FIRST GENERATION LAND REFORM IN ZIMBABWE: HISTORICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DYNAMICS INFORMING HOUSEHOLD'S VULNERABILITY IN THE NYAMAKATE RESETTLEMENT COMMUNITY.

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ABSTRACT

Resettlement communities in Zimbabwe have been documented to have complicated institutional settings due to over-lapping powers amongst; *de facto* and *de jure* institutions. These institutions and their interactions over time influence the way individuals and communities experience the plethora of stressors that confront them rendering them vulnerable. This paper aims to describe the historical, political and economic institutions responsible for shaping the current experience and response to stressors such as political-economic crisis, climate change and health challenges. The paper draws on qualitative data collected using interviews. The data was interpreted using computer software called Nvivo. The results show that the community history has impacts on the current Nyamakate leadership structure and social cohesion amongst community members. The institutional effectiveness and dynamics was dependent of the national political and economic conditions. The Nyamakate community had a higher level of institutional support in the 1980s unlike currently were aid is in the form of relief programmes. In conclusion, the attainment of sustainable development of the Nyamakate community is depended on their historical 'ghost' and the *de facto* and *de jure* institutional framework.

Key words: Political ecology, Development, Mid-Zambezi, Institutions, Adaptation and Vulnerability

INTRODUCTION

The new Black government of Zimbabwe, prioritised the land reform and support for the new farmers as a sustainable development programme aimed at stimulating food security and economic growth. Since independence in 1980, Zimbabwe has experienced both planned and sporadic land redistribution exercises. The resettling of black populations was aimed at addressing the unequal land distribution inherited from the colonial government and to alleviate poverty. The redistribution of land as a key resource was meant to be the development vehicle for the poor black communities and Zimbabwean economy. It should be acknowledged that land redistribution that took place within the first decade was planned by technocrats and politicians and the blue print was out before independence (Dekker & Kinsey, 2011). Although the first generation land resettlement was planned, the new farmers had challenges because of their socio-economic heterogeneity (Barr, 2004; Dekker & Kinsey, 2011). Resettlement communities in Zimbabwe have been documented to have complicated institutional settings due to overlapping powers amongst; *de facto* and *de jure* institutions (Moyo, Blair-Rutherford & Amanor-Wilks 2000; Wolmer, Chaumba & Scoones 2004). Literature on rural Zimbabwe suggests that communal areas have well defined structures and stand a better chance of support from government and external institutions than resettled rural areas (Chimhowu & Hulme, 2006; Mbereko, 2010; Moyo 2011). This paper aims to describe the historical, political and economic institutions responsible for shaping the current development trajectory, as communities experience and response to contemporary stressors such as climate and natural resources changes and health challenges in the political economic context. This paper is part of a research, which sought to analyse the experiences, responses to, and interpretations of, the Nyamakate households in relation to the complex relationship between HIV and AIDS and water scarcity and variability on their livelihoods and social well-being in the context of political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe. We contend that in order to understand the households' experiences of HIV and AIDS and water scarcity (micro-level) there is need to interrogate the structural influences that operate at the macro-level. Community development levels determine community resilience or vulnerability to perturbations. We argue that to a large extent the level and conditions of development are determined by the political economy. In order to appreciate historical factors that influence reality at multiple-scales this paper utilises a political ecology approach.

Zimbabwe like other African countries has always valued agricultural development as the corner stone of rural community and national sustainable development (Koeng & Diarra, 1998). The first landmark of the Zimbabwean government at reforming the agricultural sector was the 'willing buyer and willing seller' land reform policy. Overtime, changes in political and economic situations have determined shifts in development policies and programmes resulting in abandonment, neglect, replacement and coexistence of the old and new systems. This could lead to inconsistency and contradiction among different policies and programs at a single time and place. Agricultural policies have also been modified to fit into the national development policy framework. Agricultural policies seem to be biased on crop and animal production, thereby turn a blind eye to other problems confronting the communities like health and climate change. This study used the case of the Nyamakate resettlement to demonstrate the trajectories of institutions and agricultural development programmes interface with contemporary perturbations. The Nyamakate resettlement area is confronted by multiple stressors that often affect individuals and households simultaneously rendering them vulnerable. Studies in the region and Zimbabwe demonstrate a number of problems that confront rural populations such as poor commodity prices, AIDS, waterborne and parasitic diseases, droughts, human-wildlife conflicts and lack of institutional aide (Ashton & Ramasar, 2002; Blaikie & Brookfield, 1987; Gill, 2010; Patterson, Hunter & Twine 2007). Fussel (2007)

summarises the numerous frameworks and conceptual models used in the theoretical and practical understanding of vulnerability to natural hazards and risks. We contend that the structural-centric explanation of vulnerability by political ecology theorists is more applicable to third world scenarios. Structural institutions include governments, policy frameworks, non-governmental organizations, capital, multi-national organisations and other institutions that regulate and influence micro social processes. This paper to theorisation that argues, shocks do not create disasters in themselves, hence household vulnerability is explained by the structural institutions that inform the actor's agency when confronted by a shock (Blaikie, Cannon, Davies & Wisner 1994; Cardona, 2004). Thus, vulnerability is defined as internal risk factor of the subject or system that is exposed to a hazard and corresponds to its intrinsic predisposition to be affected, or to be susceptible to damage (Cardona, 2004). Thus, vulnerability is the starting point and it is conditioned to a large extent by the political economy of a society. This explanation of vulnerability and susceptibility pays attention to the differential impacts of similar shock across social classes. For example, a drought has different outcomes that depend on historical factors, support by different institutions and household's socio-economic status. To a large extent vulnerability emanates from structural institutions that create social inequality more than it is a product of the human/natural disaster.

This paper is informed by the political ecology framework, and the theory owes its origins to Marxist material dialecticism to explain society and dynamics through history. Pattberg (2007) argues that the analysis of history in political ecology serve two purposes. Firstly, history helps to place current social practices within the larger framework of historic change (Pattberg, 2007). Secondly, history sheds light on the construction of social life through the development of structure and ideational realms (Pattberg, 2007). This structuralist analysis informed much of the first generation (structuralist) political ecology work and the second generation political ecologists have built on their predecessors (Biersack, 2006; Walker, 2005). Both structuralist and post-structuralist political ecologists acknowledge the role of the structure in creating resilience or vulnerability of an individual or society.

Studies done in Zimbabwe demonstrate that during the first decade after independence, the resettlement program was conducted on a 'willing buyer' and 'willing seller' basis (Kinsey, 1999; Masilela & Rankin, 1998). The land redistribution was necessitated by the unequal distribution of land on racial lines during the colonial period. In 1979, the land was inequitably distributed, with some 700 000 black smallholders occupying 16.4 million hectares (49% of all farming land), while some 5 000±6 000 large-scale white commercial farmers occupying 15.5 million hectares (46% of the total) (Kinsey, 1999). In order to address this issue the British and Zimbabwean governments agreed amongst other things that the former was to finance the land resettlement scheme, with the latter implementing. Between independence in 1980 and 1997, over 70,000 Zimbabwean households were resettled on land previously owned by white farmers under the Rhodesian government (Barr, 2004). Resettlement schemes are associated with changes in social relations, livelihoods, natural resource base and structural institutions.

Zimbabwean rural institutions and their functionality are correlated to policies and conditions prevailing at the national level. Hence, rural population's vulnerability is determined by the political economic situation and conditions that brought it up (Barnett & Blaikie, 1992; Blaikie & Brookfield, 1987). The resettlement communities founded during the first decade from independence started under a relatively strong political and economic environment than the current state. At independence, the new government inherited one of the most structurally developed economies and effective state systems in Africa (Brett, 2005). The Zimbabwean economy had a short-lived boom of 10% per annum between 1980 and 1981. The economic growth was short lived, and the average GDP for the first eleven years after independence was 4.3% per annum (Brett, 2005). The Zimbabwean government economic policy for the first decade was informed by

the ideology of 'growth with equity' which was in line with the socialist, egalitarian and democratic principles pursued by the government (Mtapuri, 2008). Literature demonstrates that support was rendered to resettled communities in Zimbabwe by the; government, multi-national institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Dekker & Kinsey, 2011; Moyo, 2011). This institutional support is argued to have resulted in the resettled farmers successfully dealing with perturbations such as droughts by adapting to new rainfall and soils regimes and achieving growth in agricultural productivity (Dekker & Kinsey, 2011). The assistants rendered to the resettled farmers included infrastructure, social services, distribution of inputs, extension agricultural services and forming of agricultural funding structures.

The implementation of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in 1980 marked a new structural system informed by neo-liberal ideals and livelihoods reality for resettled farmers. Besides initially resisting ESAP the Zimbabwean government finally succumbed and implemented the liberal policy (Mawowa, 2008). According to Moyo (2000) ESAP slowed down land redistribution, encouraged renewed land concentration and foreign land ownership and fuelled export-oriented production, including extensive landholdings for eco-tourism (Moyo 2000). Thus, the resettled farmers were neglected by government amidst serious reductions in provision of social services in health, education and agriculture. ESAP exposed the small scale farmer to global competition and this led to a decline in maize production (Makamure, Jowa, & Muzuva 2001; Poulton, Davies, Matshe & Urey, 2002). Agricultural activities were subsidised by diverse activities (e.g. petty trading, gold panning) as resettled farmers tried to earn descent livelihoods. In the face of reduced government and institutional assistance the more people turned to informal economic activities and they set up complex social networks to invade legal regulations (Bracking & Sachikonye, 2006). The GDP averaged 1.5% per annum during the period 1991-1995 (Tekere, 2001). Between 1990 and 1999, the average national GDP for the period was 0.9% per annum with a record low employment growth of 0.4% per annum (Macro-economic paper for Zimbabwe Institute, 2007).

The worst came after 1999 as the country was confronted by a plethora of structural crises such as; governance, economic, poverty, health, sanctions, political violence and brain drain. The Zimbabwean economy shrunk by about 62.6% between 1999 and 2008, a trend typical of a country at war (Makochekanwa, 2009). During this period the government provided a conducive environment for the 'fast track' land reform which involved the grabbing of white owned farms without compensation. The government instituted a number of structural reforms, which had a bearing on the first decade resettled farmers and rural areas. For example the traditional chiefs were elevated in position and status (Makwerere & Mandonga, 2012; Ncube, 2011). In reality chiefs that supported the government enjoyed this new status and as a result boundary conflicts are common amongst the traditionalists. With the economy performing badly, the rural district councils and government departments are unable to provide socio-economic and infrastructural assistance to the rural communities they are supposed to service. The sanctions make the situation worse by alienating the country from the international community resulting in reduced NGO support and activities. The rural populations in Zimbabwe have diverted attention from expecting assistance from structural institutions to utilising whatever opportunities that arise from the weakness of the structural institutions and the available natural resources. The visibility of structural institutions on the ground is debatable, this raises questions like, what institutions influence the rural population's livelihoods? How has these institutions changed over-time? How do the structural institutions influence the way rural households confront and cope with stressors?

To address these questions this study utilised a case study of the Nyamakate resettlement community. The study was conducted in the Nyamakate resettlement area in the Hurungwe district (Figure 1). Hurungwe district is one of the six districts in the Mashonaland province in Zimbabwe (Figure 1). The Nyamakate resettlement was created in the early 1980's, by people who settled on unoccupied state land. Hurungwe district is located in the northern part of Zimbabwe. The district is composed of a number of land uses namely: resettled farming, small scale communal farming, medium and large-scale commercial farming, fishing, urban centres, and safari and game reserves. Nyamakate is located in the northern part of Zimbabwe, sixty kilometres from Karoi. Nyamakate resettlement shares the northern boundary with Mana-pools/Marongora game reserves. Like the rest of the country, the Nyamakate resettlement is governed under the state prescribed structures from the president to the Ward Counsellor (Madhekeni and Zhou, 2012). However, this research is interested in households' experiences of the institutions. A number of studies focus at the structural level without drawing their attention to the interaction between the structure and social actors. Very little research has been done on the Nyamakate area, hence this paper will present a brief history of the area in order to develop a background to current institutions and the community. History is important for political ecology analysis since it is a critical theory that is based in dialectic materialism in explaining social change and social processes over time and stratification (Atkinson, 1991; Biersack, 2006).

Figure 1 Map showing the political administrative boundaries and the study area

Nyamakate is an interesting case because it came about as a result of illegal land occupation in a period of the planned 'willing buyer willing seller'. Furthermore, scholarship have theorised that resettled communities in Zimbabwe would display disconnection and institutional disorder but with time they should develop organised and strong institutional arrangements (Barr, 2004).This paper seeks to contribute towards understanding institutional settings from before and after independence, and their implications on household's livelihood, three and a half decades after.

METHODS

The study adopted a qualitative approach. Thirteen study participants were recruited in this study. Three were key informants drawn from council (1 out of 3) and two from the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare (2 out of 3). These were purposively sampled since they represented the existing institutions in the Nyamakate area. Ten community participants were recruited to be interviewed on the history of the Nyamakate area. Participants to this interview were purposefully sampled according to the following criteria: their duration of stay in Nyamakate, and the local respect for their knowledge and role in traditional functions.

Snow balling and purposive sampling were used at different times in order to recruit key community interview participants. Firstly, snow balling was used to recruit the first four participants. One person was recommended to us, who became the first participant to be interviewed. After the interview the participant recommended another person whom he felt was more knowledgeable than him. This chain of referencing continued.

As word spread that people with historical knowledge were being sought after, there was a large number of people who were recommended. Purposive sampling was used to recruit the remaining six key community interview participants. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to select most productive participants based on their potential contribution to the research.

For the key informants, an in-depth interview schedule was used to collect data on institutional dynamics and status. The interview schedules were un-structured. The data included an inventory of organisations that had operated in the Nyamakate area since independence to date. The unstructured interviews allowed the researcher to gather data that was not previously conceived and to probe on interesting issues that arose during the interviews.

An interview schedule with semi-structured, open ended questions was administered to the key community informants, namely elderly people who have stayed in Nyamakate since the beginning of the resettlement. They were purposively selected as they hold a historical knowledge of the resettlement of the Nyamakate area. The interviews gathered data on: the socio-cultural and historical background of the area, institutional dynamics, aide rendered to the community, and changes in the political economy context that have affected the Nyamakate community. The data is important in contextualising the current household experiences within a historical and structural context, since very little has been published on the Nyamakate area.

The study made use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to describe and explaining data referenced by spatial or geographic coordinates. This study adopted GIS as one of the data collection and presentation methods because it serves as a data management tool-both a database for storing data and a system capable of analysing spatial data. The points that were referenced are the movements of people in the pre and post-colonial period.

Data Analysis

All the interviews were conducted in shona and were verbatim transcribed into English by the researchers. The transcripts were uploaded into a computer package called Nvivo (version 10) for storage and interpretation. In the interpretation the thematic analysis of data as spelled out by Dey (1993) was used. As recommended by Dey (1993) data interpretation involved two activities, namely, fragmenting and connecting. The descriptive narratives were imported into Nvivo. Nodes were used to order data into themes and the relationships between themes were run using the same software. The data was then interpreted manually.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Dynamics of Governance Institutions in the Nyamakate Area

The political history of Zimbabwe can be divided into two epochs, namely, the colonial and post-colonial periods, during which the rural communities' livelihoods were subject to and shaped by the policies of the day. Communal areas in Zimbabwe have been administered by a dual structure, the traditional leadership structure and the national government. All the ten key community informants interviewed concurred that the area currently known as Nyamakate was under Chief Dandahwa before colonisation by the British. Chief Dandahwa was of the Elephant totem. Before the colonisation of Zimbabwe, Chief Dandawa controlled the mid-Zambezi region, south of the Zambezi River. Chief Dandahwa used to rule with the help of sub-Chiefs. His kingdom stretched from Karambazungu to Chewore and, because his kingdom was so big, it was impossible for him to effectively administer without sub-chiefs (Interview 5, 23/08/2011). Totems are very important in the Shona culture and politics as they define one as an insider or 'outsider' and one's status has implications to accessing natural resources, political power and traditional ceremonies (Dzingirai 2003; Nemarundwe and Kozanayi, 2003). This concept is reinforced by the fact that so-called Shona people do not identify themselves as Shona; they identify themselves by clans such as the Karanga, Korekore, Vhitori and Manyika (Beach, 1986; Raftopoulos and Mlambo, 2009).

The ten community informants interviewed agreed that Chief Dandahwa apportioned part of his kingdom to Jenami of the Matemai totem. According to one of the descendants of Jenami, Jenami was given a medal as a symbol of authority over the Nyamakate area [indicated in figure 2 as Matemai chieftaincy] (Interview 2, 16/06/2012). Participants indicated that Jenami appointed his son to rule the area (Interviews 1, 2, 3, 6 and 8). It is not clear from the interviews why

Dandahwa gave the territory to Jenami. Literature indicates that apportioning of kingdoms was common amongst the pre-colonial states especially for outstanding performance at war (Beach, 1986). According to one participant:

> … It is said that Jenami killed an elephant that had two or three hearts. So Dandahwa was impressed by how powerful Jenami was to kill an elephant with more than one heart. ...This was during the time of the Ndebele raids in the Zambezi valley. Dandahwa was impressed by Jenami's power hence he gave him land to rule. This meant that Jenami would help him defend the Dandahwa kingdom from the Ndebele raids. Furthermore, Jenami's son Matawu was given Dandahwa's daughter to marry (Interview 46, 24/08/2011).

This account demonstrates that Chief Dandahwa wanted to build an alliance with Jenami's people for military purposes against the Ndebele. The Ndebele raids in the Zambezi valley and other parts of the Shona kingdoms have been documented (Beach, 1986; Garbett, 1966; Raftopoulos & Mlambo, 2009). Marriage was also a useful tool to foster kin relations.

Dandahwa demarcated the boundaries of the Nyamakate area. The boundary was drawn from Kugwirangoma (which is beyond present day Rukomeshi River) up to the present day boom gate to Chirundu to Mt. Hambakwe, and up to Mt. Mhambwe (Figure 2). Chief Dandawe's kingdom started from Rukomeshi River and beyond. The first Matemai chieftaincy was under Chief Matawu and the area was known as Nyamakate (Interview 41, 13/06/2011).

The ten community informants agreed that the area was named after the Nyamakate River. One study participant narrated the story behind the naming of Nyamakate. He said,

> Traditionally the river was known as Nyama-mugate. The river was called Nyama-mugate because as one was travelling along the river one could ask for sadza (thick porridge prepared from mealie meal), meat, honey and milk. One could find the food under a tree in *mugate* (clay plates). [Nyama-mugate, literally translates to mean meat on clay plates.] The whites could not pronounce it and they just called the area Nyamakate.
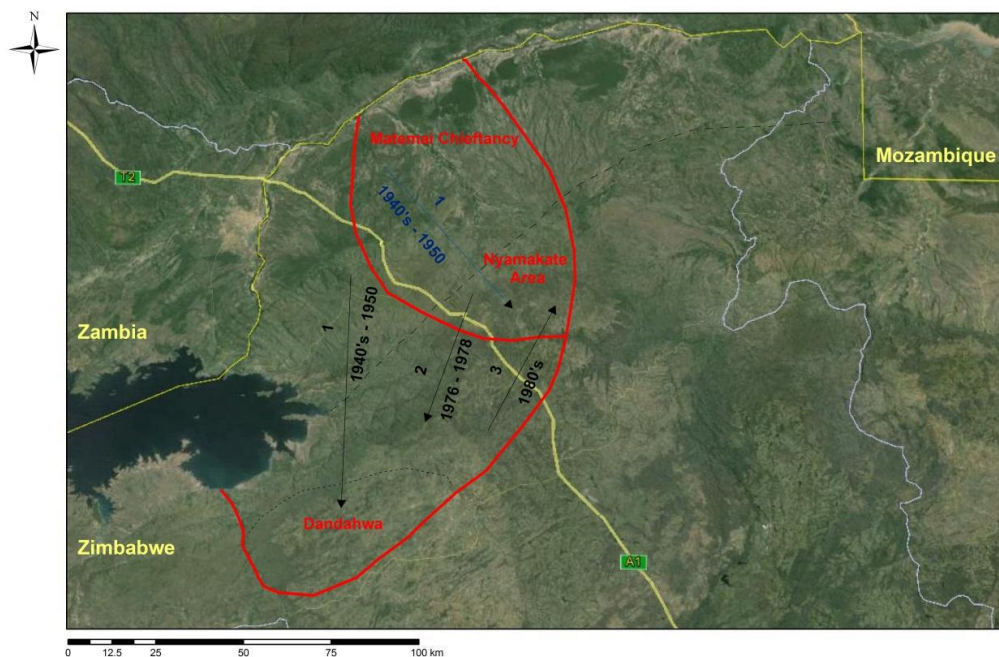
Figure 2 Dandahwa and Matawu (Matemai) boundaries and people movements in the Zambezi Valley until the creation of present day Nyamakate resettlement. *Source*: Mbereko, Alexio

Evidence shows that the Nyamakate River was important in the lives of the people for water and its spiritual value. As noted by Garbett (1966), the lives of the Shona people are closely associated with their spirituality and spaces are often valued as shrines. Hence, moving away from the shrine and losing spirituality is believed to bring curses that usually manifests in nature through natural calamities like droughts and floods.

According to all the community informant interviews, the colonial government forced the people under Dandahwa and Matawu out of the Zambezi valley between 1940 and 1950 (Figure 2). There were two movement patterns when these rural people were forced to migrate from the Zambezi valley (Figure 2). Firstly, Dandahwa and his people were forced to migrate into Magunje, Charara and Sanyati areas (Interviews 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10). These people who migrated under Dandahwa were mainly of the elephant totem (Interviews 1, 5 and 9). One participant testified to being relocated from the Zambezi valley. He said, "The white colonial government removed us from the area around 1948/9 and relocated us to Mutirikati, which is close to Sanyati River" (Interview 3, 22/06/2011).

The community informants argue that the second group to be moved from the Zambezi valley was under Matawu, and they were settled in the present day Nyamakate resettlement area (Interviews 1, 2, 4, 7 and 8) (Figure 2). According to two of the descendants of Matawo, Matawo resisted being moved by the colonial government out of the Zambezi Valley area longer than the people under Dandahwa (Interview 1 and 2). With time, the whites residing in the Zambezi valley increased, and Matawo and his people were forced to move again between 1948-1950 (Interviews 4 and 6) (Figure 2). An old man from Mike Village asserts that the colonial government further moved these people from the Nyamakate area and scattered them throughout the Hurungwe district (Interview 4, 23/08/2011). The people from the Matawo kingdom were forced to find land to settle under other traditional leaders and they ceased to exist as Matemai Chieftainship (Figure 2). The people from the Zambezi valley had a complex spatialised political system on which the modern administrative system was imposed (Garbett, 1966). It is argued here that the traditional leadership in Zimbabwe has been empowered and disempowered depending on the policies and interests of the central government of the day.

All the ten community informants agree that people started moving back to the current location of Nyamakate after independence in 1980. Furthermore, this was their own initiative and they settled illegally and were called 'squatters' by the government structures. Literature indicates that the invasion of state and unused land was common in Zimbabwe during the first decade after independence (Moyo, 2001). Moyo (2001) notes that, in most cases, the squatters did not receive support from the central government structures in the country. The post-colonial government attempted to drive these people out of the Nyamakate area by burning down their shelters. However, people would erect new structures after the police left the area.

Other families trickled in one after another settling into the Nyamakate area. One female respondent narrated the typical procedures followed by families who were interested in settling in the Nyamakate area as squatters. She said,

> Kachingamire used to be our leader. So when you came from wherever, you had to report to him if you wanted to settle in the area. He would take you around the Nyamakate area until you found a place that satisfied you. He would take some snuff and mealie meal and leave it under a tree close to where you think you want to build your homestead. The following morning Kachingamire and the prospective settler would come to check the

mixture of snuff and mealie meal. If there was nothing unusual about the mixture he would thank the spirits. This meant that the prospective settler has been accepted by the spirits of the land and they could settle (Interview 9, 30/08/2011).

Although government discourse and policy in the first decade was the willing buyer and willing seller, the Nyamakate community was illegally established. The squatters who settled in the Nyamakate area took advantage of buffer zone which was unoccupied by humans. Partly the squatters took advantage of the un-fully developed institutional structures of government and the populist politics of the new political elites. The participants had a number of reasons for preferring to resettle in the Nyamakate area, which include; the vast and fertile farming land, claiming the traditional land and the realisation that Lake Kariba was not going to flood the Nyamakate area.

The above response demonstrates the actors' agency in an effort to attain a decent livelihood. These families migrated to where they thought their livelihoods would improve. Literature from post-structural political ecology has demonstrated how the local actor can respond to the macro-structures in subtle ways (Few, 2003; Scott, 1985). Although the actor has agency, the structures are important because they determine to a large extent the political and economic context within which actors undertake action (Castree, 2002; Harvey 2003). It was, however, societal structures that limited the local actors' access to the natural resources in the Nyamakate area. Equally on the other side an institutional vacuum created a window of opportunity for the land hungry families to move and occupy the Nyamakate area. As noted by community respondent 4 (23/08/2011), "The government [Mugabe] got us back our land ... they promised that we would have our land [during the war]".

The government started formally recognising the resettlement of the people in the Nyamakate area in the mid-1980s. All participants agreed that people from all over the country were officially resettled in the Nyamakate area. Barr (2004) recommended that planners in resettlement programmes should pay attention to the ethnic mix and kinship ties amongst resettled villagers in order to foster effective civil activity and participation in governance. The government resettlement planners ignored the importance of ethnic and kinship ties and the power of spiritual cults. The government took over from the *de facto* governance structure and became directly responsible for the management of the Nyamakate resettlement. Every resettled household was allocated a four hectare plot to farm on and a homestead area (Interview 6, 24/08/2011). All the ten community participants concur that the government replaced the traditional leadership structures and instituted a new system of appointing presiding officers. Thus, the government adopted a deliberate policy of reducing the power of the traditional structures replacing them with government appointed officers (Makumbe, 1998). There were a lot of unmet promises by the government, some rural communities and their traditional leaders were demanding services, hence Chiefs were not viewed as pro-government at the time and the central government reduced their power. The illegal squatters acknowledged and respected the politico-religious system, unlike the government when it resettled the people without consulting the ethnic and spiritual leaders (Interview 8 and 10). This legacy created conflict between local people who believe in the traditional system and the presiding officers of the area.

The Matemai clan that previously presided over the Nyamakate area was marginalised from the new administration structure. The government appointed a presiding officer who was assisted by the Ward Development Committees (WADCO) and the Village Development Committees (VIDCO) to govern the Nyamakate area. The presiding officer was elected by members of the community. Nyamakate is unique when compared to other rural areas in Zimbabwe in the sense that it is the only area that does not have a pronounced traditional leadership system. But the spiritual cult of the

Matemai people exists, and it is fighting for the reinstatement of the traditional leadership under Matemai clan. For the first 20 years after independence, Chiefs nationwide existed side by side with VIDCOs, however, the former were deliberately marginalised by government, and their relationship to the elected governance structure is not clearly spelt out (Sibanda, 1990).

In 1997, the government of Zimbabwe changed its policy and disempowered the presiding officers, WADCOs and VIDCOs and elevated the Chiefs and village heads as traditional leaders (Ncube, 2011). The traditional leadership structure was empowered and remunerated being given stipends, car and fuel allocation per chief. This move is believed to have been carried out in order for politicians to garner political support in rural areas, which constitute the traditional support base of the ruling party (Makwerere and Mandoga, 2012; Ncube, 2011). The national policy of empowerment of the traditional leadership resulted in latent conflicts becoming active amongst the Nyamakate traditionalists.

As mentioned above the Nyamakate area had a traditional leadership vacuum since the destruction of the chieftaincy by the colonial government. The current Ministry of local government and National Housing approached Chief Chundu to select and install village heads and reinstate the traditional leadership structure in the Nyamakate area (Interviews 1, 2, 5, 7 and 10). All participants concurred that Chief Chundu was generally considered an 'outsider' by the Matawo people who are the rightful leaders of the area. This move has created conflicts between Chief Chundu and the Matemai people. These conflicts are affecting community activities, planning, projects and consequently community development. In one meeting the participants spent more time debating traditional and spiritual leadership issues in a community development meeting. Furthermore, the item was not on the agenda. Most of the respondents indicated that such occurrences are common and the meetings are called off.

Institutional Dynamics of the Nyamakate Area

Most (seven out of ten) of the participants indicated that the Nyamakate community had close relationships with government ministries in the early 1980s. It was reported that at this time three ministers (S. Sekeramayi, M. Mahachi and R. Manyika) visited the Nyamakate area and helped to facilitate the Nyamakate resettlement area being legally recognised (Interviews 1; 4; 5; 7; 8; 9; 10). The ministers discouraged the Nyamakate people from hunting animals in exchange for their help in legalising the squatters and the provision of food (Interview 7, 24/08/2013). The head of the first family to squat in the Nyamakate area was nominated by the ministers and the District Administrator to be the leader and see to it that there was a register of names, and that people were not hunting animals (Interview 10, 30/08/2011). The registers were used in the resettlement and in distribution of aide such as food and agricultural inputs. This move on the part of the government was a blessing in disguise, in that the government did not have to purchase this land from any farmer and at the same time was able to gain political mileage.

The government provided services to the rural areas which had been grossly neglected by the colonial government (Alexander, 1994). These services were delivered by the Department of Rural Development (DERUDE). Development of the Nyamakate area over the next decade from 1980 by government took many forms of food hand-outs, the construction of roads, the building of a primary school and the drilling and mounting of the boreholes in the new villages (Village 1 to 32) (Interview 6, 24/08/2011). The Department of Tsetse Control had erected boreholes in the villages along the game fence since they used to come and camp in those areas before people moved back into the Nyamakate area (Interview 6, 24/08/2011). According to one of the local health workers, the government, with the help of a non-governmental

organisation, built the clinic and provided staff to run it (Interview 12, 05/12/2011). DERUDE constructed the roads and drilled boreholes in the newly resettled villages (Interview 7, 24/08/2011). Furthermore, the government handed out food packs to all the villagers during the first year after resettlement, and the hand-outs were composed of beans, kapenta, maize meal and rice (Interview 5, 23/08/2011).

 Much of the development in the Nyamakate area by the government occurred in the 1980s. In the 1980s, the government policy was juggling mid-way between democracy and Marxist-socialist ideologies (Moore, 2003). The important issue is that it had an element of distributive welfarism and a desire to address the colonial inequalities among the races and classes, and hence created a policy framework for the type assistance rendered to the Nyamakate community within this period. However, after 1990, the government of Zimbabwe adopted a liberal policy and implemented the neo-liberal Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). Government then cut spending in all other sectors except for health and defence (Brett, 2005).

According to Moyo (2001), rural development within a neoliberal framework has been dominated by the provisions of funds for small-projects aimed at selected beneficiaries, who are usually from the middle class. Therefore, there was a decline in government aid in rural areas of Zimbabwe after the adoption of the neo-liberal economic policy in 1990 (Brett, 2005; Mawowa, 2008; Moyo, 2001). The community informants provided evidence of assistance from government before 1990, however, most of the interviewed participants stated that the government has not contributed to the development of the Nyamakate community since 1990. Those who did identify assistance from the government indicated the clinic services, maize seed and fertilisers had been provided to the area erratically from 1990.

All the study participants alluded to benefitting from the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare through the Nyamakate clinic. The clinic is staffed by two nurses, one environmental technician and two nurse assistants. A worker at the clinic summarised the duties of the clinic in Nyamakate as follows.

> We deal with health as our primary function and the Environmental Health Technician (EHT) deals with environmental health. For example, when there is an outbreak of diseases, such as malaria and diarrhoea, within a village the EHT goes to investigate the [the disease causing organism's] potential breeding sites and eliminates them (Interview 11, 05/12/2011)

The clinic only deals in primary health care. Three of the five staff members are trained personnel. The operations of the clinic are governed by the Health Professions Authority of Zimbabwe. It was observed (between June and December 2011) that a doctor comes from the Karoi District Hospital every month to manage the distribution of anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) and examine the condition of patients on drugs.

Since 1980 to date, the state has handed out agricultural inputs or subsidises for agricultural inputs to rural communities in Zimbabwe. According to one stakeholder sampled in the study, the government supplies agricultural inputs with the aim of distributing them to the most disadvantaged farmers (Interview 13, 07/12/2011). This philosophy of addressing the social class inequalities by assisting the most disadvantaged relates to the welfarism policies of the first decade after independence that was characterised by elements of distributive equality (Moore, 2003). In the current context, the reality on the ground in relation to the distribution of state benefits demonstrates a different picture characterised by corruption and favouritism based on affiliation to the dominant political party.

During the study period, the government distributed maize seed and fertilisers in Nyamakate area. The seed allocation process was a source of dissatisfaction in the area since there was an inadequate supply to provide for every needy household (Interview 13, 07/12/2011). Although it was not possible to establish how many households in the study area benefitted from this process, a number of the participants noted that the seed was selectively distributed, giving priority to senior ZANU PF members living in the area. Other limitations to accessing inputs distributed to the community from the government include the withholding of information by the few who would have learnt of maize seed and fertilizer distribution, the inability of older people to walk to the distribution point, and the sense of futility among those who have given up trying to access this benefit because of repeatedly not getting it (Interviews 7; 13; 21; 23; 40; 23).

The participants who commented on why government was not assisting all people in Nyamakate justified this in terms of the economic crisis being experienced by government. The accounts narrated provide evidence of the government's lack of funding for a number of services including borehole maintenance, provision of agricultural inputs and social services. This leaves the people of the Nyamakate community, to cope using available natural and social resources. Political ecologists argue that, because the poor are marginalised and lack social resources, they end up over exploiting the natural resources and hence degrade them (Castree, 2001; Watts, 1982).

The national government of Zimbabwe embarked on a rural electrification programme from as early as the 1980s. In the 1980s, the emphasis was on the electrification of growth points throughout the country, however, through an act of Parliament in 2002, the Rural Electrification Agency was instituted and specifically tasked with electrifying rural communities. In the Nyamakate area, it was observed that Juliet Village was the only one with electricity connection points, while a number of households there were linked to the electricity grid. One participant said "Government assisted us to get electricity. We paid 40% of the costs and it paid the balance. …. electric lines in this village were put in around August 2010" (Interview 7, 11/11/2011). No explanation was given as to why, in the Nyamakate area only, Juliet Village was electrified. However, it should be noted that the Councillor of the Nyamakate area lives in Juliet Village. It was also observed that the two shopping centres, clinic and school are also electrified. These community centres were electrified much earlier than Juliet Village which was electrified under the Rural Electrification Agency programme (Interview 3, 07/12/2011). Rural electrification programmes have the potential to conserve natural resources and improve people's lives, but in the current economic crisis, the role out of this programme remains limited.

According to the Zimbabwean Constitution, all District Councils are mandated by central government to provide services and develop communities under their jurisdiction and the Nyamakate community falls under the Hurungwe Rural District Council (HRDC). A number of participants reported the lack of support from the district council as well. The following statement illustrates the decline in benefits realised by the Nyamakate community from the Council. "In the past Council used to repair and maintain boreholes, but at the moment council is failing to help us. … things are generally hard in the country at the moment" (Interview 6, 16/09/2011). Research participants revealed that in the past they used to benefit from the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) programme managed by the council. Currently, the CAMPFIRE took a low note during the period of hyper-inflation and the hunters now prefer to sell game meet to crocodile farms rather than distribute it to the local communities.

Three key stakeholders from the area stated that the HRDC is currently experiencing financial difficulties and they were therefore not providing the social services as expected. Two reasons were raised in interviews as to the reason for Council failing to provide social services as mandated. One of the key stakeholders interviewed said, "Help to the community is now minimal because of sanctions and economic hardships. The sanctions and economic hardships forced government to stop giving out grants to local authorities for community development" (Interview 13, 07/12/2011). There is widespread understanding in the Nyamakate area that both the national government and the HRDC are in economic crisis and this is having a detrimental impact on the welfare of local rural households.

The second reason why the council is failing to provide adequate support to the Nyamakate community is that some of the Council officials (in the past) were corrupt (Interview 12, 05/12/2011). One study participant said, "The Council leadership at that time was corrupt and they abused resource meant for development projects and social services" (Interview 2, 05/12/2011). It was interesting to note that, despite the limitations that the HRDC was facing, it had made plans for development projects for Nyamakate community (Interview 3, 07/12/2011). An HRDC member explained that the following projects had been halted borehole sinking and maintenance, construction of weirs dams and construction of two dams (Interview 3, 07/12/2011).

In addition to government, there is evidence of the intervention of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the Nyamakate area. NGOs link the local to the global level in development and natural resources policy and programmes (Bratton, 1990). Bryant (1991) argues that even if a state wants to promote sustainable development it might not be able to if it is pressured by big NGOs, as both the state and NGOs derive legitimacy and power over society through development projects. Political ecologists make a distinction between development NGOs and the Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (ENGOs) (Bryant & Bailey, 1997). The ENGOs' rise is based in the increasing power and assertiveness of the 'civil society,' and they fight for social justice through equitable access to the natural environment (Bryant & Bailey, 1997). Development NGOs might promote sustainable environmental use, but their prime business lies in health care, education or famine relief and other humanitarian projects (Bryant & Bailey, 1997). From the evidence, the Nyamakate community has been supported by development NGO only. Bratton (1990: 90) argues that.

> The organisational landscape in rural Africa is dominated by the political and economic monopolies of the post-colonial state. These institutions take various forms: closed and uncompetitive political parties, centralized and overly bureaucratized extension services, or inefficient parastatal and co-operative marketing agencies. Paradoxically, while these monopolies claim an exclusive political legitimacy, their performance is generally weak.

Bratton's (1990) argument sheds light on the political economy of rural areas in Africa where NGOs are added as another layer and are at times more frequent in their interventions than the government. He notes that NGOs are often in competition with the state over legitimacy in the same rural space. As argued above, the Nyamakate institutional landscape is dominated by the state.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have operated in the area since the 1980s to date in two phases: before 1990 and after 1990 to date. In the first phase, the 'Freedom from Hunger Campaign' was identified by nine out of the ten community informants as the first NGO to operate in Nyamakate resettlement area. Freedom from Hunger Campaign

was a United Nations programme that aimed to promote rural development and focus mainly on agriculture, health and education The Freedom from Hunger Campaign provided agricultural inputs and implements. A community informant summarises the help offered to the community by Freedom from Hunger campaign:

> We were helped a lot by Freedom from Hunger campaign in the 1980s. They looked for money from the German government and they gave the government and District Development Fund (DDF) a lot of money to help us. The assistance from Freedom from Hunger Campaign included development of the township, clinic, school and bridges and people got 56 bags of fertilisers per household. They also bought three tractors, and their equipment like ploughs, discs. … The remains of the other one are by the bar up there. The problem was that the leadership at the time misused these tractors and it became a problem to repair these tractors (Interview 5, 23/08/2011).

There was a general understanding amongst the participants that aide from NGOs has been declining from mid-1990s to the time of data collection in 2011. NGO activities declined in Zimbabwe after 1987 in response to the political situation in the country, and withdrawal of donor funds in response to the sanctions (White and Morton, 2005). Since 2005 to date, the Nyamakate community has received sporadic help from World Vision, LEAD, Mvura/Manzi and GOAL. These organisations are based in the town of Karoi. Not everyone benefits from their programmes; for example, Mvura/Manzi constructed two toilets at two households in a village with more than 40 households (Interview 2, 05/12/2011). At a community level Mvura/Manzi has provided cement to protect wells. I observed that more than half of these wells were poorly sited and were not producing water at the time of the study between June and December 2011. One of the HRDC members explained the operations of Mvura/Manzi in Nyamakate:

> Their main area of operation was water and sanitation. They dug 35 deep wells and 69 toilets in Nyamakate. In their selection [of beneficiaries] they also managed to capture orphans. The siting of wells was not scientifically done, they would use the traditional methods of using sticks or wire, and hence most of the wells are dry. Some of the wells were protected using cement and bricks. Mvura/Manzi is no longer operational in Nyamakate and Hurungwe as a whole (Interview 8, 27/08/2011).

At a micro scale, the aim of GOAL was to distribute food to selected community members. One of the health workers explained the recruitment criteria for GOAL food beneficiaries:

> GOAL is giving out food hand-outs to patients especially those who are on the ARVs programme. We, the health workers, identify under-weight and malnourished patients when they come for monthly check ups at the health centre. These patients benefit from food-hand-outs provided by GOAL. Furthermore, children we discharge from the health centre are referred to the GOAL feeding scheme (Interview 1, 05/12/2011).

At the time of this field work, GOAL was the only remaining NGO operating in Nyamakate community. World Vision and LEAD stopped operating in Nyamakate in 2008 and 2010 respectively (Interview 3, 07/12/2011). Their impacts were minimal since there operated for less than two years each. A stakeholder explained why NGOs operate for very limited periods and then leave:

> You have to realise that different organisations came at different times and some of them went away. All organisations come and go as per the agreed timeline with council and government. Yes, organisations can

renew and extend their operations as long as council still wants them or they still have funds to continue their activities in the area (Interview 3, 07/12/2011).

Most of the community respondents blamed the absence of external support on the political situation in the country and the Nyamakate community. An interpretation of the above quotation demonstrates that the state has power over the entry and exit of an NGO in a community. Given that NGOs stand as a threat in developing countries, most governments check on their operations by monitoring the balance of power. The Nyamakate situation demonstrates Bryant and Bailey's (1997) argument that the state possesses the formal monopoly on the means of coercion within their territory. At times, because the NGOs and the state derive legitimacy through development projects, governments in developing countries have protected their political interests at the cost of the weak.

CONCLUSION

This paper presents institutions, policies and programmes that developed and under-mined community development at different stages depending on the structural conditions. The preceding findings demonstrate the institutional changes that have taken place in the Nyamakate area. The Nyamakate area experienced different levels of benefits and support from the state and HRDC in response to national policy that was informed by the macro-economic and political situation. From 1980 to 1990, the government pursued a semi-populist policy characterised by welfarism, and the Nyamakate community benefited the most from the state during this period. The benefits included infrastructure, natural resources and food hand-outs. During this decade, the livelihoods were better for the social actors since the state cushioned them from the perturbations that confronted them. However, government withdrew their support from 1990 when it pursued a neo-liberal economic policy, until the 2000s which were a period of political and economic crisis. This means social actors have had to deal with shocks and challenges that confront them with minimal state support.

The government has thus neglected community development by succumbing to neo-liberal policies, and at another more local scale, utilising agricultural inputs for political mileage. With the exception of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign, other NGOs that operated in Nyamakate after 1990 have had very few positive impacts. Furthermore, the aid from NGOs operating in the Nyamakate area has not targeted or benefited everyone. The aid takes the form of relief like food hand-out during times of stress. It has been ad hoc aid, rather than aimed at developing the beneficiaries. From the preceding argument it must be noted that the operations of the NGOs are determined by the state.

The reported findings support the political ecology literature that demonstrates the contradictions of the state as it engages with NGOs in relation to development policy and interventions. Yet both institutions compete for legitimacy and power over communities, and in the process the social actors and natural environment take a back seat (Bryant, 1991). The history of the Nyamakate community is a process and forms the context in which the actors experience their realities. The political economy of the country and the institutional context therefore provide the structural context in which actors interact with their natural environment and respond to shocks. Given that the Nyamakate households have erratic very little to no support or benefit from structural institutions they are at risk of perturbations. Thus, it can therefore be proposed that an HIV and AIDS affected household experiences the impacts of HIV and AIDS and water scarcity with minimal institutional support, thus making the affected actor vulnerable. In conclusion, although land reform with support from the structure is a potentially sustainable as a development programme, the inconsistencies and at times

contradictions evident in the Nyamakate case thwart the success of the initiative, and rendering households vulnerable to perturbations in the reverse.

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