate the entire Mafungabusi Plateau. After his victory over the paramount Karanga Shangwe chief, Nyamusasa Chimera assumed the name Chireya meaning the one who twisted to avoid pursuit.<sup>172</sup> In his quest to dominate the whole Plateau Chireya clashed with another Karanga Shangwe chief, Mafunga. Mafunga's territory was adjacent to Mhembwe Mountain. It was located south of Nyamusasa's chiefdom.<sup>173</sup> At one point the Ndebele wanted to attack him. Mafunga and his people climbed up the Mhembwe Mountain. When they were excited a buck appeared in their midst and mysteriously died. This meant that the buck was mystical in nature. It was not an ordinary animal. They were alerted against the Ndebele who were already closer to the vicinity.<sup>174</sup> Mafunga and his people were able to hide and escape Ndebele raid. Since the buck saved them from Ndebele attack the animal became a taboo. <sup>175</sup>They changed their totem to Mpunzi in honour of the buck and named their mountain stronghold Mhembwe hence Gomo Remhembwe. <sup>176</sup> It was a strategic point. Chireya had hectic time trying to conquer Mafunga. From

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid

<sup>168</sup> Ibid

<sup>169</sup> Ibid

<sup>170</sup> Interview with Henry Chidzivo (Chief Chireya) Masengere Village 26 October 2019 The Chief showed the researcher the Bari salt and the salt pans

<sup>171</sup> Ibid

<sup>172</sup> G. T, Ncube, *A History of North-western Zimbabwe, 1850-1960*, Gweru. Mambo Press, 2004.

<sup>173</sup> Interview with Augustine Masunda Zumbika Village 20 July 2019

<sup>174</sup> Ibid

<sup>175</sup> Ibid

<sup>176</sup> Ibid

the summit of the mountain Mafunga's forces could see Chireya's soldiers advancing and launch attacks from that vantage position.<sup>177</sup> Besides the mountain Mafunga had two other important war mechanisms that are the magical bees and the Kaguta magical stream. Oral tradition has it that Mafunga got these magical powers from a prominent witchdoctor who lived in Binga back then in order to protect his domain from the Ndebele who seemed to be a threat to his territory.<sup>178</sup>

As soon as Chireya's forces penetrated Mafunga's territory they would develop swollen stomachs and Mafunga's soldiers would capitalise on their situation and shoot them with their bows and arrows.<sup>179</sup> The stream marked the boundary between Mafunga and Nyamusasa.<sup>180</sup> Apart from the Kaguta magic Mafunga also used magical bees against Chireya. Mafunga had a baobab tree that housed magical bees.<sup>181</sup> The tree was known as Nyamavara because the bee bites produced bruises on the face of the enemy.<sup>182</sup> It is alleged that Nyamavara is still surviving.<sup>183</sup> Due to these defence strategies Mafunga could not be easily defeated. Chireya tried to dislodge him twice but his soldiers were dismally vanquished because Mafunga let loose his bees on them and took advantage of their confusion to shoot down many of them by poisoned arrows.<sup>184</sup>

Since Chireya had already defeated Nyamusasa he established his settlement along Ume River, the area which is now Chireya. He could launch attacks on Mafunga from his new settlement. After successive defeats by Mafunga, Chireya visited the Korekore spirit medium in Nemaconde's territory to consult on how he could dislodge Mafunga. Nehowa the spirit medium advised Chireya to send his beautiful girl to Mafunga's stronghold purporting to seek a marriage alliance between the Shangwe and the Rozvi.<sup>185</sup> Chireya sent his daughter Nyangombe or Makanda to Mafunga. Nyangombe was accompanied by her brother Nebumhu. She carried a dagger which she wrapped in her dress. Nyangombe strategically positioned herself so that she could be easily noticed. She sat at a well where Mafunga's people got their water. She was discovered by some village women

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<sup>177</sup> Interview with Garamukanwa

<sup>178</sup> Interview with Augustine Masunda 15 September 2019

<sup>179</sup> Ibid

<sup>180</sup> Ibid

<sup>181</sup> Ibid

<sup>182</sup> Ibid

<sup>183</sup> Ibid

<sup>184</sup> G. T, Ncube, *A History of North-western Zimbabwe, 1850-1960*, Gweru. Mambo Press, 2004.

<sup>185</sup> Interview with Garamukanwa 25 September 2019



who hastily informed the chief about the beautiful woman at the well. The women were convinced that Nyangombe was a gift from God. The chief sent some of his soldiers to go and collect the woman for him. Nyangombe and her brother Nebumhu were brought before the chief. The chief was very impressed with the offer from Chireya. Mafunga is believed to have been attracted by the beauty of Nyangombe and accepted the offer of a marriage alliance.<sup>186</sup> When Mafunga retired to bed with Chireya's beautiful daughter she stabbed him to death, cut off his head and fled during the night.<sup>187</sup> Nyangombe took Mafunga's head and managed to escape together with her brother. In the next morning Mafunga's soldiers discovered that their chief had been beheaded. As their custom demanded they went to chief's house to greet him. The chief did not respond. The soldiers simply thought the chief was still in deep sleep since he was busy with the virgin girl. After a couple of hours, they became sceptical. They opened the door only to discover that the chief was no more. The soldiers started to pursue Nyangombe and her brother hastily. They were extremely agitated. Nyangombe and her brother escaped through the mountain stronghold. They had difficult time trying to transverse the thick forest of the mountain. The two sustained injuries which derailed their movement. They were also obscured by mist. It seems the Mhembwe Mountain was mysterious also. Nyangombe and her brother became tired. The two rested at Tsinamagora present day Gukure. Nyangombe was apprehended but her brother Nebumhu managed to escape.

Nyangombe beseeched the soldiers not to kill her but advised them to cut off her hands and legs. The soldiers did likewise. When Chireya learnt that her daughter had been apprehended he sent his army. When the army approached Tsinamagora where Nyangombe was struggling for her life Nyangombe advised the soldiers to make an indigenous stretcher bed (mupoyi) for her.<sup>188</sup> It is claimed that Nyangombe turned into a snake.<sup>189</sup> The snake travelled from Tsinamagora to Nyagombe and then to Dzire.<sup>190</sup> It is asserted that Nyagombe is a tarnished version of Nyangombe.<sup>191</sup> The Nyagombe area was named after Nyangombe. It is also suggested areas which

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<sup>186</sup>G. T, Ncube, *A History of North-western Zimbabwe, 1850-1960*, Gweru. Mambo Press, 2004.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid

<sup>188</sup> Interview with Elfas Kufa Kufa Village 20 September 2019

<sup>189</sup> Ibid

<sup>190</sup> Ibid

<sup>191</sup> Ibid

are associated with the legendary woman are still sacred. The snake may be encountered by some people crossing the tarred road around Kamhororo and Gwavi River.<sup>192</sup>

Mafunga's forces had taken Mafunga's head from Nyangombe. Upon arrival in Mafunga's territory Chireya's forces managed to retrieve Mafunga's head.<sup>193</sup> They handed it to Chireya as a sign of victory.<sup>194</sup> Mafunga's death is said to have demoralised the Karanga Shangwe and Chireya capitalised on that and launched decisive attacks on the mountain stronghold. Chireya finally managed to vanquish Mafunga's forces. It is suggested that most of Mafunga's people fled to the neighbouring Tonga chiefdoms.<sup>195</sup> After final subjugation Chireya was able to establish his hegemony over the entire Mapfungautsi region. Oral tradition has it that Chireya's brothers Kurikona, Vhumakuregwa, Chipashu and Nemasakadza were part of his army. Kurikona was the eldest amongst Chireya's brothers. As such, after defeating Mafunga Chireya ceded the Shangwe areato his brother Kurikona. Chireya's people celebrated their victory saying, 'saying tahwina nyika nemamwe mazano', hence the title Nemamwe mazano became applied to Kurikona.<sup>196</sup> This title is said to have been wrongly recorded by the settlers as Nemangwe.<sup>197</sup>

When Chireya established himself on the Mapfungabusi Plateau he transformed his totem to Shava from Moyo in honour of his ancestor or Knehuni or Nyahuni who admired the antelope.<sup>198</sup> Since Chimera broke away from the Rozvi some Rozvi groups were still pursuing him. Therefore he changed his totem to disguise his foes.<sup>199</sup> Nemangwe became Shava Murindagomo. Since the Shangwe area is located in the middle between Chibodza and Mafunga Nemangwe became the buffer zone against the mountain stronghold of Mafunga's territory and probably the Rozvi and Ndebele groups. Nemangwe moved to Nyoka where he started to grow tobacco. The Nemangwe tobacco industry presents an interesting example of industrial specialization in pre-colonial Zimbabwe.<sup>200</sup> The Shangwe dominated the tobacco industry, which dates to the pre-colonial period. The Nemangwe people established a thriving tobacco industry and exported large

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid

<sup>193</sup> Ibid

<sup>194</sup> Ibid

<sup>195</sup> Interview with Augustine MasundaZumbika Village 25 September 2019

<sup>196</sup> Interview with GaramukanwaMudzimiri Village 25 September 2019

<sup>197</sup> Ibid

<sup>198</sup> Ibid

<sup>199</sup> Ibid

<sup>200</sup> Maganga

quantities of the crop to their neighbours in the south.<sup>201</sup>They developed exceptional skills in growing and processing tobacco.<sup>202</sup>

When Chireya defeated Mafunga he split his territory. He ceded part of his territory to his brothers Njerere, Nemangwe and Nembudziya.<sup>203</sup>These brothers played significant roles in the wars of conquest.<sup>204</sup> As such, Chireya appreciated their efforts by giving them some domains to govern.<sup>205</sup>

The history of the emergence of Nemangwe chiefdom is seem to be overshadowed by Chireya's history but one important fact is that Chireya was assisted by his brothers to establish his control over the Mafungabusi Plateau. Nemangwe did not win his chiefdom from a silver plate. He fought bravely against Mafunga. Kurikona who happen to be the first Nemangwe Mambo was a military tactician. He led a certain squadron against Mafunga. His participation in the wars of conquest earned him favour from Chireya besides being the eldest of Chireya's younger brothers.

The end of Karanga dominance on the Mapfungabusi Plateau marked the rise of the Nemangwe chiefdom. When Chireya gave part of his territory to Kurikona Nebumhu was still young. He could not contest the chieftaincy position but after a couple of years Nebumhu started to agitate for the position of the chief.<sup>206</sup> He based his claim on the fact that he had accompanied his matrilineal sister Nyangombe on a plot to kill Mafunga. There was an acute tension between Kurikona and Nebumhu over the crown.<sup>207</sup> The contention was cowed by Chireya who dictated the installation and succession systems that had to be followed in the newly created chiefdom.

Chireya decreed that the collateral adelphic system was to be followed.<sup>208</sup> As such Kurikona as the eldest brother was entitled to the position and after him Vhumakuregwa would follow since he was the second eldest brother of Chireya.Nebunhu was a son to Chireya therefore he could not usurp the throne when Chireya's brothers were still alive.<sup>209</sup> Consequently his claim was dismissed by

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<sup>201</sup>Ibid

<sup>202</sup>Kossim

<sup>203</sup>G.T,NcubeG. T, Ncube,*A History of North-western Zimbabwe, 1850-1960*, Gweru. Mambo Press, 2004.

<sup>204</sup> Interview with Elfes Kufa, Kufa Villge 20 September 2019

<sup>205</sup> Ibid

<sup>206</sup>Interview with Headman Nebumhu 20 September 2019

<sup>207</sup>Ibid

<sup>208</sup>Ibid

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

his father Chireya. Chireya also advised the elders in the chiefdom that he would preside over the chieftainship succession processes in the Nemangwe chiefdom since the chiefdom was his creation.<sup>210</sup> As compensation and appreciation for the job well done Nebumhu was allowed to go and administer Tsinamagora where her sister was apprehended by Mafunga's army.<sup>211</sup> However Nebumhu was not satisfied with the size of his territory but he could not oppose his father. Nebumhu remained aggrieved. Even today some members of the Nebumhu clan express their concern against the Nemangwe chieftaincy.<sup>212</sup>

It seems therefore Nemangwe was just one of Chireya's sub rulers. It appears that Kurikaona was ruling the chiefdom on behalf of Chireya, the paramount chief. It is even suggested that important matters in the state were handled by Chireya especially during the early phase of the Nemangwe chiefdom. Such kind of administration was jeopardised by the advent of colonialism. The wrangle between Kurikona and Nebumhu over chieftainship shaped the succession disputes that occurred later in the chiefdom. Despite Chireya's involvement in the affairs of the Nemangwe chiefdom succession squabbles became an integral part in the chiefdom especially after the death of Vhumakuregwa. One is forced to conclude that the demise of Mafunga culminated into the birth of the Nemangwe chiefdom and its succession disputes. Disputes in Nemangwe emerged with the creation of the chiefdom.

The history of the genesis of the Nemangwe chiefdom is a complex history. It is associated with a lot of mysteries that are still haunting the memories of elders in the chiefly clan today. It appears that they pose a lot of confusion to the elders. The mystery of Nyangombe triggered the succession wrangles in the chiefdom. Even today the chiefdom is deeply involved in a succession dispute that dates back to a distant past.

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid

<sup>211</sup> Ibid

<sup>212</sup> Ibid

## Chapter 4: The quest for legitimacy among the Nemangwe feuds

### Introduction

The Nemangwe chiefdom is characterised by a complex history of succession disputes. In the previous chapter we learnt that Kurikona was given the Sebungwe area to administer by his brother Chireya after the demise of Mafunga. Though Nebumhu tried to contest the throne Chireya used his discretion as the paramount chief of the entire Mafungabusi plateau to calm his aggrieved son. For Chireya his brother Kurikona was the legitimate ruler. He felt that his son could not rule when his brothers were still alive. However, Nebumhu's claim paved way for the wrangles that rocked the Nemangwe chiefdom after the reign of Vhumakuregwa. Therefore, the essence of this chapter is to scrutinise the nature and causes of succession disputes in the Nemangwe chieftaincy.

## Succession wrangles during the pre-colonial period

After the death of Kurikona, Vhumakuregwa took over the throne. Vhumakuregwa was a brother to Kurikona.<sup>213</sup> The fact that Vhumakuregwa succeeded his brother Kurikona is a clear indication that the collateral adelphic principle is the ideal succession system of the Shangwe communities. The collateral adelphic system is most common succession system among the Shona chiefdoms.<sup>214</sup> There is no doubt that the Shangwe succession system was adopted from the Rozvi Kingdom where the Shangwe people originated from. Despite elaborate succession principles succession disputes remain a thorn in the Nemangwe chiefdom. There are basically two comprehensive narratives on the chieftaincy succession squabbles that entangled the Nemangwe chiefdom prior to colonialism. However, the two versions concur with each other in a plethora of aspects.

It is alleged that Vhumakuregwa's senior wife had a son outside wedlock.<sup>215</sup> The son was known as Manjoro.<sup>216</sup> Thus Manjoro was Vhumakuregwa's adopted son. Now when Vhumakuregwa died Manjoro wanted to take over the throne. He was castigated by the Nemangwe family members. He was actually driven out of the chiefdom.<sup>217</sup> Manjoro went to Zambia. Nemananga the biological son of Vhumakuregwa usurped the throne after his father.<sup>218</sup> This was a violation of the collateral adelphic system. Nemananga forcibly took over power at the expense of his uncles.<sup>219</sup> Thus the collateral adelphic system was compromised by Nemananga for his selfish interests. Such a scenario brewed tension in the chiefdom. Nemananga's death was mysterious and therefore according to the Shona tradition his relatives were supposed to visit a witchdoctor to search for the cause of his death. It came out that one of his wives, Kucha's mother connived with Nemananga's brothers Degwe and Dzunganyi to kill the chief.<sup>220</sup> The culprits were executed. Kucha fled to Chihota where he sought refuge from his grandfather.<sup>221</sup> He grew up among the Chihota people.

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<sup>213</sup> Interview with GaramukanwaMudzimiri Village 25 September 2019

<sup>214</sup> Pekeshe

<sup>215</sup> Interview with Joel MateisanwaMudzimiri Village 25 September 2019

<sup>216</sup> Ibid

<sup>217</sup> Ibid

<sup>218</sup> Ibid

<sup>219</sup> Ibid

<sup>220</sup> Interview with GaramukanwaMudzimiri Village 25 September 2019

<sup>221</sup> Ibid

He managed to raise his family in the Chihota chiefdom. Kucha married many wives who produced numerous children for him.<sup>222</sup>

When Manjoro heard about the death of Nemananga he returned back from Zambia to try his chance once again. Vhumakuregwa had his last son Chipashu. Chipashu began to quarrel with Manjoro over the succession of Nemananga.<sup>223</sup> Chipashu claimed legitimacy basing on the fact that Manjoro was an adopted son of Vhumakuregwa. However, the status of Manjoro was not clear. Manjoro was accused of being a Tonga.<sup>224</sup> It appears that they were mere allegations. Nemananga's house wanted to eliminate Manjoro. The two, Manjoro and Chipashu were advised by the spirit medium, Nevana and the elders to go to Chireya and seek advice.<sup>225</sup> They were accompanied by their sister. Chireya advised them to return back to their chiefdom but he told them that one of them was going to die along the way.<sup>226</sup>

It is alleged that at Nyaruhwe hills Manjoro was attacked by a lion.<sup>227</sup> To many this implied that Manjoro was truly an adopted son therefore he was not eligible to take up the throne. However some clan members argue that Chipashu threw Manjoro into a cliff and claimed that he was devoured by a lion spirit '*Mhondoro*'<sup>228</sup>. Chipashu and his sister went back to Chireya to report the death of Manjoro. Chireya advised Chipashu to take over the stool.<sup>229</sup> Since Nemananga had succeeded his father Vhumakuregwa, Kucha felt that he should succeed his father Nemananga. Kucha organised a powerful army from the Chihota chiefdom. The army consisted of his children and his supporters. Kucha and his army travelled all the way to GokweMafungabutsi to launch an armed confrontation against his uncle Chipashu.<sup>230</sup> According to the collateral adelphic system Chipashu was the legitimate successor of Nemananga since he was Nemananga's brother.<sup>231</sup> Kucha wanted to eliminate Chipashu's house from the Nemanangwe chieftaincy. Kucha attacked Chipashu's army and demolished it. He captured his uncle Chipashu and threw him into a very

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid

<sup>223</sup> Ibid

<sup>224</sup> Ibid

<sup>225</sup> Interview with Headman NebumhuKufa Village 20 July 2019

<sup>226</sup> Ibid

<sup>227</sup> Ibid

<sup>228</sup> Interview with Brighton KaneshongaMadaupindu Village 27/10/19

<sup>229</sup> Ibid

<sup>230</sup> Ibid

<sup>231</sup> Interview with Garamukanwa

deep pool at the confluence of Boi and Sasame Rivers known as Nyangura.<sup>232</sup> The next day Chipashu appeared at the chief's court.<sup>233</sup> This mystery did not deter Kucha from attacking Chipashu. Kucha was determined to grab the throne from Chipashu through thick and thin. Kucha took Chipashu back to the pool. This time around Kucha tied some heavy stones around Chipashu's neck to make sure he sunk deep into the pool and never come out again.<sup>234</sup> Still this did not work. Chipashu appeared at the court once again. Chipashu then advised Kucha's people to tie his face with a black cloth and task a virgin girl throw him into Nyangura pool.<sup>235</sup> This was done and the following day Kucha and his people visited the pool and found the black cloth which tied Chipashu's face at the pool.<sup>236</sup> They could hear drum sounds, songs and ululations from the pool.<sup>237</sup> Kucha organised a ceremony to celebrate his victory. Kucha assumed chieftaincy position after killing his uncle. This had a ripple effect in his life time. During the course of his reign Kucha became blind.<sup>238</sup> It is alleged that the source this misfortune was the black cloth that tied Chipashu's face.<sup>239</sup>

When Kucha was blind his sons, Matengambiri, Chichembere, Bango, Kanhukamwe and Muchoramwendo began to commit adultery with his young wives.<sup>240</sup> Kucha was aggrieved and prohibited them from taking over chieftainship after him. Succession disputes among various Shona groups were largely a result of improper definition of succession principles and personal ambitions.<sup>241</sup> Likewise the violation of the collateral adelphic system after the death of Vhumakuregwa culminated into succession wrangle between Kucha and Chipashu. After Vhumakuregwa's death his brother should have usurped the throne instead of his son Nemananga. Chireya tried to rectify the problem by installing Chipashu after Nemananga. This did not yield a positive result since Kucha Nemananga's son, felt he was the heir to his father's throne. This version is geared to eliminate claimants from the houses of Manjoro, Nemananga. Thus it supports

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid

<sup>233</sup> Interview with Joel Mateisanwa Mudzimiri Village 25 September 2019

<sup>234</sup> Ibid

<sup>235</sup> Ibid

<sup>236</sup> Ibid

<sup>237</sup> Ibid

<sup>238</sup> Ibid

<sup>239</sup> Interview with J Nemanangwe Kutonho Village 24 September 2019

<sup>240</sup> Ibid

<sup>241</sup> T.C. Eden, When the Chieftaincy Stools become a Source of Disputes in the Banyang Polity, *Imperial Journal of Interdisciplinary Research* Vol 3 No 10 2017



the legitimacy of Mudzimiri, Chipashu's descendant. This version has been vehemently castigated by other clan members.

The other notion dismisses the fact that Manjoro was an adopted son. One of the interviewees pointed out that Manjoro was a witchdoctor. As a witchdoctor he went to Zambia to perform his duties.<sup>242</sup> When his father Vhumakuregwa died he was away and this created a lee way for his younger brother Nemananga. Thus if this version is to be believed by right Manjoro was supposed to rule before Nemananga because he was the elder brother. As such when Nemananga died Manjoro came back from Zambia to usurp the throne after his young brother.<sup>243</sup> This did not auger well with Chipashu who was a father figure to Nemananga and Manjoro. The two went to Chireya the paramount to search for advice. Chireya advised them that to avoid future conflicts Manjoro had to succeed his brother such that chieftainship in Nemanangwe would follow the two houses Nemananga and Manjoro.<sup>244</sup> On their way back to Nemanangwe territory Chipashu killed Manjoro<sup>245</sup> Chipashu claimed that Manjoro was devoured by the lion spirit, the *Mhondoro*.<sup>246</sup> When Chireya learnt from Nehowa the spirit medium that Chipashu killed Manjoro he told Chipashu that his house would never rule because he had shed blood which is a taboo.<sup>247</sup> Instead Chipashu was made acting chief.<sup>248</sup> This notion does not consider Chipashu's house in the Nemanangwe chieftaincy. According to this version Chipashu's house was relegated to the role of a chief maker, *Zibaba*.<sup>249</sup> The two versions concur on the fact that Chipashu was conquered by Kucha Nemananga's son. From the two narratives one can note the complexity of the Nemanangwe chieftainship. However, it appears that Manjoro and Nemananga's houses are both legitimate houses for the Nemanangwe chieftainship.

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<sup>242</sup> Interview with Mambo one Mudzimiri Village 25 September 2019

<sup>243</sup> Interview with Brighton Kaneshonga Madaupandu Village 27 October 2019

<sup>244</sup> Ibid

<sup>245</sup> Interview with Jonathan Kaneshong Madaupandu Village 27 October 2019

<sup>246</sup> Ibid

<sup>247</sup> Ibid

<sup>248</sup> Ibid

<sup>249</sup> Ibid

## Succession squabbles that rocked the Nemangwe chiefdom during the colonial era

Despite the fact that Kucha banished his sons from succeeding him, Bango one of his sons succeeded him during the advent of colonial encroachment, in 1890.<sup>250</sup> It is suggested that Bango's reign was short lived.<sup>251</sup> Bango died mysteriously just like his grandfather Nemananga. His brother Chichembere succeeded him in 1892.<sup>252</sup> Chichembere committed suicide on his way to Karirangwe to pay tax to the settler government barely two months after usurping power.<sup>253</sup> It is alleged that Chichembere feared the whites. After Chichembere his brother Ndira took over the throne. Soon after getting into power Ndira was killed by the bees in 1893.<sup>254</sup> Ndira was succeeded by Muchoramwendo who also died barely a year after taking over power.<sup>255</sup> Kucha's sons were very unfortunate.

It is believed that they were haunted by Chipashu's avenging spirit. Again they did not take heed to their father's words.<sup>256</sup> The mysterious deaths of Kucha's sons raised eyebrows of the colonial government. The government started to make a research on the Nemangwe chieftainship.<sup>257</sup> It was advised that Chipashu's house should provide the chief. Unfortunately, Chipashu did not leave behind any brother. His brothers had died together with his son Mvumbi.<sup>258</sup> The only member who was inclined to his house was Mudzimiri, son of Mvumbi.<sup>259</sup> Mudzimiri was Chipashu's grandson. Mudzimiri felt that he was old enough to rule. He suggested for Kanyongo son of Dzunganyi on condition that Mudzimiri's sons would rule after him.<sup>260</sup> After Kanyongo Marimbizike, Matengambiri, Madomasi of Manjoro's house and Matsaukigwa started to wrangle over chieftainship at the expense of Mudzimiri's sons.<sup>261</sup> However, some clan members deny the legitimacy of Mudzimiri. For many, Mudzimiri from Chipashu's house was made a chief maker,

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<sup>250</sup> National Archive of Zimbabwe

<sup>251</sup> Interview with GaramukanwaMudzimiri Village 25 September 2019

<sup>252</sup> Ibid

<sup>253</sup> Ibid

<sup>254</sup> Ibid

<sup>255</sup> Ibid

<sup>256</sup> Ibid

<sup>257</sup> Ibid

<sup>258</sup> Ibid

<sup>259</sup> Ibid

<sup>260</sup> Ibid

<sup>261</sup> Interview with Joel MaeteisanwaMudzimiri Village 25 September 2019

Zibaba.<sup>262</sup> The role of Mudzimiri was to facilitate the Matatara process. The Matatara process is a test for legitimacy. He was also a mediator between the community and the rainmaking spirit Nevana. People would gather at his home before proceeding to the Nevana shrine. At the shrine Mudzimiri would serve as a spokesperson. According to this version Mudzimiri is not a member of the chiefly clan. Mudzimiri does not appear on the archival record at all. The members of the Mudzimiri base their legitimacy on Chipashu who was banished from ruling in the Nemangwe chiefdom. Thus Mudzimiri's sons were sidelined.

Marimbizike had a magical knobkerrie which he stabbed into the ground as a challenge to his rivals. For Marimbizike, one who managed to pull out the knobkerrie would become the chief.<sup>263</sup> Madomasi, who was inclined to the so-called adopted son Manjoro managed to pull out the knobkerrie.<sup>264</sup> Marimbizike did not know that Madomasi was a witchdoctor. According to the agreement Madomasi was supposed to rule. Marimbizike begged Madomasi to allow him to succeed Muchoramwendo on condition that Madomasi would rule after him.<sup>265</sup> As such Marimbizike ruled after Muchoramwendo.

During the course of his rule Marimbizike became blind. He allowed his son, Matenganyika to rule on his behalf. Marimbizike died in 1960. Matenganyika automatically became a regent chief. According to Shangwe tradition a regent chief was supposed to rule for two years after which a new chief would be installed. However, Matenganyika was able to win the favour of the colonial regime. Chiefs were used by the colonial administration when the principle of divide-and-rule was employed to destroy the solidarity that existed among the traditional leaders.<sup>266</sup> With the surfacing of colonialism it ushered a new dispensation in terms of appointments, succession and authority of traditional leaders.<sup>267</sup> There was random selection of individuals by colonialist not following procedures.<sup>268</sup> Traditional leaders were imposed without traditions of chieftaincy.<sup>269</sup> Colonial masters introduced managerial structures and governmental laws that diverted the function of

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<sup>262</sup> Interview with Jonathan Kaneshonga

<sup>263</sup> Ibid

<sup>264</sup> Ibid

<sup>265</sup> Ibid

<sup>266</sup> Ibid

<sup>267</sup> Ibid

<sup>268</sup> Beke 1999

<sup>269</sup> N. Gumbi, Traditional Leadership Succession and Appointment processes in Zimbabwe: A Case of Masvingo Province, Midlands State University 2015

traditional leaders to that of management officer.<sup>270</sup> Traditional leaders were no longer accountable to ancestors in issues pertaining to day-to-day activities in their chiefdoms but rather to colonial administrators.<sup>271</sup> As long as one was prepared to serve the interests of the colonial government one would become a chief. During the colonial rule chiefs were imposed without considering the customary traditions of the group. As such, some regent chiefs would be allowed to stay in power for as long as they proved to be loyal to the colonial regime. Matenganyika supplied labourers through the Chibharo system and enforced the payment of taxes. As such, he was allowed to remain in power against the Shangwe tradition.<sup>272</sup> After two years of acting Matenganyika was supposed to handover the throne to the legitimate leader. After Marimbizike's death Matenganyika clashed with Kachavazungu's son Herija Kachavazungu Masungu because of the agreement made between Madomasi and Marimbizike. Both Kachavazungu and Madomasi belonged to Manjoro house. Matenganyika was supported by the whites at the detriment of Kachavazungu. When Matenganyika died in 1982 Kachavazungu was accused of bewitching the deceased. The Nemananga house believed that Herija Masungu Kachavazungu killed Matenganyika in order to take over power. However, the allegation did not deter Herija from succeeding Matenganyika. In 1983 Sixpence Karombe was made the regent chief. He ruled for two years after which Herija Kachavazungu Masungu was appointed by the ZANU government to become the new chief because he supported the liberation struggle. Thus the appointment of Herija Masungu was politically motivated. Politicising chieftaincy succession leads to defective succession systems. Defective succession systems results in succession wrangles and fragmentation to the state.<sup>273</sup> The contemporary wrangle is really a product of the politicisation of chieftaincy succession in the Nemananga chiefdom. The appointment of Kachavazungu by ZAPU remains a thorn among the chiefly houses in the Nemananga chiefdom. They feel that the post-independence government of Zimbabwe violated their succession system.

## The contemporary succession wrangles in the Nemananga chiefdom

Chieftainship in the Nemananga chiefdom is supposed to alternate between two major houses Manjoro and Nemananga.<sup>274</sup> The two houses are divided into sub houses. Manjoro house has three

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<sup>270</sup> Ibid

<sup>271</sup> Ibid

<sup>272</sup> Interview with Gwatirinda, Assistant DA Gokwe South District 4 October 2019

<sup>273</sup> Ibid

<sup>274</sup> Interview with Mambo one Mudzimiri Village 25 September 2019

sub houses namely Manyonde, Madomasi and Kachavazungu. Nemananga house has five sub houses which include, Bango, Degwe ,Dzonganyi, Kucha and Banhire. Banhire sub house had no sons. It is suggested that Nemananga house rotated nine consecutive times. Its sub houses were rotating at the expense of the Manjoro house. After a long struggle Herija Masungo of the Manjoro house got the chance to rule. When Herija Kachavazungu died his son Mike was appointed to be the regent chief.<sup>275</sup> When his term of office expired the District Administrator (DA) advised the members of the Nemananga family to select a successor in 2011.<sup>276</sup> The Manjoro family asked the Nemananga clan members to allow them another chance since they ruled once.<sup>277</sup> The clan agreed to give Manjoro the second chance on 14 February 2014.<sup>278</sup> Through the support of the Manyonde house Mike Kachavazungu began to process some papers so that he would be elevated to become a substantive chief from being a regent chief, *Sarapavana*<sup>279</sup>. The Manjoro sub house, Madomasi disputed the arrangement on the basis that chieftainship should rotate even within sub houses.<sup>280</sup> This translates to the fact that Mike was not supposed to rule after his father Herija Masungo Kachavazungu. The baton has to be passed to another sub house of Manjoro. The three sub houses Manyonde, Madomasi and Kachavazungu were invited by the then minister of local government Ignitius Chombo to discuss the matter.<sup>281</sup> Manyonde and Kachavazungu supported the primogeniture system against the collateral system. Madomasi agitated for the collateral system, arguing that it was the ideal succession principle for the Shangwe people.<sup>282</sup> Consequently the issue was referred back to the Nemananga clan members. Still there was a stalemate because Mike Kachavazungu still insisted that he should continue ruling because Matenganyika who was also regent chief ruled until he died in 1982.<sup>283</sup> Madomasi house jeopardised Mike Kachavazungu's chance of becoming a substantive chief. However, Mike Kachavazungu Nemananga refused to release the stool.<sup>284</sup> He claimed that the house of Nemananga ruled for twelve consecutive years.<sup>285</sup> Since 2011 a series of meetings were held with the family and the DA's office to discuss

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid

<sup>276</sup> Ibid

<sup>277</sup> Interview with Pharoah Chidzivo Chidzivo Village 27 October 2019

<sup>278</sup> Ibid

<sup>279</sup> Interview with Jonathan Kaneshonga Madaupandu Village 27 October 2019

<sup>280</sup> Ibid

<sup>281</sup> Ibid

<sup>282</sup> Ibid

<sup>283</sup> Interview with Brighton Kaneshonga Madaupandu Village 27 October 2019

<sup>284</sup> Ibid

<sup>285</sup> Ibid

the matter but Mike remained adamant. Mike was supported by his council and some family members. To maintain his hold over power Kachavazungu got involved in politics. He vehemently supported the ruling party ZANU PF. He became the party's key instrument during the election campaigns since 2013.<sup>286</sup> Mike was openly campaigning for ZANU PF candidates.<sup>287</sup> Following the emergence of the Movement For Democratic Change (MDC) the ruling party began to use the traditional leadership to harness the support of the rural populace.<sup>288</sup> The MDC polarised the Zimbabwean society into rural ZANU PF and urban MDC.<sup>289</sup> Mugabe was quick to realise that the land issue would be a backdrop to rejuvenate ZANU PF.<sup>290</sup> Since the traditional leaders like chiefs, headmen and village heads were considered to be the custodian of the land they were advised to indoctrinate the rural folk. The traditional leaders played a key role during the election campaigns. The constitution of Zimbabwe under section 28(2) stipulates that traditional leaders must not act in a partisan manner. On the contrary traditional leaders continue to further the interests of the ruling party which was a typical feature of Mugabe's reign. They continue to threaten the opposition supporters with violence if they fail to support the ruling party.<sup>291</sup> Chiefs, headmen and village heads collaborated with ZANU PF officials in monitoring and intimidating residents.<sup>292</sup>

They told the electorate at gatherings that their photographs would be used to check if they have voted for ZANU PF or not.<sup>293</sup> The leaders were intimidating and threatening the rural populace that if they do not vote properly the biometric system would be used to hunt them down.<sup>294</sup> They demanded serial numbers of the registration slips.<sup>295</sup> Traditional leaders forced people to attend ZANU PF meetings.<sup>296</sup> Such meetings were used to indoctrinate the people. Traditional leaders became important instruments for mobilising support for the ZANU PF candidates. In all these activities Mike was not an exceptional case. He actively participated in ZANU PF politics.<sup>297</sup> As such, he became a puppet chief. His loyalty to ZANU PF won him the support from the ZANU PF

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<sup>286</sup> Interview with Brighton Kaneshonga

<sup>287</sup> Ibid

<sup>288</sup> Daily News 25 April 2008

<sup>289</sup> G. Hill, The battle for Zimbabwe

<sup>290</sup> R.G, Mugabe, Inside the Third Chimurenga ,Harare Publishing House 2001

<sup>291</sup> Financial Gazzette 5-11 April 2018

<sup>292</sup> Ibid

<sup>293</sup> Ibid

<sup>294</sup> Ibid

<sup>295</sup> Ibid

<sup>296</sup> Ibid

<sup>297</sup> Interview with Jonathan Kaneshonga 26 October 2019

heavy weights.<sup>298</sup> As such, he could not be removed from chieftainship. Despite Mike 's involvement in politics the clan members continued to pressurise the government to discuss the question of Nemangwe chieftainship. It is suggested that between 2015 and 2016 the chief's council tried to impose Moffat Mavaramhaka as the new Nemangwe chief.<sup>299</sup> The idea was to create confusion among the Nemangwe clan thereby delaying the replacement of Mike Kachavazungu Nemangwe. Mavaramhaka is said to be an adopted son.<sup>300</sup> He does not appear on the archival records and is not known in the history of the chiefdom.<sup>301</sup> Another delegation which was led by chief Bango, Ndabeni and Nenyunga was sent by the ministry of local government to go and resolve the Nemangwe chieftaincy succession wrangle in 2017 at Nemangwe secondary school. After some deliberations with the Nemangwe clan members the delegation together with the DA's office ruled that Bango was the legitimate sub house. Bango belong to Nemananga. The delegation was convinced that Bango did not rule at any given point.<sup>302</sup> One of the contesting candidates from Madomasi sub house, Jonathan Kaneshonga visited the National archive and retrieved a 2015 record of the Nemangwe chiefly lineage. The record indicates that Bango ruled between 1890 and 1906.<sup>303</sup> The candidate submitted a petition to the local government basing on the archival record and the ministry took heed to his petition.<sup>304</sup> It was agreed that only two houses did not rule, Manyonde and Madomasi. As such Bango's claim was dismissed by the then minister of local governance, Ignatius Chombo. The minister suggested that the Manjoro house should be allowed another chance. He argued that Nemananga should not rule for the tenth time at the expense of Manjoro.<sup>305</sup> In 2018 two more meetings were held to discuss the matter. The meetings were presided over by the Council of Chiefs in liason with the DA's office. The meetings were marred with rampant violence.<sup>306</sup> The DA failed to pass any verdict. Apart from the violence the DA's hands were tied by the ZANU PF party.<sup>307</sup> Since elections were about to be held the DA would not rule against Mike who was a campaigning machine for the ruling party. During the last

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<sup>298</sup> Ibid

<sup>299</sup> Interview with Jonathan Kaneshonga

<sup>300</sup> Ibid

<sup>301</sup> Ibid

<sup>302</sup> Ibid

<sup>303</sup> Ibid

<sup>304</sup> Ibid

<sup>305</sup> Ibid

<sup>306</sup> Interview with Gwatirinda , Assistant DA Gokwe South District 4 October 2019

<sup>307</sup> Ibid

meeting the government sent some police details from the Support Unit (SU) to monitor the proceedings.<sup>308</sup> The SU was supposed to deter any form violence during the discussions. Had it not been the presence of the police details violence would have occurred.<sup>309</sup> The wrangle in the Nemangwe chiefdom jeopardised the acting chief Mike Kachavazungu Nemangwe from receiving the Isuzu double cab truck that was given to other chiefs by the government.<sup>310</sup>

Apart from the two houses Manjoro and Nemananga's claims Mudzimiri house is also claiming chieftaincy in the Nemangwe chiefdom.<sup>311</sup> Members of the Mudzimiri clan wrote a petition claiming legitimacy over the Nemangwe chieftainship. Mudzimiri claims to be Chipashu's grandson.<sup>312</sup> Mudzimiri visited the National Archives to launch his petition. He brought back a family record that indicates that Chipashu was just any acting chief.<sup>313</sup> For them Chipashu never ruled and therefore his turn has come. However, the other two houses Bango and Manjoro are dismissing the claim. They suggest that Chipashu is a chief maker and not chiefly house.<sup>314</sup> It seems this other house is simply trying to stir up confusion in the chiefdom. They did not launch the claim from the onset but they were attending the meetings. The fact that chiefs get salaries and some hefty benefits drive people to launch unnecessary claims. As a result of Madomasi's petition the Nemangwe succession issue is still pending.

## Exploring the impact of the Nemangwe succession disputes on the clan members and the general populace

Chieftainship wrangles in the Nemangwe chiefdom have been associated with a plethora of negative effects on some clan members and the general populace. During a dispute between Chipashu and Kucha many people lost their lives.<sup>315</sup> It is suggested that the war was very terrible. Most ordinary people died. Some were displaced from their homes. Many people who fled from Kucha's invasion joined other Shangwe communities for example the Njere, Nembudziya and

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<sup>308</sup>Ibid

<sup>309</sup>Ibid

<sup>310</sup>Ibid

<sup>311</sup> Interview with GaramukanwaMudzimiri Village 2019

<sup>312</sup> Ibid

<sup>313</sup> Ibid

<sup>314</sup> Ibid

<sup>315</sup>Interview with Joel MateisanwaMudzimiri Village 25 September 2019



Chireya.<sup>316</sup> The period was a period of crisis. When Chipashu's soldiers were defeated they were scattered all over the Gokwe region.

The dispute coloured relations of the Nemangwe family members. Even today the Mudzimiri house which is inclined to Chipashu and the Nemananga house members do not see eye to eye.<sup>317</sup> There is gross hatred between the two houses. Both houses came from Chireya which means they are blood relatives but because of chieftainship. Chieftaincy dispute culminate into witchcraft. It is believed that Matenganyika was bewitched by Herija Kachavazungu.<sup>318</sup> It is also believed that the recently appointed Bango was killed by Mike Kachavazungu.<sup>319</sup> Succession squabbles polarise communities.

As a result of succession disputes in Nemangwe chieftdom the generality has lost confidence in its leadership.<sup>320</sup> People have lost confidence even in village heads and headmen.<sup>321</sup> They feel that these leaders have been appointed by an illegitimate chief. Bad governance has also become a common feature in the chieftdom.<sup>322</sup> Undemocratic policies are being imposed on community members for example making 28<sup>th</sup> day of every month a sacred day. This day is not clearly defined and therefore, it is often resented by the local people.<sup>323</sup> Some people tend to capitalise on the instability and defy the customary traditions for example some people are settling on sacred places.<sup>324</sup>

## Conclusion

A close scrutiny of the Nemangwe chieftaincy disputes reveals that the primary source of the succession disputes was an inconsistent succession system. At one point they follow the collateral system and at one point the primogeniture. Defective succession systems were compounded by some external factors such as colonialism and politics. From the nature of the disputes one can tell that the ideal system for the chieftdom is the collateral adelphic system. Where this system was

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<sup>316</sup> Ibid

<sup>317</sup> Ibid

<sup>318</sup> Interview with J NemangweKutonho Village 20 July 2019

<sup>319</sup> Ibid

<sup>320</sup> Ibid

<sup>321</sup> Ibid

<sup>322</sup> Ibid

<sup>323</sup> Interview with Garamukanwa

<sup>324</sup> Ibid

followed no wrangles had been recorded for example after Kurikona. Since Kurikona was succeeded by his brother Vhumakuregwa no dispute arose. Again when Kucha's sons were succeeding one another no wrangles were recorded. The fact that the chiefdom combined succession systems it is difficult to trace the chronology of the chiefs and at the end it is difficult to determine the legitimate successor to the throne. It is important, however, to note that the chieftaincy succession wrangles in the Nemangwe chiefdom have negatively impacted on the welfare of the clan members and the general populace.

## Chapter 5: General conclusion: An Exploration on the efficacy of the Nemangwe jurisprudence and the contemporary resolutions to Nemangwe chieftaincy wrangles

In the last phase of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Nemangwe chiefdom emerged after Chireya conquered the Mafunga. However, Chireya did not take over control of the Mapfungabusi Plateau on a silver plate. He had hectic time trying to dislodge Mafunga. Mafunga had two defence mechanisms, the bees and the Kaguta juju.<sup>325</sup> He let loose his bees against the enemy.<sup>326</sup> As such Chireya could not defeat him easily until he was advised by Nehowa the spirit medium to trap chief Mafunga using his beautiful daughter Nyangombe.<sup>327</sup> Nyangombe killed Mafunga and that marked the end of Mafunga's chiefdom.<sup>328</sup> After defeating Mafunga Chireya gave part of his territory to Nemangwe, Njerere and Nemasakadza. Kurikona became the first Nemangwe feud. Thus the demise of

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<sup>325</sup>Interview with Augustine Masunda 20 July 2019

<sup>326</sup>G.T,Ncube, A History of Northwestern Zimbabwe 2004

<sup>327</sup>Ibid

<sup>328</sup>Interview with Elifas Kufa 25 September 2019

Mafunga gave rise to the Nemangwe chiefdom. After the reign of Vhumakuregwa the Nemangwe chiefdom became associated with chieftainship succession wrangles.

The chieftaincy conflicts emanate from the quest for traditional power among chiefly clan members.<sup>329</sup>It has been noted by Mudenge that after the death of a chief or king numerous claimants to the throne emerge.<sup>330</sup>The causes of chieftaincy succession disputes include defective succession systems, colonial distortion and political ubiquitous.<sup>331</sup> A closer look at the succession wrangles that rocked the Nemangwe chiefdom since the 19<sup>th</sup> century indicates that defective succession systems, colonial distortion and political ubiquitous contributed to the conflicts in one way or the other. The wrangles that scarred the Nemangwe chiefdom stretched from pre-colonial period to 2019. There is a succession dispute that is still rocking the chiefdom today. It seems the succession wrangles in the Nemangwe chiefdom result from the fact that the Shangwe combine both primogeniture system and the collateral adelphic.<sup>332</sup> This is evidenced by the fact that Nemananga succeeded his father Vhumakuregwa. This created tension between Chipashu and Manjoro after Nemananga.<sup>333</sup> However efforts to avert or resolve succession disputes were made. The Nemangwe society like any other Shona ethnic groups have some elaborate judicial structures that are designed to solve disputes in the community. There is no denial that the Nemangwe jurisprudence plays a significant role in handling chieftaincy disputes among the Nemangwe feuds. Like any other Shona society, the Nemangwe chiefdom had spirit mediums who worked in liaison with the council of elders in solving chieftainship wrangles that rocked the chiefdom since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some solutions were put in place to resolve some of the conflicts that occurred in the Nemangwe chiefdom since its advent. Therefore, the crux of this chapter is to interrogate the efficacy of the Nemangwe jurisprudence and the role of the contemporary judicial institutions in resolving succession disputes in the Nemangwe chiefdom. The indigenous and judicial structures these days' work together with modern institutions such as the modern courts, chief's council and the DA's office. A couple of ways were and some are still being applied in an attempt to resolve chieftainship succession disputes. As such the chapter shall focus on the role of the Shangwe

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<sup>329</sup>Bukari

<sup>330</sup>Mudenge

<sup>331</sup>L. Nkomo

<sup>332</sup>M. bourdillon

<sup>333</sup>Interview with Garamukanwa Mudzimiri village 25 September 2019

traditional council, role of the spirit mediums, role of the DA's office and the role the modern courts in dealing with chieftaincy succession disputes.

The Nemangwe chiefdom like any other Shona chiefdoms had their traditional ways of handling their chieftainship succession disputes. In case of a succession dispute the Nemangwe traditional council would discuss the matter. If the council of elders failed to resolve the issue, spirit mediums would be summoned to give the legitimate chief.<sup>334</sup> Spirit mediums played a very significant role in the politics of the Shona chiefdoms. Nevana and Nehowa were influential in the Nemangwe chiefdom. It is suggested that whenever a new chief was being installed Nevana travelled to Nemangwe area to preside over the installation in liaison with Chief Chireya.<sup>335</sup> Their role in trying to solve chieftaincy succession disputes should not be undermined. It is alleged that after the death of Nemananga the clan members visited Nehowa in Chinhoyi who advised them to go to Chireya the paramount chief. Most Shona say that the senior spirits of the chiefdom, speaking through their mediums should decide which of the candidates should succeed to the chieftainship and mediums are usually consulted at various stages during the succession disputes.<sup>336</sup> This is a clear testimony that the traditional councils among the Shona chiefdoms, the Shangwe included worked in liaison with spirit mediums in their endeavour to solve succession disputes in their chiefdoms. Spirit mediums advised chiefdoms on the ideal succession system. This is spelt out by Mavengere in his novel *Akanyangira yaona* when he says, "Svikiro rikati ushe madzoro hunoravanwa".<sup>337</sup> In this case the spirit medium advised people that chieftainship or kingship is rotational. It is clear that religion played a very vital role in traditional politics of Shona chiefdoms. It presided over the election of traditional leaders who were then viewed as representatives of the spiritual world on earth.<sup>338</sup> Spirit mediums were consulted to determine the legitimate successor of the deceased chief or King.<sup>339</sup> There after a ritual to appease the ancestral spirit of the local spirit is done and the medium is then asked to appoint the legitimate successor of the late chief basing on the adelphic

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<sup>334</sup> Interview with Loche Siyagijima, Siyagijima Village 23-10-19

<sup>335</sup> Ibid

<sup>336</sup> M. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples: An Ethnography of Contemporary Shona, with Special Reference to Their Religion*, Gweru, Mambo Press 1976

<sup>337</sup> E.P. Mavengere, *Akanyangira Yaona*, Longman 1979

<sup>338</sup> G. Makaudze, *African Traditional Leadership and Succession in the Post-Colonial Novel*, *Journal of African Literature Association*, Routledge 2017 pp210-222

<sup>339</sup> E.P. Mavengere, *Akanyangira Yaona*, Longman 1979

collateral system.<sup>340</sup> The religious performances and the involvement of the spirit mediums in the installation of the chief authenticate the succession system. Shona religion was always there to safeguard communal interests and not to champion selfish ends.<sup>341</sup> The spiritual world, being the most powerful and being concerned about the social well-being of its progeny, always provided ways of establishing and safeguarding order in society.<sup>342</sup> Among the Shona it was hardly expected of anyone to argue against the spiritual world and disturb the peace it had established.<sup>343</sup> No one's reign could prosper or last long if it did not have the blessing of the spiritual world.<sup>344</sup> Kucha did not respect the spirit mediums of the community and his reign was associated with misfortunes. Oral tradition has it that his children mysteriously died and he got blind during the course. Likewise the Nemangwe chiefdom consulted spirit mediums like Nehowa and Nevana in the event of a succession dispute.<sup>345</sup>

During a succession dispute between Kucha and Chipashu the spirit medium Nehowa was consulted. He advised the Nemangwe community to stick to the adelphic collateral system. This implied that Chipashu was the legitimate chief since he was Nemananga's brother. All the same Kucha overthrew his uncle through direct confrontation.<sup>346</sup> Although in theory the possessed medium of the senior spirit of the chiefdom is supposed to have the last word, in practice his decision may be disputed.<sup>347</sup> People may accuse the medium of pretending to be possessed and speaking with his own voice rather than that of the spirit.<sup>348</sup> Some may deliberately choose to defy the religious decision in order to make their ends meet. Thus Kucha decided to ignore the advice of Nehowa just to achieve his goal. Religion even tested an elected king or chief to confirm his legitimacy. Likewise Shangwe chiefs have to go through the process known as *Matatara* (graveyard). The *Matatara* process was facilitated with the spirit mediums of the area like Nevana

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<sup>340</sup> Interview with Henry Chidzivo

<sup>341</sup> Ibid

<sup>342</sup> Ibid

<sup>343</sup> M. Gelfand, *The Genuine Shona: Survival Values of an African Culture*. Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1973. Print.

<sup>344</sup> J. M. Gombe, *Tsika dzava Shona*. 1st ed. Harare: College Press, 1986

<sup>345</sup> Interview with Loche Siyagijima Village 15 October 2019

<sup>346</sup> Interview with Joel Mateisanwa Mudzimiri Village 25 September 2019

<sup>347</sup> M. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples: An Ethnography of Contemporary Shona, with Special Reference to Their Religion*, Gweru, Mambo Press 1976

<sup>348</sup> Ibid

and Nehowa. These spirit mediums were helped by the chief maker, Mudzimiri.<sup>349</sup> This process was meant to test the legitimacy of the candidate. By the *Matatara* process the chieftaincy candidate was asked by the senior spirit mediums of the Shangwe community to spend the whole night sleeping in the graveyard of the clan's ancestors. If one was not a legitimate candidate he would die during the night. Again the candidate is smeared with oil extracted from the corpses of the deceased chiefs. If one was not from the royal family and wants to cheat his way to the throne he would die there and then. If he had hurried to become chief before his time was ripe, he would develop burns all over his body. If the candidate was successful in this litmus test he was then asked to have sex with his blood sister in public. The graveyards for the Nemangwe chiefs are found at Kasuwe. This is where the *Matatara* takes place. Surviving the *Matatara* confirmed legitimacy to the throne. In some cases the candidate was asked to go and spend the whole night in Mabweadziva pool. If he survived the test the following morning people would find him out of the pool. The people would celebrate by singing and dancing for their new chief. After the tests the candidate was then sworn in by chief Chireya. Such tests were used to solve succession disputes in the Nemangwe chieftaincy. Illegitimate candidates would hesitate to risk life, thus reducing unnecessary chieftaincy succession conflicts. The role that is played by chief Chireya in the installation of chiefs in the Nemangwe chieftaincy should not be undermined. Chireya as a paramount chief of the Gokwe region would determine the Nemangwe succession system.<sup>350</sup> However, these days the chieftaincy institution is permeated with a lot of politics. As a result the role of Chireya in the appointment of Nemangwe chiefs had been marginalised. Similarly, the Chirimuhanzu dynasty also undertook some tests. The aspiring chief was asked to swim across the mythical Gonawapotera pool, which was expected of a genuine chief and was only accomplished by one whose election was supported by the ancestors.<sup>351</sup> All the above activities were of great value and meaning among the Shona. The smearing of one with ointment from dead bodies was meant to establish whether one was also the choice of the spiritual world, failure of which led to the death of the individual<sup>352</sup>.

These reduced incidents of opportunists and politically ambitious people who wanted to force their way to leadership positions they did not deserve. Intimacy with one's sister had a religious

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<sup>349</sup> Interview with Handisen Chidzivo, Chidzivo Village 27 October 2019

<sup>350</sup> Interview with Henry Chidzivo (Chief Chireya) Masengere Village 26 October 2019

<sup>351</sup> I. Zvarevashe, *Gonawapotera*. Salisbury: College Press, 1978.

<sup>352</sup> J. M. Gombe, *Tsika dzava Shona*. 1st ed. Harare: College Press, 1986

significance. This was only applicable to the right aspirant. Sleeping in the graveyard was another test, which sought to establish one's resilience, bravery and authenticity.<sup>353</sup> Opportunists would not dare undertake this move as it was a sure way of courting a premature death, it was a move only left to the chosen ones, whose being would be looked after by the spiritual world.<sup>354</sup> Only the rightful clan members would be brave enough to perform the ritual acts. As such chieftaincy succession disputes would be systematically averted. However, Kucha usurped power through military conquest. He attacked Chipashu who was acting chief Nemangwe. Kucha did not perform the rituals. Whether Kucha was legitimate or not remains unclear because he did not undergo the *Matatara* process<sup>355</sup>. In some cases, the Nemangwe chiefly clan would consult witch doctors to assist them to solve their chieftaincy succession disputes. After Nemananga's mysterious death the elders of the clan consulted a witch doctor in their quest to expose the culprits who bewitched the chief. The recalcitrant elements were exposed and beheaded. This possibly deterred some illegitimate aspirants from making unnecessary claims to the stool. Despite the tests succession disputes occurred in the Nemangwe chiefdom. The *Matatara* process did not prevent conflicts out rightly as some aspiring candidates deliberately ignored the rituals. Again succession wrangles remain a thorn in the Nemangwe chiefdom despite the presence of spirit mediums and the council of elders because some rogue elements disregarded the role of these institutions. Some accused the religious leaders of being corrupt.<sup>356</sup> However, the Nemangwe jurisprudence played a very

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<sup>353</sup>G.Makaudze, African Traditional Leadership and Succession in the Post-Colonial Novel, Journal of African Literature Association, Routledge 2017 pp210-222

<sup>354</sup> Ibid

<sup>355</sup> Interview with Garamukanwa

<sup>356</sup>M. Bourdillon, The Shona Peoples: An Ethnography of Contemporary Shona, with Special Reference to Their Religion , Gweru ,Mambo Press 1976

significant role in dealing with succession disputes in the area prior to colonialism. The role of the council and the spirit mediums in handling succession conflicts must not be down played. It is suggested that the peace that prevailed during the reign of Kurikona, Vhumakuregwa and Nemananga was partly a result of religion. Nevana and Nehowa were able to maintain the collateral adelphic system. The contemporary world would view the above tests of genuine leadership as a violation of one's individual rights, as being unnecessarily perfectionist, unfair and unhygienic.<sup>357</sup> This may make the current generation view traditional religion as cruel, unfeeling, superstitious and inconsiderate.<sup>358</sup> They may consider the tests as impossible to accomplish.<sup>359</sup> In spite of these seemingly negative aspects, the truth is that they indeed were accomplishable but only by those whose nomination was vindicated by the spiritual world and they helped genuinely elected leaders from self-acclaimed ones and hence, quashed many succession disputes that could erupt at each time.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>357</sup>G.Makaudze, African Traditional Leadership and Succession in the Post-Colonial Novel, Journal of African Literature Association, Routledge 2017 pp210-222

<sup>358</sup> Ibid

<sup>359</sup> Ibid

<sup>360</sup> Ibid



This helped to maintain peaceful existence. In addition, as the most respected living being who again was the living's point of reference to the spiritual world, the chief or king's appointment was not supposed to be doubted.<sup>361</sup> This doubt was removed by one passing all these tests that were lined up for the rightful heir.<sup>362</sup> Even though the tests were essential tools for averting chieftaincy disputes nowadays they are not very applicable in the Nemangwe chiefdom. Some contemporary institutions have taken over the responsibility of handling succession disputes in Zimbabwe. The institutions include the modern courts, chiefs' council, the Integrity and Ethics Committee and the DA's office.

After the death of Marimbizike a dispute arose between Matenganyika and Herija Masungu Kachavazungu. Matenganyika's term as acting chief lapsed but he was allowed to continue ruling by the British colonial government. The colonial government averted the wrangle between Matenganyika and Herija by declaring that Matenganyika should assume a substantive chieftaincy position through the District Commissioner (DC).<sup>363</sup> The solution was a violation of the customary law of the Shangwe people. The acting chief was supposed to rule for two years before the incumbent chief was installed. The colonial ways of solving disputes often distorted the traditions of African societies. At independence the DC became known as the District Administrator (DA). District Administrators are appointed by and answerable to the minister of Local Government.<sup>364</sup> The role of the DA is deeply embedded in the practice of rural local governance in Zimbabwe.<sup>365</sup> DA functions as the chief advisor to the council, chief implementer, government regulator and monitor.<sup>366</sup> DAs assume a leadership role in the appointment of chiefs.<sup>367</sup> As such the DA's office in Gokwe has dealt with the contemporary chieftaincy succession disputes. The DA's office is one of the contemporary institutions that assist in handling succession disputes in concerned districts. It also facilitates the appointment of chiefs.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> *ibid*

<sup>362</sup> *ibid*

<sup>363</sup> Interview with Joshua NemangweTsive Village 20 July 2019

<sup>364</sup> Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation.

<sup>365</sup> *ibid*

<sup>366</sup> *ibid*

<sup>367</sup> *ibid*

<sup>368</sup> T. Chigwata, *The role of Traditional Leaders in Zimbabwe: Are they still relevant*, University of western cape 2016

When Mike Kachavazungu Nemangwe's term of office expired the District Administrator (DA) advised the members of the Nemangwe family to select a successor in 2011. The DA's office helps in the appointment of chiefs but its role is mainly secretariat.<sup>369</sup> The office does not take part in the selection of the candidate because the candidate is selected according to the principles of the clan members.<sup>370</sup> According to the Traditional leaders Act the chief is appointed by the President guided by the principles of succession and the President appoints a person nominated by the appropriate persons.<sup>371</sup> This shows that the DA's office will be taking down some points that will help the President and the local government to appoint a person according to the succession principles of the given ethnic group. In dealing with the dispute that is rocking the Nemangwe chieftom currently the DA's office leave the appropriate persons with the task of nominating the candidate whom they think is legitimate. The role of the DA's office is to monitor and regulate the negotiations. At the end of the day the DA keeps the records of the chieftainship. Otherwise the responsibility of presiding over the talks concerning chieftaincy succession is in the hands of the chiefs' council.<sup>372</sup> The council is a preserve of provincial assemblies. The members of the chiefs' council have five year tenure of office.<sup>373</sup> The council of chiefs was sent by the minister of local government on a number of occasions to go and discuss the Nemangwe chieftainship wrangle but all efforts were in vain. The efforts were of no avail. The dispute is still a thorn in the chieftom. In 2019 Mike Kachavazungu Nemangwe was still refusing to release the throne. In 2017 the council of chiefs suggested for the Bango house believing that it did not rule before.<sup>374</sup> Some rival houses were able to access records that indicate that Bango ruled from 1890- 1906. That jeopardised the effort made by the council to resolve the issue. Between 2015 and 2016 the conflict over the Nemangwe chieftainship was referred to the Gokwe Magistrate Court.<sup>375</sup>

It was reported to the criminal court by the clan members who felt that Mike Kachavazungu's term of office had expired. This was of no avail and the issue was referred back to the DA's office.<sup>376</sup> According to the Traditional Leaders Act disputes concerning the appointment of chiefs should be

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<sup>369</sup> Interview with Gwatirinda

<sup>370</sup> Ibid

<sup>371</sup> Inter-ministerial task force on Alignment of Legislation Technical committee

<sup>372</sup> Interview with Gwatirinda

<sup>373</sup> Inter-ministerial taskforce

<sup>374</sup> Interview with Jonathan Kaneshonga

<sup>375</sup> Interview with Spinola Mpfu Gokwe Magistrate court

<sup>376</sup> Ibid

resolved by the President on the recommendation of provincial assembly of chiefs through the minister responsible for traditional leaders. The courts have no jurisdiction to resolve chieftaincy succession disputes.<sup>377</sup> As such the Nemangwe chieftainship dispute could not be dealt with in the Magistrate court. The Nemangwe chieftaincy conflict, like other such conflicts in Zimbabwe, has been affected by events and interferences from personalities located outside the Traditional realm. One of the most important of such interferences is the involvement of some prominent political figures in the wrangle. Succession politics is now marred by violence and conflicts and are subject to political manoeuvres and dirty tricks.<sup>378</sup> Political figures like Victor Matemadanda, Moses Runzirwayi and Gordon Chanda were supporting Mike Kachavazungu. They manipulated the system in favour of Mike the acting chief.<sup>379</sup> According to the Traditional Leaders Act chiefs should be apolitical. Against this background Mike Kachavazungu was actively participating in ZANU PF politics. He was mobilising support for the party's candidates.<sup>380</sup> This earned him support from political heavy weights against the Nemangwe traditions and culture. According to Nemangwe succession principle an acting chief holds office for two years only. Mike's term elapsed way back but by 2019 he remained on the throne because of his political status.<sup>381</sup> Politics is ubiquitous as it permeates all corners of society<sup>382</sup>. Certainly the appointment of chiefs is not exceptional. In the Nemangwe chieftainship politics derailed the appointment of the substantive chief. All efforts made by the relevant authorities to resolve the Nemangwe chieftainship dispute were sacrificed by the political atmosphere. Faced with a strong opposition party, MDC, ZANU PF officials saw chieftaincy as the most convenient institution for rejuvenating their party. As a result, chiefs were co-opted into politics. The logic of co-opting chiefs was hinged on the fact that chiefs possess significant influence over their subjects. The government would tap into the institution's mobilising influence reminiscent of the liberation struggle when the smith attempted to harness power of chiefs.<sup>383</sup> Mugabe redefined chiefs to make them useful in the face of new political

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<sup>377</sup> Zimbabwe Legal Information Institute 2015

<sup>378</sup> L. Nkomo, "Leadership and Accountability: Lessons from African Traditions." *The Human Factor Approach to Development in Africa*. Eds. V.G. Chivaura and C.G. Mararike. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1998. 191–197.

<sup>379</sup> Interview with Brighton Kaneshonga

<sup>380</sup> Ibid

<sup>381</sup> Ibid

<sup>382</sup> Zimbabwe Legal Information Institute 2015

<sup>383</sup> J. Wood, *A Matter of Weeks rather than Months: The Impasse between Harold Wilson and Ian Smith Aborted Settlements and War, 1965-1969*, Bloomington: Trafford Publishing pp 568-569

challenges.<sup>384</sup> Chiefs were co-opted and drilled to fight against both rhetoric and real political enemies especially after a serious defeat of ZANU PF during the referendum of February 2000. It would be difficult to engage into any development or political programme in the Nemangwe territory without co-opting Mike Kachavazungu Nemangwe the territory's acting chief. Alex Aidoo observed that,

You cannot go to any village and start a programme or anything in air. The chiefs are very important if we are going to think about participation of all people in the government. We have to use them from the grassroots level to the national level.<sup>385</sup>

For the above reason Mike Kachavazungu Nemangwe was made a grass root representative of some ZANU PF candidates. He became a significant instrument for mobilising support for ZANU PF candidates. Political leaders who wanted to gain political mileage out of chieftaincy institution were using Mike Nemangwe for their political expedience. Mike is closer to his subjects and most of headmen are his kinsmen.<sup>386</sup> As incentive the ZANU PF candidates assisted Mike Nemangwe to remain in power against the succession tradition of the Nemangwe chiefdom. Consequently, efforts to install a legitimate chief in the chiefdom were forfeited. In 2019 Mike Nemangwe remained the acting chief of Nemangwe community. Both the Nemangwe jurisprudence and the contemporary institutions have failed to resolve the Nemangwe contemporary succession wrangle. It seems Mike Kachavazungu Nemangwe is prepared to cling to power through thick and thin.

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<sup>384</sup>New Zimbabwe 22 September 2004

<sup>385</sup>A. Aidoo Quoted in J. R. A. Ayee, Traditional Leadership and Local Governance Conference, Quo Vadis, Durban 2007p2.

<sup>386</sup>Intervi with Garamukanwa

Despite the presence of the spirit mediums and some clan elders the Nemangwe chiefdom experienced some succession disputes since its genesis in the 1870s. Since time immemorial chiefs were highly respected as such the position of a chief was highly contested to the extent that some people ignored the advice of spirit mediums for the sake of chieftainship. When the modern institutions were put in place disputes remained a thorn. It appears that the contemporary succession dispute in Nemangwe chiefdom is being aggravated by the political motives of some political figures especially members of the ruling party.

As a result, despite efforts to resolve succession disputes in the Nemangwe chiefdom the chiefdom remains rocked with succession disputes because politics has permeated the institution. As such, indigenous ways of resolving succession disputes are jeopardised. The prevalence of succession disputes in Zimbabwe has influenced a barrage of scholars such as Beach, Mudenge, Makaudze and Bourdillon to interrogate the chieftaincy institution. These scholars provided insightful literature that gave direction to my work. Succession disputes in the Nemangwe chiefdom posed some serious effects to the people in the community. Due to succession wrangles some people lost their life. In Nemangwe chiefdom the chieftainship wrangles led to clan fragmentation. Relatives today do not see eye to eye because of succession squabbles that were occurring in the chiefdom from time to time. The general populace are equally affected by these wrangles. They lose confidence in their traditional leaders because when the ruling class quarrel it loses dignity. As such their subjects become sceptical of their legitimacy. Therefore, this study endeavoured to establish the legitimate house to provide a substantive chief in the Nemangwe chiefdom. However, it appears all efforts made by the relevant authorities to resolve the conflict that currently exists in the Nemangwe chiefdom yielded nothing after all. The chiefdom remains puzzled by a sharp conflict, the bone of contention being chieftainship stool.

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## INTERVIEWS

Interview with Agustine Masunda Zumbika Village 20 July 2019

Interview with Brighton Kaneashonga 27 October 2019

Interview with Douglas Kamhiripiri Kamhiripiri village, 10 September 2019

Interview with Elfas Kufa Kufa Village 10 July 2019

Interview with Garamukanwa Mudzimiri village 25 September 2019

Interview with Gwatirinda (Assistant DA Gokwe South) 15 October 2019

Interview with Handsen Chidzivo Masengere Village 27 October 2019

Interview with Henry (Chief Chireya) Masengere Village 26 October 2019

Interview with Joel Mateisanwa Mudzimiri Village 25 September 2019

Interview with Jonathan Kaneshonga Madaupandu Village 27 October 2019

Interview with Joshua Nemangwe Tsive Village 20 July 2019

Interview with Loche Siyagijima 28 October 2019

Interview with Mambo One Mudzimiri Village 25 September 2019

Interview with Pharoh Chidzivo Chidzivo Village 27 October 2019

Interview with Spinola Mpfu ( Gokwe Magistrate's court) 28 October 2019

## **APPENDIX**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Who were the Karanga Shangwe people?
2. How did the Nemangwe chiefdom emerge?
3. In which year did the Nemangwe chiefdom emerge?
4. Who was the first Nemangwe chief?
5. How many succession disputes were recorded in the Nemangwe chiefdom since its genesis?
6. What were the causes of these disputes?
7. Did the Nemangwe chiefdom have a judicial structure prior to colonialism?
8. What role did religion play in Nemangwe politics?
9. Which contemporary institutions have the responsibility of solving disputes in Zimbabwe?

10. How successful were the Nemangwe jurisprudence and the contemporary institutions in solving succession disputes?