
Cadastral Politics: The Making of Community-Based Resource Management in Zimbabwe and Mozambique

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ABSTRACT

Projects promoting community-based management of natural resources frequently encourage local smallholders to share flora, fauna, or land forms with state agencies and/or private companies. Ideals of common property and moral economy have inspired this agenda and helped spread it globally. In Southern Africa, however, the general model of shared landscapes has collided with a bitter history of white colonization and land grabbing. This article recounts the rise and fall of one CAMPFIRE (Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources) project in eastern Zimbabwe. There, cadastral politics — struggles over the bounding and control of land — overwhelmed negotiations for joint management and eco-tourism. Across the border, in Mozambique, community-based resource management has engaged with cadastral politics in a more fruitful fashion. In the midst of latter-day Afrikaner colonization, this project mapped smallholders' claims to land. Thus, the Zimbabwean project ignored territorial conflict and ultimately succumbed to it. The Mozambican project jumped into the fray, with some success. On past or current settler frontiers, community-based management may learn from this lesson: dispense with an ideology of sharing and join the rough-and-tumble of cadastral politics.

INTRODUCTION

High hopes have obscured thorny problems in community-based resource management. The policy is fast becoming a blueprint for Southern Africa's flora and fauna. In the 1990s, Murphree's (1991) vision of 'communities as institutions for resource management' took Zimbabwe by storm. The celebrated CAMPFIRE programme has applied that vision to much of the country's natural resources,¹ and proponents have spread the gospel outside Zimbabwe's borders. Their message: local people, their government, and private enterprises should manage a forest, wildlife population, or other natural resource jointly. Such 'co-management', of course, represents a significant departure from the earlier 'fortress model' of conservation. It is hoped that governments will no longer expel and exclude people from

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1. Having started in the field of sport-hunting for large mammals, CAMPFIRE expanded in the 1990s to encompass non-consumptive eco-tourism in Zimbabwe's rural areas.

forests, but that local, governmental, and commercial ‘stakeholders’ should from now on share a landscape² in a mutually beneficial and sustainable fashion. As one advocacy group counsels, they should ‘find consensus in diversity’ (Poffenberger and Selin, 1998). But who is the local community and who are the stakeholders?³ Both categories imply a congruence of interest between disparate actors, such as widows and patriarchs, smallholders and state technocrats, or all of the above and multinational corporations. In many programmes of community-based management, local government and other strong parties have already captured benefits intended for weaker ones.⁴

This article addresses a related problem: shared landscapes — the idea that communities, states, and private companies would want to or be capable of making joint decisions with regard to forests and other natural resources. Optimistic indeed — but policy-makers argue that the ‘right incentives’ will persuade even hardened adversaries to come to the table (for example Child, 1993). A park buffer zone, for instance, could reduce unauthorized tree felling by giving local people a stake in the tourism trade. Thus, conservationists, farmers, tourism operators, and tourists find reasons for co-operation and sharing. Southern Africa, however, may present stronger reasons for these parties *not* to share a forest. The region is a cauldron for land-grabbing and resource theft, precisely the opposite of sharing. In Zimbabwe, in particular, such struggles pervade political life. In the 1890s, white settlers alienated the bulk of the fertile plateau and mountainous regions between the Limpopo and Zambezi Rivers. They established the Rhodesian cadaster, a map of property that reflected the injustice and violence of conquest. The cadastral map has changed little since then. African smallholders grow in number within the fixed land base of native reserves. Worse still, national parks have periodically bitten off chunks of those reserves and expelled the residents. Parks and private estates have defeated armed and peaceful efforts at land reform.

In these ways, Zimbabwe’s rural politics have become cadastral. They centre on the measurement, demarcation, and control of land. Smallholders fight with each other over access to land and, at another level, the state, corporations, and the leaders of smallholder communities contest the division

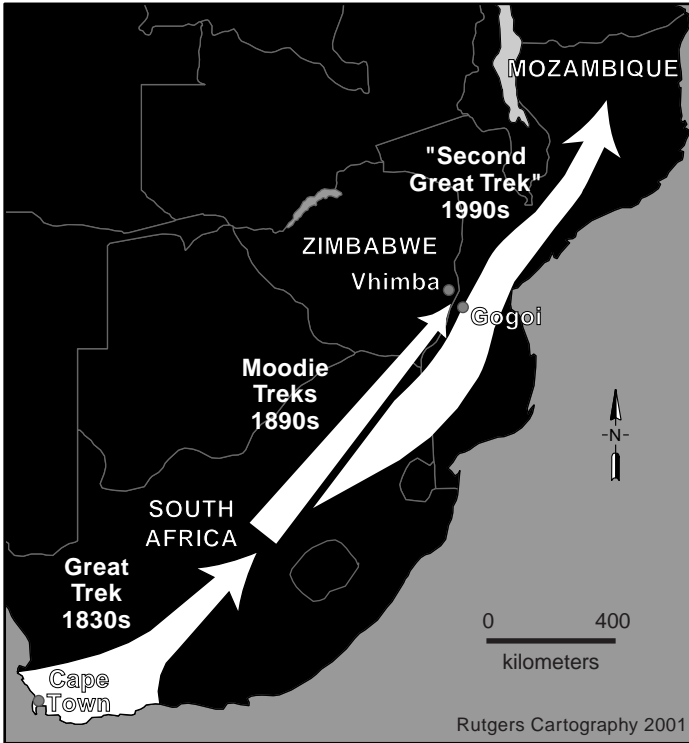
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2. I use the term ‘landscape’ to mean an expanse of land with the natural resources on it. The exact extent of a landscape emerges in the course of political debate and action, as explained below.
 3. Brosius et al. (1998), Li (1996), and Peters (1996) pose the same question in a variety of settings.
 4. Ribot (1996, 1999) and, with regard to CAMFPFIRE, Campbell et al. (2000), Derman and Murombedzi (1994: 125–7), Murombedzi (1992), and Murphree himself (1997: 22–3) describe local and national governments’ capture of benefits and control. Within communities, as Madzudzo (1996: 4) finds, dominant ethnic groups (Ndebele and Kalanga) have managed to disenfranchise marginalized people entirely (San). Schroeder (1999) suggests that some policies of community forestry actually *intend* to shift the costs of conservation from government to local people.

of territory. Economic ambition and historical grievances are denominated in hectares. Land stirs the emotions more than does any other political debate. How can such a nation of evictees, squatters, and land barons — among whom exclusion is the governing principle — now share a landscape? Does today's policy of community-based resource management stand a chance under these inhospitable conditions?

It *may* stand a chance and particularly if it can learn from efforts in a neighbouring part of Mozambique. In west-central Mozambique, cadastral politics are now blossoming — during rather than long before the age of community-based management. Why this delayed onset? From the 1890s onward, white settlers mostly avoided this area in favour of the territory that became Zimbabwe. Africans retained control of the land. The colonial state did establish a handful of national parks and protected areas, but no state has succeeded in evicting the inhabitants (with the partial exception of Mozambique's flagship park, Gorongosa). An eleven-year anti-colonial guerrilla war (1964–75) and a longer post-independence war (1979–92) confined conservationists and agricultural investors alike to the cities. Conflict raged, but it did not address the demarcation of land. In the mid-1990s, however, whites began trickling into west-central Mozambique. Largely Afrikaners from South Africa, they wished to invest in timber, sport-hunting and eco-tourism. A loose concession system permitted many to grab land (see Eliseu et al., 1998; Massinga, 1996). Indeed, in the mid-1990s, it appeared as if Rhodesia-style homesteaders would roll over this frontier. Yet, a Mozambican variant of community-based resource management — devised in reaction to land-grabbing — may have helped stop them in their tracks. The approach is simple: establish the inalienable rights of local people to their land prior to any efforts to share the landscape. This type of 'community mapping' seeks to create a cadaster, but one that protects and enfranchises smallholder farmers. Whereas community-based management in Zimbabwe locks smallholders into a state of dispossession, the policy in Mozambique, at least in some places, seeks above all to prevent dispossession. This article will compare a Mozambican project in community-based management with its twin, 30 km away, just inside eastern Zimbabwe. The ethnography provides clues for a new approach to conservation — one that would take cadastral politics seriously and perhaps try to influence them.

FRONTIERS AND FOREST POLICY

Southern African cadasters have developed along colonial frontiers. From the original Cape Town settlement of 1652, European-derived settlers expanded northward in fits and starts. The Great Trek took them to Orange Free State (in the centre of current South Africa) in the 1830s. In the 1890s, many departed again for Rhodesia, particularly its eastern highlands (the

Map 1. *Vhimba, Gogoi, and Three White Migrations.*

concern of this article). In the 1990s, in a movement once called the Second Great Trek, Afrikaners again colonized remote parts of Mozambique, Zambia, and even Congo-Brazzaville⁵ (see Map 1). Each step of the way, these settlers — in common with later arrivals from Britain, Portugal, and Europe generally — have imposed a common view of the landscape: prosperity and development based on surveyed zones of exclusive ownership (cf. Cronon, 1983: *passim*, 71; Kain and Baigent, 1992). In the eighteenth century, homesteaders demarcated farms whose width corresponded to an hour's horse ride (Christopher, 1971: 3). They permitted Africans to remain as tenant farmers (although the latter frequently contested that status). In eastern Zimbabwe, subsequent land-owners tossed smallholders off the estates altogether. Timber and tea corporations converted the landscape to intensive silviculture and tea plantations. Finally, national parks and protected areas, which pepper the eastern highlands, adopted a similar logic of expulsion and strict

5. See, for example, 'Afrikaners on a second Great Trek', *The Economist*, 30 August 1997, p. 30.

territorial control. By 1980, smallholders legally held only 42.1 per cent of the land area of Zimbabwe (Zinyama and Whitlow, 1986: 371). Thus, colonial settlement, and conservation, and (particularly in eastern Zimbabwe) commercial forestry jointly closed the frontier.

For African smallholders, this process entailed not only material theft but a cultural sea change as well. Nineteenth-century occupants of what became the Zimbabwe–Mozambique border used land, but they seldom divided it into bounded, exclusive zones. They appear to have demarcated territory only when one polity's farmland abutted another's. In the early twentieth century, Machiwenyika recalled a quarrel between the Maungwe and the Nyamhuka people who cultivated on opposite sides of a watercourse.⁶ This river or stream delimited the two jurisdictions and figured centrally in the protagonist's theft and flight with a hoe. At least, in that case, the disputants agreed upon a clear geographical feature. Elsewhere, in uncultivated, drier landscapes, boundary makers relied upon a schematic series of points, rather than any marked or unmarked line. According to an oral account from the Save Valley: 'people . . . were sent by Paramount chief Mutema. They performed their rituals in the night while naked and possessed and where they sat down became the boundary of the village. If boundaries are not made by possessed and naked people in this way then boundaries are not known'.⁷

Today's cadastral maps — of unbroken lines and measurable areas — were a long way off (cf. Kopytoff, 1987; Thongchai, 1994). Instead of staking their rule on land-holding, Mutema, Maungwe, and Nyamhuka wielded power through 'rights in persons' (Kopytoff and Miers, 1977: 7). Male lineage heads accumulated subjects through marriage, procreation, and various forms of economic dependence shading into slavery. These people lived in a village around the patriarch, laboured in his fields, and produced a surplus with which he could attract orphans and destitutes to further enlarge his following. So pre-eminent was human capital in Ngorima⁸ — the eventual site of the Zimbabwean project discussed below — that an evangelist reported in 1905: 'The old man [Chief Ngorima] is really in quite a state of unease. The missionaries are going to convert all his girls [housing them at the mission] and he will be left alone in the midst of his land' (Wood, 1905: 185).

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6. The area lies just to the east of present-day Mutare. National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) historical manuscripts MA 14/1/1 and MA 14/1/2, Jason Tafara Machiwenyika, 'History of Manyika' (Shona/Manyika and English versions), Lesson 101.
 7. Quoted and translated by Vijfhuizen (1998: 176). In 1891–1892, the explorer J. B. Don found 'ancient beacons' in the highlands that may have served the same purpose (Beach, 1997: 22, 23).
 8. Ngorima refers to a place as well as a hereditary title. I refer to all of the individuals who, at different times, have held the title simply as 'Chief Ngorima'.

To the extent that land in and of itself lacked value, the frontier lay open. Studies of similarly open frontiers helped launch the movement towards shared landscapes and community-based resource management. In the 1980s, social scientists documented numerous ‘common property regimes’ (McCay and Acheson, 1987). Although legal terminology may overstate the case, farmers, grazers, and fishers in such regimes, at the very least, treat land and each other in characteristic ways. ‘Resources’, according to Bruce and Fortmann (1988: 2–3), ‘can be utilized by more than one person either simultaneously or sequentially’ (cf. Ostrom, 1990). One person may hunt in a given hectare while a second grazes cattle, a third tends to trees, and a fourth fallows the land in preparation for inter-planting. Rather than controlling territory *per se* (as zones of exclusive ownership), such people share a landscape. They imagine it as a series of overlapping but separable resources: wildlife, grasses, crops, and — in the double meaning of ‘forest’ — trees and land. Regarding the ways people treat each other, common property relies upon what McCay and Acheson (1987: 9) call the “web of use rights” (Thompson, 1975) underlying the moral economy of human communities’. As in England before the Enclosure Acts, such people adhere to a Thompsonian ‘moral economy’ that restrains exploitation and unbridled accumulation. Of course, many moral economies conceal inequality and resentment significant enough to sabotage collective action (Tsing, 1993: 90). Nonetheless, the give-and-take of an open frontier provides the best hope for shared landscapes and community-based resource management.

Policy-makers and advocates, however, frequently extend community-based management beyond its logical sites. They apply the approach of shared landscapes even to places in the grip of enclosures, cadastral politics, and violence. Managers of buffer zones around national parks, for example, now frequently reach out to precisely the people originally displaced by the park. According to one expert, such ‘local resource users’ ‘must be assured of active participation in creating management policies’ for the buffer zone (Brown, 1990: 10). Yet, these exiles frequently seek to ‘participate’ in management on a wider scale, that is, to manage the park itself — complete with trees and animals. If denied that aspiration, why should they want to share their remaining resources with outsiders? The frequent alliance between outside ‘stakeholders’ and original evictors further sharpens the question. In short, a resource-rich state would appear to ask resource-poor people to share what little they have left. At best, the dispossessed will gain nothing from such an arrangement. At worst, community-based management will let the thieves back into the house to finish the job.⁹

9. Less dramatically, Neumann (1997: 575) describes this kind of arrangement as ‘a tremendous territorial expansion of state power’. Hill (1996) argues that CAMPFIRE allows the state to tax rural Zimbabweans.

In Zimbabwe, the worst has happened or will happen eventually. In the mid-1990s, two district governments in Matabeleland planned to clear the Gwampa Valley of smallholders and stock it with big game. The valley would then serve the double purpose of producing CAMPFIRE revenue and protecting an adjoining forest reserve from encroachment (Alexander and McGregor, 2000). In other parts of Zimbabwe, corporate parties to co-management have pushed for eviction. From a business standpoint, they almost *have* to do so. Overlapping rights are risky: in comparison with full ownership, co-operation is less predictable, less financially secure, and reduces each partner's control over quality. How can a sport-hunting firm, for example, guarantee its clients the experience of a game-rich 'wild Africa' as long as it allows Africans to graze and plough hunting areas (cf. Adams and McShane, 1992: 3ff)? In the Zambezi Valley, CAMPFIRE has ultimately erected game fences between hunting grounds and cultivated land (Dzingirai, 1996: 27; Matzke and Nabane, 1996: 77–9). Fences delimit smallholders' planting and grazing now and for the future. Even if a fence encloses a large enough area for smallholders' current needs, it is an eviction time bomb: a growing population (growing in the Zambezi Valley largely through in-migration) will one day want to break out. Fences also rupture the notion of overlapping rights. Spatially segregated agriculture, hunting, and forestry each lay claim to *terra firma*. In sum, the compromise of shared landscapes frequently collapses because no one — neither past evictees nor evictors — is willing to share. Cadastral politics reproduce themselves.

If cadastral politics can unravel community-based resource management, they can also make such programmes more robust. The Zimbabwe and Mozambique case studies represent these two outcomes. Vhimba, a Ndauspeaking settlement along Zimbabwe's eastern border, has suffered some of the most extreme land alienation of that country's history (see Map 1). The Vhimba people now live packed into a tiny reservation. In the mid-1990s, an NGO linked to the CAMPFIRE programme tried to enhance the profitability of that reservation through eco-tourism. The strategy was flawed from the beginning. Decades before, the Vhimba leadership had staked its claim on regaining the lost land. CAMPFIRE did not respond to this felt need. Worse still, as the programme evolved in Vhimba, it became clear that eco-tourism itself required that further land be removed from agricultural production. Outraged, local leadership sabotaged CAMPFIRE. In nearby Gogoi, in Mozambique (see Map 1), such an upset may still take place, but, thus far, community-based management and cadastral politics have interacted very differently. In the mid-1990s, South African timber firms rediscovered central Mozambique. Meanwhile, NGOs and the provincial government devised a programme of community-based resource management that would guarantee smallholders' rights against the timber firms. In theory, Gogoi people should then dictate the terms of any joint activities they might undertake with outsiders. This type of community-based management aimed to help smallholders succeed in the emergent cadastral

politics. Vhimba's version of the same policy, by contrast, promoted a longstanding cadastral politics prejudiced against smallholders. In both cases, forest management has proved to be a question of boundaries and hectares — sharing with a hard edge.

VHIMBA, ZIMBABWE

Vhimba's first forest policies capitalized on the earlier white seizure of the landscape. In 1893, a pioneer column reached what are now the Chimanimani and Chipinge Districts of eastern Zimbabwe. Dunbar Moodie, the organizer of that and subsequent treks, drew the region's first cadaster and partitioned the landscape into 2500-acre farms. Fortunately, he spared two fertile valleys, advised that they might lie across the as yet undemarcated colonial border.¹⁰ This forbearance — amidst otherwise unbridled land-grabbing — left the British colonial administration some room to manoeuvre. In 1896, it gazetted the Rusitu and Haroni Valleys — which meet at Vhimba — as the Ngorima Native Reserve. This tribal reservation¹¹ bore the name of the local chief, even though his home and most of his subjects now lived on white estates. These newly minted 'tenants' had two options: stay on the estates of the 'white highlands', paying high rents in labour, or descend to the reserve, where they could farm relatively unencumbered. Many opted to stay put. In the 1950s, however, forestry finally dislodged them. By that time, the settlers and their descendants were going bankrupt and selling out. Border Timbers Ltd. and the parastatal Forestry Commission bought their land and, over the next two decades, blanketed it with exotics, chiefly eucalyptus and pine. There was no longer space or need for tenant farming. Once stuffed into the reserve, Ngorima's people received a further blow from the conservationists. In 1965, the Haroni Valley, which happened to contain one of Zimbabwe's few moist, high-canopy forests, was annexed to the Chimanimani National Park (see Map 2). Eight years later, the government gazetted two equivalent forests sacred to the Vhimba people as botanical reserves (see Map 2). Thus, corporations and the state systematically destroyed the indigenous vegetation surrounding the native reservation and took from the natives the forests that *they* had protected (Hughes, 1999a: 74ff).

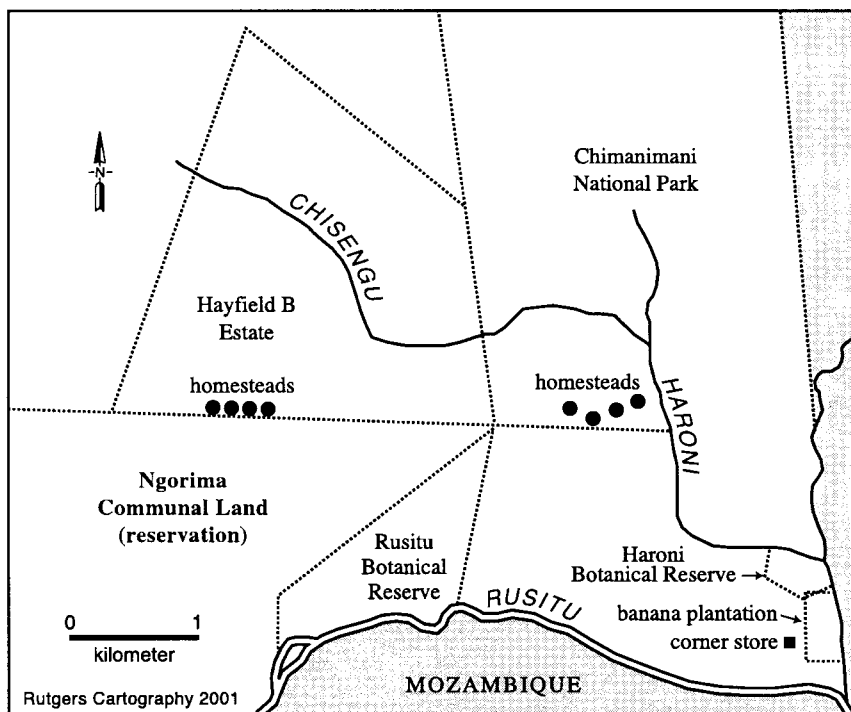
Vhimba's leadership reacted to this tree-centred land-grabbing by learning cadastral politics. Between 1893 and the 1950s, Chief Ngorima and his deputies, known as 'headmen',¹² gradually shifted their activities

10. Letter from A. H. Duncan, British South Africa Company to G. B. D. Moodie, 20 October 1892; cited in Olivier (1957: 150).

11. I will use the term 'reservation' to encompass local terminology ranging from 'reserve' to 'tribal trust land' to (currently) 'communal area'.

12. For both Vhimba and Gogoi, I use the British colonial term 'headmen', although it masks a host of ambiguities in Ndau terminology and official rhetoric.

Map 2. Vhimba, Ngorima Communal Land, Zimbabwe.



from managing people to managing land (Hughes, 1999a: 94–9). The British colonial government partly assisted them in this transition. After what had been an exceedingly violent period, *Pax Britannica* cut off the supply of refugees, orphans, and destitutes that had constituted chiefly retinues. Missionaries of the Rusitu Mission and others siphoned off youth, especially girls. The administration also repressed rights-in-persons directly, particularly the frequent bondage of sons-in-law to their fathers-in-law. The Native Marriages Ordinance of 1901 required that patriarchs accept a cash-based bridewealth, in lieu of services, and burgeoning migrant labour markets allowed young men to earn sufficient cash. As junior men bought their way out of obligations, senior men lost their traditional form of power. Yet, land alienation and the question of resettling evictees raised the possibility of a new form of power: cadastral politics. Vhimba's headmen embraced this opportunity. They took charge of allocating fields in the reservations. Of course, they have never monopolized that arena completely. Yet, in attempting to do so, Chief Ngorima and his headmen shifted the locus of struggle from rights-in-people to rights-in-land.

In the course of the twentieth century, the battle for terrain grew increasingly important. The evictions of the 1950s packed people into the reservations, placing a premium on land allocation and on the adjudication of disputes. In effect, headmen reaped the rewards of politically induced population density.¹³ In the late 1960s and 1970s, the administration formally recognized headmen as land managers and mapped their jurisdictional ‘wards’ within the Ngorima reservation. Headmen embraced their role rather more enthusiastically than the government wished: they refined land allocation, as a device for exceeding the wards, for taking land from each other, and for regaining lost land. For instance, a 1968 resurvey of the Rusitu Mission enraged Chief Ngorima. The chief, wrote the alarmed station head, ‘despised the authority [the District Commissioner] that had told us to put up the beacons without reference to him’.¹⁴ The 1970s war of liberation further emboldened leadership in the reservation. With the guerrillas’ blessing, headmen in Vhimba settled people within the Chimanimani National Park and an adjoining estate. When, at independence in 1980, the government of the guerrillas reneged on their promises, Vhimba’s three headmen fought on. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, they injected another round of hapless squatters — this time largely war refugees from Mozambique — into the disputed territories. By the same token, they refused to remove inhabitants of the two botanical reserves, arguing that the Parks Department had widened the boundaries arbitrarily (Hughes, 1996, 1999b). The triumvirate of headmen was fighting — if not always beating — the state at its own cadastral game.

Fearful of conflict, outside agencies acted to undermine headmen. In 1993 and 1994, they created two institutions designed to supersede Vhimba’s extant leadership and promote more harmonious political relations. First, the Ministry of Local Government amalgamated administrative structures in Chimanimani District to form the rural district council. Known as the ‘local land authority’ and run by appointed (rather than elected) officers, the Council grabbed both land and the authority to manage land. In 1994, it cleared seven families from an area close to the Haroni-Rusitu junction and established its banana plantation there.¹⁵ Additionally, in the same period, the Council drafted conservation by-laws empowering it to ‘specify which inhabitants may cultivate in any cultivation area’ and to ‘reserve [degraded land] against human occupation’.¹⁶ Local government clothed itself in

13. According to census data, there were 80–120 persons per km² in 1982.

14. Society for International Ministries archives, Charlotte, North Carolina, USA, Africa Evangelical Fellowship collection, Zimbabwe, Box 2; David P. Evans, Rusitu Mission to R. S. Glen, District Superintendent, Salisbury, 13 August 1968.

15. The elected councillor who in theory represented this area, rarely came down the escarpment to visit it.

16. Chimanimani Rural District Council, ‘Gazetting of Chimanimani Rural District Council (Land Use and Conservation By Laws) Draft (1994)’.

headmen's robes. Within Vhimba, an NGO linked to CAMPFIRE promoted the second new institution. In 1995, it organized elections for the Vhimba Area Development Committee (VADC). The populace chose four officers, two of whom took the lead for the next four years: Chair Ruben Zuze, a former guerrilla arrested in 1994 for squatting, and Secretary Elias Nyamunda, Vhimba's most literate person. These men and their colleagues tasked themselves with the 'sound management of the area's natural resources for the benefit of the community'.¹⁷ More specifically, external backers pushed the committee to start an eco-tourism business. Along the lines of CAMPFIRE's logic, the community's income from such sustainable use of the national park would discourage it from cutting and cultivating there. In short, a win-win situation would diffuse the cadastral dispute headmen had been waging.

Yet, the prospect of tourism pushed three of Vhimba's territorial alarm buttons: whites were involved, the Rural District Council was involved, and tourism would and did raise issues of land allocation. First, the tourists were white, and so were the tour operators. Their interest in opening Vhimba to tourism recalled the long history of land alienation. In at least one respect, the connection was real and current: the Chipinge Wildlife Society, a group of tour operators, bird watchers and estate owners, had previously transported National Park scouts to Vhimba deliberately, so that they could enforce the boundary of the Rusitu Botanical Reserve. Such co-operation, of course, helped protect the tour operators' source of revenue, their stake in the cadaster. Second, the Council's banana plantation had earned it the reputation of a land-grabber. Now, its 'CAMPFIRE officer' was to promote tourism in scenic parts of the district's native reservations. This new interest raised the question whether the Council would manipulate tourism — in the way it had the banana 'co-operative' — in order to seize land from smallholders. Vhimba's committee decided to take no such chances: *if* the Committee undertook tourism, then the Committee would run it. Third and finally, tourism was a cauldron of cadastral politics because it certainly did require land. Although their interest lay in trees, tourists would need a tract for chalets and/or camping. They would use the 'forest' in both senses. No one knew how much land was at stake, or where, but already in early 1995, 'certain members of the committee felt that this project was meant to grab land from them'.¹⁸

In spite of these fears, the committee actually occupied a middle ground between some male elders opposed to tourism and the organizations promoting it. Headmen, who were included *ex officio* on the committee, insisted that the committee settle outstanding turf battles before engaging in

17. 'Vhimba Area Development Committee Constitution', p. 2 (no date).

18. Zvidzai Chidhakwa, Project Officer for Vhimba, 'Report on the look-and-learn tour to Uzumba-Maramba-Pfungwe's Sunungukai Camp', by the Vhimba Area Development Committee, January 1995, p. 4.

any tourist venture. At the initial ‘participatory rural appraisal’ in mid-1994, ‘the development of tourism under CAMPFIRE’ was debated. While there was a definite interest in this, it was felt that outstanding grievances needed to first be resolved with National Parks.¹⁹ Nyamunda felt this popular pressure keenly. ‘In the introduction of the CAMPFIRE’, he opined in the minute book, ‘the community is not satisfied if [convinced that] the CAMPFIRE is worth living for. We are in trouble on the displacement of people from their stands [homesteads] and their fields’.²⁰ The grievance with the Rural District Council was equally pressing and equally disruptive of the work of Nyamunda and the Committee. Headman Tiyekiye, who was already implicated in the banana plantation, wanted to settle that issue prior to *any* development projects. When the committee considered an irrigation scheme, it found that ‘the people of Tiyekiye’s village . . . prefer boundary issues to water’.²¹ The NGO was well aware of Vhimba’s preferences. Nonetheless, in early 1995, with the committee’s assent and that of Council, the NGO submitted a proposal for funding to the CAMPFIRE Association.²² A year later, the NGO prepared to implement that proposal. Ultimately, the committee never decided for or against tourism. Other events dictated its course of action.

In late 1996, a British investor made a tourist facility in Vhimba a real possibility for the first time. Henry Oberlander²³ had worked in banking in Hong Kong. Tiring of this frenzied life, he decided to establish an ‘adventure company’ in Chimanimani. He joined forces with Collin Walker, a white Zimbabwean, raised on an estate in Nyanga District, and associated with the Heaven Lodge in Chimanimani town. The two of them hoped to bring back-packers from ‘Heaven’ to Vhimba via steep trails in the Haroni Valley. Once in Vhimba, the tourists would raft on the Rusitu, hike in the national park, mountain bike on the road, and visit smallholders. In contrast to Zimbabwe’s luxury hotels and safaris, Oberlander and Walker imagined a simpler eco-tourism embedded in the local community. In order to realize this dream, however, the two entrepreneurs first needed to satisfy the Chimanimani Rural District Council. In late 1996, Oberlander explained his vision to a Council meeting. Impressed by the proposal, the Council agreed to grant him a business licence contingent upon his payment of the standard application fee of Z\$50. In effect, the Council torpedoed the NGO’s proposal that the Vhimba Area Development Committee conduct

19. ‘A participatory rural appraisal exercise in Mutemanerangu Village, Vhimba Ward, Chimanimani District, Zimbabwe, 23–30 July 1994’, Harare: Southern Alliance for Indigenous Resources, p. 8.

20. VADC, Minutes, personal note of Elias Nyamunda, 6 April 1995.

21. VADC, Minutes of Community Meeting, 4 October 1995, p. 2.

22. Often assumed to be an NGO, the CAMPFIRE Association is a membership body of rural district councils that gained the authority to disburse funds (whose source is USAID).

23. Henry Oberlander and Collin Walker (see below) are pseudonyms.

the same enterprise in the same area. Later asked in public to account for his authorization of two competing ventures, the Council's chief executive officer responded, 'It's a question of survival of the fittest – dog eat dog'.²⁴ Oberlander's dog, though, had a cadastral bite.

The Council's deal with Oberlander raised troubling cadastral questions. Did the granting of a business licence confer rights in land? In a conversation with Oberlander in late 1996, he conveyed that he believed that it did confer rights in land. Specifically, he claimed to be negotiating with the Council for the purchase of a small patch of secondary woodland next to the 'Corner Store' (given that name because of its proximity to the 90-degree bend in the Zimbabwe–Mozambique border; see Map 2). The store had passed through a variety of owners before falling into the hands of the Council. It now served as the storage shed for equipment used in the adjacent banana plantation. Associated in this way with the Council's primal sin, the store was a remarkably poor choice of location for a business in need of Vhimba's support. To make matters worse, the Council proceeded to act as a land allocator. Authorities within or outside the Council had led Oberlander to believe that the land next to the store lay within a 'business centre', an area over which the Council supposedly had full authority. On this assumption, he decided to pursue access to the area through the Council and only later introduced himself to Vhimba's headmen, the Committee, and other residents. This delay spawned rumours and greatly undercut local support.

Oberlander and Walker's first meeting in Vhimba gave residents further reason to interpret tourism as a territorial claim. The particular grievance of that meeting and of a subsequent one centred as much on the fact of eviction as on its manner: the Council was taking on the role of headman. In the normal course of events, Tiyekiye and other headmen wielded the particular responsibility of 'showing a place' to all newcomers. In the mid-1990s, of course, they had used that role to particular effect in reclaiming parts of the Chimanimani National Park and of the Hayfield B estate (see Map 2). Now, the Council was usurping their power: at the first meeting, Oberlander had paid the Council a fee of Z\$50. That sum fell well within the range of *huku* presentations given by newcomers to headmen in return for land allocation. Worse still, the Council had done a bad job of allocating land. Because it did not 'know the area', it had given to Oberlander fallow fields technically owned by Tatorerwa.²⁵ In a second meeting, held one month after the first, Tatorerwa protested. The business centre, he argued, extended east from the corner store, not west to his field. Furthermore, Tiyekiye's father had assured Tatorerwa's father of this boundary; so the Council had to be mistaken. In relation to Oberlander, this *mis*-allocation of land engendered

24. My minutes of the Haroni/Vhimba Consultative Group Meeting, 19 February 1997.

25. Tatorerwa is a pseudonym.

both sympathy and resentment. ‘You were shown a place that is not yours’, said one smallholder to Oberlander *in absentia*, ‘Council is insulting him’.²⁶ Perhaps more prevalent was the fear that, as one farmer put it, ‘He will take our land from us’.²⁷ The Council’s blunder left Oberlander no means with which to clear his name.

Difficult to falsify, the suspicion of land-grabbing arose from two oddly territorial interpretations of the facts in Oberlander’s case. First, the people of Vhimba understood the granting of a business licence as land allocation. Oberlander appeared as a newcomer, someone from outside Vhimba who wanted to establish himself there. Since the wave of evictions and in-migration in the 1950s, outsiders had inserted themselves into Vhimba by only one means: requesting and receiving land from the headmen on whose land they wished to live. Oberlander wished to construct his ‘homestead’ in Tiyekiye’s area, but he had spoken and even exchanged money with the Council, and not Tiyekiye. In effect, Oberlander and the Council had usurped Tiyekiye’s power of land allocation and taken the land. The second misunderstanding created boundaries where there were none. Legally, the ‘business centre’ was merely a store. Unlike Vhimba’s official business centre 7 km to the west, the store had never been surveyed and appeared on government maps as simply ‘store’. Issues of boundaries, moreover, appeared natural to smallholders and, it is likely, to a good many of the councillors themselves. All the players except Oberlander were thoroughly prepared to ignite and fight a turf battle over tourism.

In the end, Oberlander salvaged his proposal only by surrendering his piece of land. Under siege at the March meeting, he declared his preference for collaboration with the ‘CAMPFIRE tourism project’. He thus averted an unpopular ‘dog-eat-dog’ competition — in which he was sure to triumph — and in the process managed to trade his site for a better one. The NGO and the Vhimba committee had selected their proposed campsite at a viewpoint overlooking the Haroni River. Far from the disturbances of the store and banana plantation, the committee’s site offered the picturesque setting attractive to tourists from the Heaven Lodge. A transfer to this location, moreover, exonerated Oberlander from charges of land-grabbing. Other people had allocated the site for tourism more than a year before he first came to Vhimba. He was merely accepting the committee’s allocation in a way visible to all, and was no longer seen to be engaging with the Council in a territorial subterfuge. The Council and the NGO encouraged this merger. A month later, in May 1997, the committee decided to co-operate with Oberlander conditional upon an agreement on profit-sharing. Oberlander had definitely gambled in ceding his official parcel, but the chances for success seemed good.

26. ‘*Makaratiidziwa nzvimbo isiri yenyu ... Council iri kumukanganisa*’ (Vhimba, 21 April

27. ‘*Anozotitorera nyika yedu*’ (Vhimba, 26 July 1997).

Unknown to Oberlander, however, Headman Tiyekiye had reached the point of reasserting his authority over land in a dramatic fashion. The Council, the banana plantation, and his own actions had forced him into a corner. Having become the foreman of the plantation, he allegedly embezzled from it. Upon his arrest in May 1997, he referred to his territorial rights to excuse the crime: ‘Who is the owner of the field?’ a Vhimba man quoted him as having asked rhetorically.²⁸ The question put the Council in an awkward position. If the Council had negotiated for the land fairly with Tiyekiye — as its officers insisted — then Tiyekiye retained the headman’s prerogative of adjudicating the dispute between the Council and Vhimba residents and, even, of reallocating a portion of the field.²⁹ The Council would have to acknowledge Tiyekiye’s right to ‘redistribute’ proceeds from the plantation. If, on the other hand, the Council owned the plantation free and clear, then it owed nothing to Tiyekiye. By prosecuting him, the Council would admit fault to having stolen land. The case languished while Tiyekiye and the Council’s detractors stewed. In this context, neither this nor other headmen were disposed to support the entry of someone whom the Council had helped to circumvent their authority over land. Informally, Tiyekiye lobbied against the joint venture with Oberlander and helped push the Committee into a dramatic about-face. In June, the Committee declared publicly, ‘Death before partnership!’³⁰ The joint venture was over before it had begun.

By the middle of 1997, when I left Vhimba, both the committee and development were crippled. The CAMPFIRE Association did intend to fund a community-run tourism project in Vhimba independent of Oberlander. Zuze and Nyamunda still met and, with other officers, constituted the committee. Yet, headmen had transferred the locus of power to behind the scenes, to rumour-mongering and alliance building. There, especially among older men, suspicion and loyalty centred on claims to land and efforts to regain the lost land. The Rural District Council and the Parks Department, of course, inflamed these grievances by repeatedly taking land from Vhimba smallholders. These politics diverted and strangled development in 1997. Unless land alienators return their booty — or, at least, refrain from grabbing more — territorial imperatives may well continue to overwhelm community-based resource management in Vhimba.³¹

28. ‘*Muridzi wemunda ndiani?*’ (Vhimba, 20 May 1997).

29. The facts of the original installation and of the missing funds are still murky. Regarding the former, the most likely scenario is that the Council sought Tiyekiye’s ‘permission’ (but in a context where he was required to give it) for a ‘co-operative’ of Vhimba residents (that ultimately was a parastatal company).

30. As recalled by Henry Oberlander (Chimanimani, 2 July 1997).

31. In Hughes (forthcoming) the story continues, with even greater dangers to the Vhimba people.

GOGOI, MOZAMBIQUE

In Gogoi, this policy has engaged with cadastral politics in quite a different fashion. Prior to proposals for co-management, the notion of land-grabbing was hardly known. Although Gogoi lies only 30 km from Vhimba on equally fertile land, streams of white settlement avoided it. The early trekkers demurred at Mozambique's insecure system of property leases and inadequate road network. Although Portuguese plantation agriculture and silviculture gradually took root in west-central Mozambique, they exploited Gogoi only as a labour reserve (*reserva indígena*) (Alexander, 1994: 9–11; das Neves, 1998: 134–7; cf. Borges Coelho, 1991). At last, in the 1960s, a Pretoria-based firm, Continental Timbers, established a sawmill and logging operation in Gogoi (Hughes, 1999a: 46ff). Yet, upon independence in 1975, Mozambique's socialist government nationalized and terminated its operations. Needless to say, the ensuing war kept all investors at bay. In this 'white highlands' *manqué*, Africans stayed on the land. Without the squeeze of evictions, population density remained a fraction of that in Vhimba, and debates on land allocation, land alienation, and boundaries simply did not emerge.

Instead, local politics centred on the alienation of labour. In contrast with Rhodesia, the Portuguese administration allowed the pre-colonial custom of bride-service to continue. Meanwhile, it expanded this base of rights-in-persons into a total system of forced labour. From the 1890s, the administration used ruling lineages to collect tax — payable in cash or (much more likely) in labour. Chief Gogoi and other chiefs sent their sons, sons-in-law, and eventually all able-bodied men for long, arduous stints on distant plantations (Newitt, 1995: 368ff; Vail, 1976). Chieftainship came to focus on the use and abuse of *braços*, that is literally human arms. Meanwhile, from 1938 to 1961, the National Cotton Company compelled peasants in Gogoi and its environs to grow commercial cotton (Isaacman, 1996: 44–45). Although officially abolished in 1961, forced labour reappeared during the war. Gogoi thus entered peacetime as a polity obsessed with labour and innocent of cadastral politics.

By the mid-late 1990s, however, two foreign influences were simultaneously politicizing territory in Gogoi. Continental Timbers had returned with a vision of settler silviculture; and a project in community-based resource management set out to establish Gogoi's first property map and to write the South Africans out of it. In 1995, Continental Timbers acquired an annual cutting licence for indigenous trees in and around Gogoi. In their own minds, these whites were reclaiming the vast tract they had previously logged — this time, with bolder designs. The regional director, an Afrikaner and son of the owner, spoke of planting eucalyptus. Additionally, his on-site sawmill manager, a Zimbabwean-born white and conservationist, dreamed of planting tea and of setting aside a hunting reserve elsewhere in the parcel. All three activities would displace Chief Gogoi and his people. How could

Continental Timbers justify this transformation of Gogoi's social and ecological landscape? As the sawmill manger assured me, 'The chief is the chief. I am the mayor here. This is my land!'³² Continental Timbers had to be stopped, but Chief Gogoi and his people could hardly do so alone. Here arose the rationale for the second foreign intervention into Gogoi: a project in community-based management. By themselves, the Gogoi people lacked both the conceptual and political tools to negotiate with or repel the next wave of white colonists. Community-based management could help them to fight — and perhaps even win — territorial struggles.

Launched in 1997, the project drew ideas from a number of existing programmes in co-management in Mozambique. Three years before, CAMP-FIRE had inspired a project in the community of Bawa in the Zambezi Valley. Assisted by the Ford Foundation and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, local leaders had reached an accord with a sport-hunting company (Koch, 1998). Slightly to the north of Gogoi, the government's National Directorate of Forestry and Wildlife had declared the Chimanimani Transfrontier Conservation Area. The World Bank sent money and consultants (including myself). In Gogoi, an Italian NGO whose activities there were previously limited to literacy, decided to jump on the bandwagon. CIES, or the Centre for Information and Education for Development, imagined that smallholders could establish small sawmills. Perhaps they could also become part-owners of the South Africans' undertaking. Yet no one had informed either the Gogoi people or Continental Timbers of this exciting, possibly hare-brained idea. No one had prepared the community or those in the transfrontier conservation areas to negotiate with private firms or with the government. In particular, no one had prepared them to negotiate from a position of strength.

The mapping exercise aimed to do exactly this — with all the optimism of inexperience. Under Mozambique's new Land Law, smallholders could protect themselves from expropriation — and gain a veto power over outside investment — by documenting their residence on the land. The first field team, therefore, undertook what has been called 'counter-mapping' or 'geomatics' (Peluso, 1995; Poole, 1995). I directed that team, and we set out to generate maps that the government of Mozambique would recognize. Residents of Gogoi would draw their land on the ground or on paper. Then, using a geographic positioning system, we would compile a standard 1:50,000-scale map to be presented to the government by Gogoi representatives. Ultimately, the project accomplished what it set out to do. It also accomplished an unexpected transformation: the 'territorialization' (Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995) of Chief Gogoi's polity. Chief Gogoi, his headmen and others involved in the project came, in fits and starts, to appreciate

32. Interviews with employees of Continental Timbers, Espungabera, 28 April 1997; Gogoi, 6 May 1997.

the new value of turf and the means by which to hold onto it. This awareness may have helped the leadership weather a difficult transition — the end of forced labour and the re-establishing of its rule on a new footing. In the meantime, however, Gogoi's headmen and other residents interpreted and manipulated the mapping project in ways characteristic of their non-territorial politics: first, as a question of labour, second, as one of trees, and, third, as a question of sacred forests.

The project first and unavoidably addressed the need for local staff. To Gogoi residents, we, therefore, fell into the well-known category of labour recruiters. Upon arrival in Gogoi, we had informed the chief that we would hire a guide, a cook, and a guard — and asked for his recommendations. He chose a son as our guide, and that son together with our team found a cook and guard, confirming our selection with Chief Gogoi himself. Without intending to, we thus recapitulated the age-old hiring practice of the Portuguese administration: in a certain, formal sense, we recruited our labour through the chief. Of course, our project was not demanding *forced* labour. Yet, the distinction regarding the nature of the labour seemed less important than the form of its procurement. During the war Frelimo, who did not recognize chieftainship, had press-ganged rural men. The Renamo rebels, on the other hand, had shown greater cultural tact by demanding that chiefs furnish them with porters. Our project had won local approval by symbolically reaffirming the chief's rights-in-people. Coincidentally, the sawmill had also stumbled upon this good fortune. In that case, the chief had called a popular meeting to announce that whites were offering employment — news disseminated more bluntly as, 'The sawmill wants people'.³³ So far we were running neck-and-neck with Continental Timbers.

The project, nonetheless, moved rapidly to issues besides labour and distinguished itself from the sawmill. Again, however, the project and Gogoi's people rode on different tracks. The opening meeting, held at Chief Gogoi's compound, turned the attention of the roughly 150 on-lookers to natural resources and their ownership. Ana Paula Reis, the provincial head of forestry and wildlife, declared, 'We [the government] are not the owners of the land. You who live here are'.³⁴ Oddly, the remainder of her speech and the public reaction to it focused on trees. Interrupting Reis, one man asked for clarification: does this talk of community-managed forests mean that he may demand payment for the cutting of trees in the vicinity of his fields and homestead? The audience grew excited at the prospect of charging whites by the log. Reis and the other government and NGO officials intended that people should benefit from sustainable commercial use of the forest, but they expected that people would do so as a community rather than

33. '*Serasawe inoda vanhu*' (recalled in Gogoi, 5 July 1997).

34. '*Os donos da terra não somos nós. São vocês que vivem aqui*' (notes of a meeting in Gogoi, 29 April 1997).

individually. Responding to the question of tree sales, Benjamin Gemo, provincial head of Geography and Cadaster, admonished, ‘The tree belongs to the community. It does not belong to João [the equivalent of Joe Blow or Joe Bloggs]’.³⁵ Gemo’s idealism only heightened the mystification.

Gemo was referring to a community of place, a notion quite foreign to Gogoi. He assumed that proximity and residence within geographical limits gave his audience a common identity and interest. Logically, that interest should include the management of the community’s common landscape. Gogoi residents differed with Gemo’s notion of community in two senses. First, their community was the *polity* of Chief Gogoi’s subjects. In other words, they did not identify, first and foremost, with a geographical community of place. They were members of the collectivity circumscribed by a leader’s jurisdiction over people. Given this kind of community, Gogoi residents — differing from Gemo in the second sense — did not associate the resources and activities in and around one’s field with Chief Gogoi. Individuals, households, and lineages managed trees and their products. These resources were not normally the chief’s business; so what could cutting them have to do with the ‘community’ led by him?

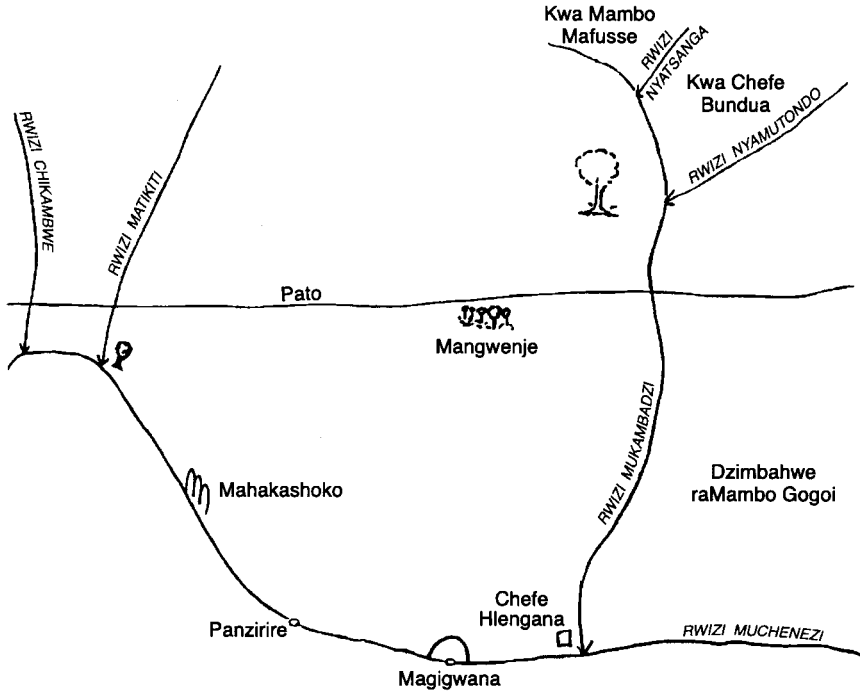
The project answered that question by concentrating on religious matters rather than on the economics of natural resources. Before the first public meeting, the chief had expressed fears that whites would cut in sacred forests. As he and his headmen explained, the loggers of the 1960s and early 1970s had done precisely that and, consequently, caused many forests to cease to be sacred. Chiefs and headmen — the organizers or performers of *kupira* propitiating ceremonies — resented this disenchantment profoundly. Their involvement made sacred forests an issue of the Gogoi polity or, as Gemo had gropingly insisted, a ‘community’ concern. Our team, therefore, introduced the project as a means for change such that, ‘... the company [Continental Timbers] will be required to obey your wishes. It will not be permitted to cut in sacred forests or to cut sacred trees or trees that you use’.³⁶ People appreciated this objective immediately. In meetings at chief Gogoi’s homestead and at those of his three headmen, men discussed these forests volubly. Ignoring our additional interest in areas used for fuelwood, hunting, and so on, Gogoi people sketched maps on the ground, in the dirt, or on loose pieces of paper that showed almost nothing but sacred zones (see Map 3).

These maps of sacred forests were not fully territorial. Nyakwawa, the forest I knew from Vhimba, had been expansive. Although sometimes in a flexible fashion, Vhimba people had demarcated this and other forests using

35. ‘*A árvore é da comunidade. Não é do João*’ (notes of meeting in Gogoi, 29 April 1997).

36. ‘... company yacho ichafanira kuteera zvido zvenyu. Haichabvumirwi kutema makwasha akakosha kana mimbuti yakakosha kana mimbuti inoshandiswa nemi’ (notes of meeting in Gogoi, 29 April 1997).

Map 3. Headman Hlengana's Area (drawing by Headman Hlengana, Gogoi, 9 May 1997; labels added subsequently)



the Rusitu and Haroni Rivers and smaller streams. However, only one of twelve sacred forests in Gogoi corresponded to this model. That forest, Mabombe, contains 250 ha of woodland lying between the Nzuwe stream, a dry stream, and the Sitatonga ridge. Two of the remaining smaller forests cover at least one hectare. More typically, nine of the ‘forests’ are not forests at all. They are stands of trees or even one tree often next to streams or pools. Five *mupanga-panga* (*Milletia stuhlmannii*) trees, for example, sprouted from the grave of Mangwenje; so the hallowed ground bears his name (see Map 3). Finally, a single *muvava* (*Khaya nyasica*) tree constitutes each of the two smallest sites, considered sacred simply because ceremonies are performed there. (One such tree is marked on Map 3.) The team collected one set of co-ordinates for each of these nine sites and added them as dots to our ‘cadastral’ version of the locally drawn sketch maps. Thus, halfway through the project, we had drafted an official representation of Gogoi’s ‘territory’ as merely three forests and nine points. Like so many development workers, we had not yet convinced the ‘participants’ in this project to see the world our way.

Our interlocutors also disappointed us on the question of boundaries. On a sketch map where we expected sharp limits, Gogoi encircled his country with a broken, indeterminate frontier. Headman Hlengana, the only one of Gogoi's three headmen who was able to draw a map at all, likewise left a large gap to the north (see Map 3). In response to further prodding, Gogoi and Hlengana named various streams and dry stream beds that would close their circles. Yet, the streams did not connect, they did not flow in the directions indicated, and, given the topography, they could not possibly form an unbroken chain. Gogoi, at last, told us that he did know his northern boundary and we must go there to ask Headman Matsikiti. Yet, Matsikiti also confessed uncertainty. Only the families actually living on the frontier, he said, knew precisely where it was. In the meantime, we had also followed the chain of command upward to the government *chefe de posto* (the lowest level functionary) and district administrator. They had referred us back downwards. The knowledge about boundaries, the *chefe de posto* told us, 'is there, in the field'.³⁷ Ultimately, the 'field' meant, quite literally, the cultivated fields of Gogoi's far-flung subjects. Thus, as far as the leadership was concerned, people — or the remotest hinterland of members of Gogoi's polity — delimited that polity spatially.

This kind of fuzzy frontier came about because settlement preceded demarcation. Gogoi's polity formed and developed according to the pattern of fission and secession common elsewhere in East and Southern Africa. At the turn of the century, Gogoi split from Mafussi and went south. Subsequent Gogoi title-holders prevented secession only by allowing their younger brothers to leave the *dzimbahwe* (the central, capital part of the chiefdom) and assume authority as headmen in the outlying areas. As Kopytoff (1987) writes, this kind of fragmentation slowly populates the 'interstitial frontiers' between chiefly seats. In colonial Mozambique those frontiers did not need to be primarily territorial. Since obligations of forced labour defined the Gogoi polity, Gogoi's chiefdom ended where his ability to compel labour ended. The degree of demarcation, therefore, varied with population density. In Gogoi's heartland, where settlement is much denser, headmen probably agreed on borders in order to avoid overlapping claims to labour. Their sketch maps for the project often placed streams between headmen's areas or between them and the *dzimbahwe* (see Map 3, upper right corner). As a result of dense settlement and cultivation, frontiers had become solid and physical (as in Machiwenyika's account of the hoe expatriated across a river). In the sparsely populated hinterland, on the other hand, physical demarcation was not necessary. Until 1997, the outermost extent of headmen's areas and of Gogoi's chiefdom remained a matter for conjecture.

37. 'Está lá, no campo' (interview with Francisco Zianja, Chefe de Posto, Dacata, Mossurize District, 7 July 1997).

Frontiers of this kind do not help a chief wage territorial battles. In the worst case, the people holding the frontier go elsewhere, causing territory to shrink. Wartime exodus had already affected all of Gogoi's area and probably deepened the leadership's doubt regarding its northern fringe. Now that lack of specificity threatened to undermine the first cadastral effort to establish and defend Gogoi's land. Gogoi would have been in a much better position if his boundaries had existed prior to or independent of settlement. In Vhimba, for example, Headman Tiyekiye knew that the Chisengu River was his northern limit. To claim the territory thus encircled, he settled squatters in the uninhabited stretch between his legal border and his desired border (see Map 2). Of course, Tiyekiye exploited his unchecked authority to settle Mozambicans where he wished. Neither Gogoi nor his headmen wielded this kind of authority over land allocation to anyone. Therefore, a history of forced labour rendered Gogoi's leaders doubly disadvantaged in counter-demarcation: their outermost borders were mere frontiers, and they lacked the means to deploy settlers as strategic boundary beacons. The second difficulty was insurmountable in the short term. Gogoi could, however, transform his fuzzy frontiers into cadastral lines, and we hoped he would.

The practical advantage of physical borders over human frontiers gradually became clear to Gogoi in discussions over the western delimitation of his land. Here, Chief Mukuyana had taken a huge lobe of Gogoi's area in the 1960s. Gogoi and his elders described this theft as a damaging loss of subjects and, consequently, of tribute in tax and labour. Makuyana had expropriated some of Gogoi's rights-in-persons. Now, as other counter-mapping projects have found (Hodgson and Schroeder, 1999), the local elite used mapping to rekindle a simmering dispute. Seeking to grab land back from Makuyana, Chief Gogoi and his elders sketched the Mbisarutsva Hills as their western limit. This upland, however, did not join up with the Chicambue River, Gogoi's limit to the northwest. Questioned on the exact location of the boundary, Gogoi again said that the people living in and around Mbisarutsva knew, but, he said, they were too distant to visit. Faced with these difficulties and perceiving the political premium on clear borders, Chief Gogoi simply relinquished his claim against Makuyana. On his sketch, he moved the border roughly 12 km eastward to the Muchenedzi River, where it eventually appeared on the project's official, cadastral maps. He thus traded a vague and shifting frontier of settlement for a line that could be written down and, therefore, enforced against Continental Timbers and other resources users.

However, Gogoi's maps were not yet serviceable. As they stood, they could, in fact, make matters worse for Gogoi residents. Although the borders had hardened, the interior — the territory itself — was an empty shell. Map 3 showed only one grove, two trees, and four points. In other words, it showed Gogoi's land as a nearly vacant lot that inhabitants could presumably share. In particular, the map implied that Continental Timbers

could plant large tracts of eucalyptus without inconveniencing local smallholders. Fortunately and rather suddenly, their leadership perceived this dangerous loophole. In a flash of territorial insight, they realized that their sketches risked selling the non-sacred parts of the landscape. To close this loophole, the mapping project changed course. Expanding beyond the male leadership of Gogoi, we worked with groups of men and women to generate matrices of resource use. Using stones and drawings, smallholders made correlating charts showing the usable (sometimes saleable) plants and animals that they obtained with land types (Hughes and McDermott, 1997, Appendix: 15–21). They thus demonstrated the necessity of fields, mountains, wetlands, primary forest, and a number of secondary forest types for local livelihood. This information, submitted to the government along with the maps, filled Gogoi's vacant lot with actual and potential commercial and subsistence zones, all reserved for the people of Gogoi. Just as important, at least some Gogoi residents knew the value of their work. Rehearsing the presentation of the maps and matrices to the provincial government, sons and brothers of Chief Gogoi and his headmen declared, 'We will not sell the land!'.³⁸

Will they possibly *share* the land, or will cadastral politics overwhelm prospects for community-based resource management again? In fact, Gogoi's people have continued to share their forests with the sawmill. Under annual cutting licences, Continental Timbers has maintained its extraction of indigenous trees. To my knowledge, it has neither harmed sacred areas nor planted exotic trees. When I ran into one of the employees in 1999, he still spoke of eucalyptus planting, but only as a distant, uncertain 'dream'.³⁹ Community mapping may or may not account for his dampened expectations. Just as likely, the company was starting to succumb to the transport delays and isolation from markets that defeated earlier white entrepreneurs. By contrast, the Italian NGO was planning to push ahead. Between 1997 and 1999, it had mapped another four chieftaincies, all close to Gogoi. Now, it hoped to broker profit-sharing agreements between these polities and Continental Timbers and/or other timber or tourism firms. Could the bargain between community and capital be fair? Had our beloved project ultimately mapped an investment route from various metropolises to Gogoi? It is too soon to tell.

CONCLUDING NOTE

Cadastral politics, then, can either promote or disable projects in community-based natural resources management. In Vhimba, headmen identified ecotourism (accurately) as land-grabbing and, therefore, sabotaged it. The

38. 'Hatitengesi nyika!' (Gogoi, 9 July 1997).

39. Interview, Chipinge, 31 July 1999.

leadership of Gogoi has claimed land and now holds a stronger position *vis-à-vis* outside firms. At their inception, of course, the two projects conceived of cadastral politics quite differently. Backers of eco-tourism viewed squatting as an obstacle to both nature conservation and harmonious political relations. This assessment was correct, but the NGO drew the wrong lesson. It tried and failed to supplant Vhimba's champions in century-old boundary disputes. Instead, those headmen subverted community-based resource management. Gogoi's project tied the policy to cadastral issues in an entirely different and more successful fashion. The design of the project postulated that Gogoi people could only control the sharing of the landscape if they possessed rights to it first. The project encouraged cadastral politics. It demarcated boundaries, linked trees inseparably to territory, and, in theory, empowered local leaders over both. In the face of colonizers, the maps give Chief Gogoi an advantage that Chief Ngorima lacked one hundred or even fifty years ago (although it is not clear that a map would have helped Ngorima then). White settlers, timber firms, and a national park cleared Ngorima's people off most of their landscape. Chief Gogoi's people will probably not be so easily moved.

These events point towards a strain of community-based resource management adapted to cadastral politics and frontier situations. In the context of ongoing or imminent land alienation, such programmes would forego hopeful notions of smallholders, the state, and private enterprise sharing natural resources. Instead, advocates of the policy could adopt cadastral agendas — with minimal and maximal options. At a minimum, directors of projects would follow a Hippocratic Oath to do no harm — to do nothing to compromise smallholders' direct access to farmland, pasture, and other natural resources.⁴⁰ Vhimba's eco-tourism project and other CAMPFIRE schemes have neglected this principle and sometimes violated it egregiously. As a result of CAMPFIRE, white-owned sport-hunting firms now operate in numerous native reservations. Inventions such as game fences and Vhimba's 'business centre' threaten to excise parts of the reservations. Thus, a community-based management that merely upheld the Hippocratic Oath would represent an improvement in Zimbabwe. A more ambitious, maximalist policy for the frontier would plunge into high-stakes cadastral politics. Programmes would target those areas where smallholders were losing land and defend them (cf. McDermott, 1999). Where chiefs and headmen were seeking to retain or regain farmland from business interests (which is not always the case), NGOs could join their side. Then, sharing the landscape is secondary or even undesirable. Of utmost importance, smallholders must secure a territorial base for their sustenance.

40. Rudel (2000), for example, writes of deals between timber companies and indigenous people — but grounded in the secure land rights of the latter party.

Policy-makers in Mozambique *may* still adopt this agenda. Their opposite numbers in Zimbabwe are moving decisively in the opposite direction, and ‘market triumphalism’ (Peet and Watts, 1996) fills their sails. In both countries, the notion of territorial entitlements for smallholders has lost all vigour. Especially in Zimbabwe, reservations that once kept (white) investors out — precisely because they were ‘native reserves’ — now welcome tourism firms and various entrepreneurs. On the basis of a good business plan (or even a bad one), many district governments are ready to transfer rights to ‘business centres’ or other parcels of land. As an architect of CAMPFIRE recently expounded: ‘Our wildlife is managed in the economic marketplace; so if you want to debate, you bring your dollars to the table’.⁴¹ He could easily have said the same for land. At the margins, Zimbabwe’s terrain for smallholder agriculture is now on the auction block. Mapped and measured long ago — as reservations — this territory can sell smoothly. It is ‘legible’, to use Scott’s (1998) phrase for social realities made uniform for administrative purposes. Until recently, Gogoi and many other parts of Mozambique were illegible. Neither the state nor NGOs nor investors knew which resources lay where, in what quantities, and used by whom. The mapping project described above and many others have helped dispel this uncertainty in some areas — with a very uncertain outcome. At worst, these projects are filling in a cadaster for sale, the catalogue of Mozambique’s incipient land auction (Rocheleau, 1997). At best, they are excising entries from any such catalogue, pre-emptively claiming goods that would otherwise sell. Mozambican policy-makers, NGOs, and smallholders themselves will choose how to interpret these maps. The cadastral struggle has just begun.

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41. Interview, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 6 December 2000.

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