

IDIOMS OF ACCUMULATION

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN AN AFRICAN FREEHOLD FARMING AREA

IN RHODESIA

by

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PREFACE

This thesis is based on field research, conducted during 1973-4 while I was a research fellow in the Faculty of Social Studies at the University of Rhodesia. Unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, therefore, all data presented and conclusions reached are my own original work.

Many people have, of course, contributed to my understanding of the society with which this work is concerned: it is impossible to name them all, but to those omitted from specific mention, my gratitude is no less real.

I am particularly grateful to all those farmers and their families in Msengezi, who collectively made this study possible by their willing assistance to a total stranger who became a friend. My special thanks go to Mr. H. Mano, Mr. C. Hlazo, Mr. T. Ndhlovu, Mr. K.T. Molife and to Mrs. M. Mnyanda, for their extensive knowledge of Msengezi in the past and the present and their unfailing hospitality.

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Finally, to my husband, Graham, I am grateful for his patience and forbearance during a very trying period of our lives together, as well as for his professional comments on the economic aspects of this work.

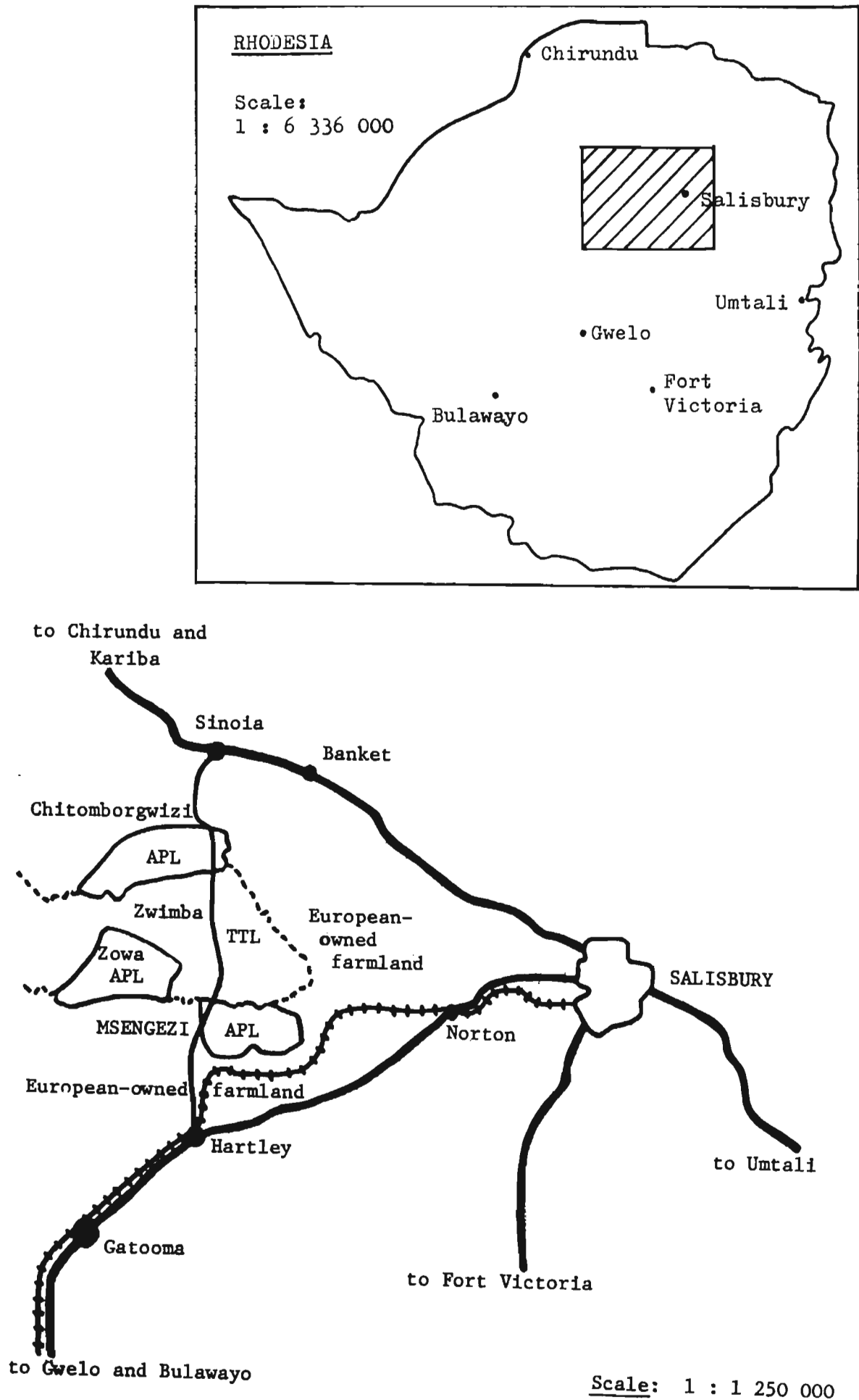
## INTRODUCTION

For many years now, the existence of some relationship between forms of land tenure and socio-economic development has been recognised, although the details of this relationship have been hotly debated. In this thesis I shall attempt to show how development has proceeded in one area of freehold tenure in Rhodesia. There are sixty-six geographically distinct 'African purchase lands' in Rhodesia, in which Africans alone may acquire title to farms which average 200 acres each. These areas date from 1930, when the Land Apportionment Act was first passed.

By now, there is a considerable body of information on these purchase lands, most of which has been supplied by agricultural economists (Hunt, 1960; D.T. Johnson, 1963, 1965; R.W.M. Johnson, 1964a, 1964b, 1964c, 1970; Matondo, 1970; Paraiwa, 1970, 1972 and unpublished papers). However, extension personnel have also contributed to our knowledge of these areas (Bembridge, 1972; du Toit, whose research is still in progress), as have human geographers (Fynn, 1969; Kay, 1971; Madzokere, 1971) and historians (Steele, in preparation). Sociologists and social anthropologists, however, have shown surprisingly little interest in the purchase lands: Weinrich (1971 and 1975) is the only person to have published some material on the sociological aspects of two purchase lands in the Victoria Province, although Roger Woods began a study of Chesa purchase land in 1964. Unfortunately, he was declared persona non grata before completing fieldwork and has published nothing, to date, on this unfinished work. My own work, conducted during 1973 and 1974, was thus intended to fill this important gap in our knowledge of these areas.

Fieldwork was undertaken, over a period of eighteen months, in Msengezi purchase land. Msengezi lies approximately 100 kilometres due west of the Rhodesian capital, Salisbury, in the administrative district of Hartley. It is bounded on the east, south and west by European-owned farms and on the north, across the Musengezi River, by Zwimba Tribal Trust Land. As may be seen from map 1, Msengezi lies only a few miles north of road and rail links between Salisbury, the capital, and Bulawayo, Rhodesia's second largest city. An important untarred road which runs through the western section of Msengezi links the minor centres of Hartley and Sinoia. Msengezi's proximity to communication links and markets, together with its relatively favourable climate and soils, were the main considerations governing the selection of this particular area, in which socio-economic development was reputed to have advanced beyond the level of most other purchase lands.

Map 1. The Location of Msengezi relative to Communications Routes and Markets



During the fieldwork period (between March 1973 and September 1974), my research assistants and I lived permanently in Msengezi. To avoid identification with any particular farmers, I stayed at the field office of the Department of Conservation and Extension (Conex), although on occasion I was invited to spend the night at individual farm home-steads. Chris Chivanda, who worked with me from March 1973 to April 1974, lived at the local government secondary school, while Phillipa Mundangepfupfu (a first-year university student who assisted me during three university vacations) actually lived on one of the farms with a family who knew her parents. We visited virtually every farm in Msengezi in order to interview the owner or manager, although a few interviews were done in Dombwe township. Phillipa and I became particularly close to certain families, Phillipa because she was related to a number of Msengezi people and myself because I was 'adopted' by some families: it is from these close relationships that my intimate knowledge of family affairs and inter-personal relationships is derived. Naturally, I have preserved the anonymity of individuals and families as far as possible by the use of fictitious names, although I am aware that people who know Msengezi will be able to identify many of those who appear in this thesis. Unfortunately, it is not possible to disguise the area itself.

The actual techniques by which we collected information varied with the type of data. Historical information was gathered by consulting archival material, current government files and past minutes of meetings of various organisations in Msengezi itself. These written sources were supplemented by the verbal recollections of the farmers themselves, since many of the original settlers were still alive.

In the sphere of local politics and the activities of voluntary associations, direct observation enabled me to take extensive notes at meetings. I concentrated my attention on the local Council and its various committees, the executive committee of the co-operative society and the Show Committee, although I also attended meetings of other voluntary associations such as the Intensive Conservation Area committees, savings clubs, Young Farmers' Clubs, Women's Clubs and other, less important organisations. The field of women's activities, in the Women's Clubs and church groups, was investigated intensively by Phillipa Mundangepfupfu.

For the collection of information from individual farmers, however, interviewing rather than direct observation constituted the main research instrument. Questionnaires were not used, although a schedule of required information was drawn up and memorised to ensure



that essential data were not omitted in any case. Two distinct sets of data were required from individual farmers: farm production data and information on the farmers' own life histories. Production data were obtained for 325 of the 329 farms and eight of the nine 'plots' (small-holdings of less than six hectares apiece). Information on life histories and children were obtained from approximately 90 per cent of those who gave us production data. Of those farm-owners for whom personal information was not obtained, the majority were deceased, while the remainder could not be contacted in the towns in which they were supposed to be working. Most farm-owners who were working in various towns were, however, contacted and interviewed: only a small minority could not be traced. Personal interviews with two farm-owners working outside Rhodesia and one political detainee were, of course, impossible.

The personal information collected from individual farmers included details of education, past employment, marital history and some indication of social network, together with particulars concerning education, present employment and marital status of all children. Fairly detailed information was thus obtained for most farm-owners, although more intensive data, covering ongoing relationships, came from some dozen farmers and their families with whom we had especially close relationships.

All of this formal information was, of course, supplemented by informal conversations; by attending field days, weddings and funerals; by noting gossip; and by Chris Chivanda's visits to the local pub. I should note that language was not a problem: both of my assistants were Shona-speakers and, although my spoken Shona is bad, my understanding of this language is proficient. Within a few months, I was competent to take notes at meetings without requiring someone to check the accuracy of my understanding. The most important reason for this situation is found in the spoken language itself, which is heavily interlarded with English words and phrases. Furthermore, because English is the official language of Rhodesia, the proceedings of all public meetings are always subject to two-way interpretation. Indeed, at weddings and funerals held on farms where the families are not Shona-speakers (being either Ndebele or Fingo/Xhosa), proceedings in the minority-group language are always translated into Shona if not English as well. Most farmers in fact speak English, some very fluently indeed. Maybe a dozen use English in the home regularly and, in two cases, English is their home language. Being able to converse in English is the hallmark of an educated person and an important indicator of social status in Msengezi, although it took some time before I appreciated why so many farmers insisted on

being interviewed in English rather than Shona. In this respect, it is relevant to note that the term 'illiterate', as used by Msengezi farmers, does not refer to a person who cannot read, write or count: it refers to someone who is not fluent in English.

From this account of data collection techniques, the reader will note that I attempted to investigate both farmers and social institutions as thoroughly as possible, for no-one had undertaken such documentation before. Even Weinrich's (1975) material is less extensive (and was gathered nearly ten years before publication), while other fieldwork dealt with randomly selected samples of the total farming population in any given purchase land, despite assertions by Kay (1971) and others that there is a wide range of success, together with a significant number of failures, among purchase land producers. In this situation, there is no 'typical purchase land producer' and it was, therefore, important to identify the different categories of farmer before any in-depth study of individual producers was undertaken. Furthermore, there is no published account of social organisation in any purchase land, although Weinrich (1975) does mention the importance of voluntary associations in these areas: my study was also intended to fill this gap. Once I had concluded this 'blanket coverage' of Msengezi, I could identify those aspects which would repay more intensive study. Essentially, then, this research was a pioneering attempt in a type of community to which social anthropologists have paid very little attention in the past.

The highly differentiated nature of purchase land societies has resulted largely from the fact that these societies have no real historical antecedents, having been established at most only forty-five years ago. Although there are a number of such new societies in Africa today, from the sociological viewpoint very little is known of these 'settlement' schemes. In analysing data collected in Msengezi, therefore, I have had to rely heavily on my own resources, since techniques of analysis (including situational analysis and the extended case method) developed for old-established communities appeared to have very little direct relevance to this area, in which the range of differences among individuals is considerable. Only in the realm of local politics were these techniques really useful to me, for here the minutiae of interpersonal relationships among a few individuals may indeed affect the development process. However, in order to relate factors of production to the overall development process on individual farms, I had to resort to detailed historiography, for my concern was not 'to shift the emphasis away from problems arising out of the exposition of

so-called 'traditional' institutions to problems posed by the presence of new factors making for social change' (Long, 1968:1), nor to explain individual behaviour in social situations, but to understand the process of rapid development in a new society. It is this process of development, unconstrained by the levelling mechanisms which operate in 'traditional' societies, which has given rise to the considerable differences among purchase land farmers. My respondents, for example, included men who had never attended school and one man with a doctorate; farmers who produced very little for the national market and those whose crops were worth more than Rh\$2 000 each year; families living in pole and dagga huts and those whose modern homes had cost anything up to Rh\$15 000 to build; men who were teachers, high-ranking civil servants and successful businessmen, and those who had been tribal cultivators and migrant labourers. The extent of socio-economic differentiation in Msengezi is therefore probably greater than that in most rural African societies, with the possible exception of Buganda (cf. Richards *et al.*, 1973), although one must note that this differentiation is as much a function of past employment experience as of differences in agricultural production. The differences between Msengezi and, for example, the Lala community studied by Long (1968) are immense, even though both are rural societies undergoing extensive socio-economic change.

Another reason for the marked differences between Msengezi (along with other purchase lands in Rhodesia) and most other rural societies in Africa, lies in systems of land tenure: Msengezi is a freehold area, where most others are not. In the first part of this thesis, therefore, I examine the relationship of freehold tenure to agricultural modernisation and rural development in selected African societies, paying particular attention to the circumstances under which systems of freehold tenure were introduced to these areas, for purposes of comparison with the Rhodesian situation. In the second part, I consider the factors of land, labour, capital, entrepreneurship and inheritance in relation to development on individual farms in Msengezi, showing how different strategies of production and accumulation give rise to different types of farmer. Finally, in the third section, I discuss the nature of the society which these farmers have developed, relating social organisation and local politics to the overall process of rural development in this particular area. Throughout the various sections, the reader may notice the recurrent theme of the influence of the national bureaucracy on development: this influence is extremely important, for local societies are drawn further and further into the national network of government



and private institutions as development proceeds. By no stretching of the imagination could Msengezi be regarded as an autonomous, bounded, self-sufficient community: its links to the national bureaucracy are far too strong to be ignored, as will become apparent in the body of this thesis.

PART I

RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND INDIVIDUAL LAND TENURE

## CHAPTER ONE

### INDIVIDUALISM AND DEVELOPMENT

Most African societies today reflect the process of ongoing change, but few, perhaps, exhibit such extensive changes as the one with which this work is concerned. Television sets, electricity, expensive cars, houses costing thousands of dollars and incomes of up to Rh\$20 000 per annum are rarely found in rural Africa. Only a small proportion of Msengezi farmers have these modern appurtenances, of course, but the society as a whole is considerably richer and more developed than most rural communities in developing countries. How and why this unusual situation has arisen in Msengezi are questions I attempt to answer by examining, within the dual context of local society and national bureaucracy, the strategies adopted by land-owners to accumulate wealth in an explicitly capitalist system.

The accumulation of wealth in a contemporary, new society would appear, on the face of it, to have little connection with any antecedents in 'traditional' African societies. Such 'traditional' antecedents are, in any case, very difficult to identify, for, as Garbett (1967:325) points out:

In societies where mission influence has been strong, where a high proportion of the population are Christian or accept Christian/Western values, and where indigenous ritual practices have been discarded, to distinguish between 'traditional' and 'modern' institutions may be misleading and irrelevant.

Msengezi certainly fulfills these conditions: over 90 per cent of the population is Christian and western life-styles and techniques of production are widely accepted. Yet there do exist residues of 'tradition', which are recognised by the farmers themselves: certain people, for example, are classified as 'old-fashioned' while most are believed to be striving towards 'this new civilisation', to use the terms of Msengezi people themselves; modified 'traditional' rituals are held occasionally, usually by the younger generation in response to stress in the wider society (ancestral spirits may be consulted in cases of continued unemployment, for example); and many funerals incorporate elements of 'custom'. If one accepts Garbett's argument, then, these instances should presumably be regarded as irrelevant exceptions to the general pattern - which, in one sense, they are.

Nevertheless, as I show in detail in chapter four, there exist ~~two~~ modes of accumulation in Msengezi, one of which does have its roots

in 'traditional' society. This particular mode of accumulation is closely associated with polygyny, which is the form of marriage chosen by up to 43 per cent of farmers in some purchase lands (cf. Weinrich, 1975) and by nearly 20 per cent of farmers in Msengezi. Msengezi has the lowest incidence of polygynous marriage of any of the six purchase lands for which this information is available.

Of course, this apparently 'traditional' mode of accumulation, in the context of a new society such as Msengezi, has different results from those found in earlier African communities of shifting cultivators, for, in Msengezi, wealth may be accumulated in the form of durable goods (such as farm machinery and bank accounts). In earlier African societies, there were few opportunities to retain wealth in such material forms and crop surpluses were, therefore, converted into control over people, particularly over wives and children. Yet there is evidence, even in these early communities, that individuals did adapt traditional institutions in order to circumvent pressures towards the redistribution of accumulated, non-durable wealth. Some of this evidence dates back at least to the early nineteenth century.

For example, among migrant cocoa farmers in Ghana, the jural corporateness of lineage groups nevertheless provided 'enough flexibility in economic affairs to permit of individual enterprise and private 'profit' during each person's lifetime' (Hill, 1962:2). Uchendu (1968) similarly emphasises that individual producers in Igbo society responded readily to the possibilities of aggrandisement and status rewards. Yet another example of the West African individual as entrepreneur is expressed superbly in Achebe's (1957) interpretation of precolonial village life from a novelist's viewpoint. Moving to East Africa, it is clear that individual enterprise and the private ownership of palm trees were present among the 'undeveloped' Giriama decades ago (Parkin, 1972). Of the interlacustrine kingdoms, Bunyoro and Buganda showed that individual initiative and enterprise were the key to social mobility and wealth (Beattie, 1971; Mair, 1934; Fallers, 1964). In many African societies, then, it was possible to accumulate wealth by means of individual initiative and hard work. The expectations of the redistribution of wealth which were associated with such entrepreneurial roles did not deny, indeed, depended upon, this possibility of accumulation.

These examples are sufficient to illustrate the fact that there did emerge, in African societies of the past, a mode of individual accumulation which was, in certain important respects, similar to the one which I have described as 'traditional' in Msengezi. In these older societies, however, pressure to redistribute wealth often remained

sufficiently great to inhibit general economic development, whereas in Msengezi such levelling mechanisms have been virtually eliminated - if, indeed, they ever existed. As a result, this traditional mode has proved very successful in this new society. However, by 1974, it had become less popular and less prestigious than the second, more 'modern' mode of accumulation found in this society. The preference for the modern mode was most marked among the second generation of land-owners, who had inherited their farms.

However, even though it appeared to be displacing the traditional mode, this modern mode is more difficult to operate successfully, particularly for men of little education and few resources. I would suggest, therefore, that without the earlier, more widespread use of the traditional mode, or idiom, of accumulation by Msengezi farmers, economic development in this area might not have reached its present impressive levels.

In making this suggestion, I recognise, of course, that the concept of development is itself controversial. Originally, development was a purely economic concept, measured and defined by dividing the gross national product of a country by its estimated population to give an approximate figure for per capita 'income'. The figures for per capita income for different years could then be compared and if the figure rose in real terms (that is, allowing for inflation and other monetary adjustments), such a rise was regarded as reflecting 'development'. More people were thought to be becoming richer. Recently, however, there has been dissatisfaction with this measure, partly because it can conceal the concentration of increasing wealth in relatively few hands, instead of indicating a general rise in the standard of living. Today the concept of development is therefore couched in more general socio-economic terms which stress collective rather than individual accumulation of resources: the decline of poverty, unemployment and inequality among the population at large (Seers, 1969); or 'the expansion of opportunities and the enhancement of human capacities needed to exploit them' (Dorner, 1972:15). These recent assessments of development are linked to a broadly socialist viewpoint, so that Seers (1969:3) can add: 'If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result 'development', even if per capita income had doubled'.

In the light of these differing definitions, to speak of 'development' in the explicitly capitalist and racially divided society of Rhodesia is probably to lay oneself open to considerable criticism from



some quarters. However, if per capita income is in any way indicative of economic change, Rhodesia's overall situation is certainly no worse than that of certain socialist economies in Africa in which per capita income has actually declined over the past decade. Indeed, in local communities such as Msengezi, the process of development has been quite spectacular: incomes have risen and social facilities have been improved considerably, even though the majority of black Rhodesians may not have seen similar improvements in their situations. Thus while certain writers might not accept that development has occurred at the national level, local changes have indisputably made a considerable difference to certain segments of the total population. Those segments which have experienced development have generally been agricultural communities following development policies formulated by government. In general, this development has rested on modernising agriculture, which process has recently included the introduction of cotton as a cash crop on a very wide scale. Such agricultural modernisation, in Rhodesia as in other African states, has been geared to keeping the largest possible number of people on the land as producers, since industry can employ only limited numbers of all potential work-seekers. Increased crop production is thus the only means by which most black Rhodesians are able to increase their cash incomes and improve their living standards.

Increased crop outputs rely mainly on increased yields, which in turn depend on the adoption of what are called 'improved methods of agriculture'. These include: protection of the land against erosion; approved crop rotations and fallowing; deep soil cultivation by the use of properly-set ploughs; replenishment of soil fertility using nitrogenous compounds (fertiliser and manure); improved, usually hybrid, seed varieties; chemical pesticides for crops such as cotton and tobacco; the acceptance of expert advice on all of these methods.

Agricultural economists generally assume that rural development may be measured indirectly by counting the number of producers adopting such new techniques of production. Certainly such counting may indicate the rate of diffusion of such practices, but it is not necessarily an accurate measure of socio-economic development. Especially if the adoption of any or all of these new techniques is legally enforceable, they may spread so rapidly that the rate of diffusion is hardly worth measuring, for rural Africans would appear to appreciate the value of new technology without much persuasion. They may not, however, be able to afford to use this new technology fully. Simply measuring the number of people who can afford to adopt these new techniques is thus only partly indicative of the acceptance rate for changes in production methods.

Furthermore, once a certain level of development has been reached, these indicators become irrelevant, as they were in Msengezi where, in the 1972-3 season, 99,99 per cent of the total maize acreage was planted with hybrid seed and an average of one and one-third tonnes of fertiliser were applied to crops on each farm. Yet even in Msengezi, yields are lower than extension staff would like, because other factors affect crop production, such as the availability of working capital and labour at critical periods in the agricultural cycle, children's educational requirements and the farmers' own consumer aspirations, among others. A number of non-agricultural factors affect crop output and are, therefore, quite as important in the process of rural development as is agricultural modernisation.

Nevertheless, agricultural modernisation remains the single most important means by which rural dwellers can increase their incomes and standards of living and different methods of promoting the necessary agricultural changes have, therefore, been tried in different countries. To some extent, the choice of a particular agency to promote agricultural modernisation and rural development has depended on national policy. In Tanzania, for example, the local branches of TANU, the governing and only official party, have assumed responsibility for promoting development along approved socialist lines. In Zambia, co-operatives were the main focus for development projects for some years, again on a communal basis. Other countries, such as Kenya and India, have relied more on the provision of technical advice and loan finance facilities than on structured institutions to encourage development, while the francophone African states, in contrast, have experimented with animation rurale, attempting to modernise whole villages by providing broadly-trained advisors responsible for organising change.

In Rhodesia, there has been a largely unco-ordinated use of various agencies to modernise agriculture: technical advice has been provided; co-operative societies for marketing have been formed; local councils have been established to provide services; and loan finance has been made available from government, para-government and private sources. Most of these facilities were concentrated initially in the purchase lands, although they are now found in the tribal areas as well. There is still no overall planning for development, however, although it seems possible that planned development in tribal areas may begin soon. Until now, the Rhodesian development effort has been characterised by its rather ad hoc nature and lack of co-ordination between various ministries responsible for different aspects of change.

In Msengezi specifically, a number of development agencies operate, which I list in the chronological order of their establishment. Technical advisors were first provided by government in 1938, on a visiting basis. In 1946 the first resident agricultural demonstrator appeared in Msengezi, and by 1974 there were eleven, full-time, permanent extension workers to serve some 340 producers. The local Council, promulgated in 1944, was also established by central government to provide local services, including education, health, roads, public water supplies and public diptanks. Loan finance institutions were the next type of development agency to begin operations in Msengezi. In the early 1950s, the Land and Agricultural Bank made its first loans to farmers, followed by the African Development Fund and the Agricultural Finance Corporation. All of these government or para-government organisations loaned farmers money for capital development only, and it was left to the privately-registered African Loan and Development Trust, in the mid-1960s, to make available seasonal loans for seed and fertilisers and other crop inputs. In addition, hire purchase facilities for equipment have been available to credit-worthy farmers since 1960. The co-operative society was established for marketing purposes in 1957, later providing a buying function for its members as well. The society store now stocks spare parts for simple agricultural equipment, fertilisers, agricultural chemicals, domestic goods and groceries. In 1958, the now-defunct Agricultural Committee was formed, operating under the auspices of the local Council. In 1965 and 1966, its responsibilities for conservation and re-forestation were taken over by the four Intensive Conservation Area committees. Coinciding with the boundaries of the ICAs, four loosely-organised associations for marketing fattened cattle to the Cold Storage Commission were founded in the late 1960s, on the advice of extension workers. Finally, specific interest groups, formed on a voluntary basis, have also influenced development in Msengezi. The most important of these groups are the Cotton Growers' Clubs, the Waze Ploughing Club, the Women's Clubs and the Fertiliser Discount Groups (which operate in association with one of the main fertiliser companies in Rhodesia).

Some of these development agencies, including the technical advisors, the Council, the co-operative society and the Intensive Conservation Area committees, are local branches of the national bureaucracy. All were established at the request of the farmers themselves: development in Msengezi has been demanded and generated from within the society itself, with external assistance, which has been important, but about which I shall say little in succeeding chapters.



The resulting level of development is, in any case, impressive, both on individual farms and in the area as a whole.

Such development has been pioneered by individuals, as I have already emphasised and as I shall continue to emphasise in the remainder of this thesis. Indeed, despite the time lag between one man's adoption of a new technique of production or type of relationship and its acceptance by the society at large, development agencies, in Msengezi as elsewhere, have had to rely on individual precedent as a vehicle for change, thus in effect implementing the entrepreneurial theory of change which has only recently gained acceptance in anthropological circles (cf. Barth, 1966; Bailey, 1969). Perhaps the extent to which rural communities in the third world have changed - or have not changed, in certain cases - in recent decades affords some measure of support for this theory.

However, the extent to which governments harness individual initiative to promote development depends partly on political attitudes to development. In those countries attempting to establish a genuinely socialist system, individual entrepreneurship and the private accumulation of resources are discouraged: Tanzania is the best-known example in Africa and it is perhaps worth noting that economic indicators suggest that this country is lagging behind Kenya, Rhodesia and Nigeria, among others, where individual entrepreneurship has been encouraged and where socio-economic differentials have become an accepted way of life. Zambia has already abandoned some of her early attempts to modernise agriculture on a communal basis using co-operatives, because these were patently unsuccessful in the short term (cf. Lombard, 1971).

In contrast to such attempts to promote development along socialist lines, the blatantly capitalist assumptions underlying the behaviour of producers in areas of relatively successful development are well-documented in Hill (1962), Long (1968) and Parkin (1972), and were unmistakable in Msengezi. There is moreover an increasing body of evidence which suggests that successful development is associated with relatively undemocratic government, which rests on and preserves marked inequalities in the economic sphere. To adapt the phrase of a recent British prime minister, there may be 'an unacceptable face of development' as well as that associated with capitalism: rural development and the capitalist ethic may be inextricably linked. As Firth (1971:109) notes:

... the peasant has a highly expansible set of wants ... it seems that a powerful incentive for him to try to gratify these wants is the possibility of raising himself and his dependants in the status system.

By blocking the accumulation of wealth by individuals, this incentive is removed in socialist systems, where entrepreneurial tendencies towards 'private enterprise' are discouraged as far as possible. Yet even in Tanzania, where the official policy of African socialism and the concept of ujamaa are supposedly based on 'traditional' principles of social organisation, Feldman (1974) was able to detect such entrepreneurship in action, to the point of establishing that a form of individual ownership of land continues to exist in the Iringa district. (Cf. also van Hekken and van Velzen (1972) for a similar situation in the Rungwe district.) Such individual control of the basic means of production in agricultural societies is, of course, directly contrary to socialist principles, even though systems of individual land tenure may permit accumulation and development to occur more rapidly than do forms of communal tenure, provided that other factors such as extension advice and loan finance are made available to land-owners. Freehold tenure in particular appears to have an important and possibly indispensable enabling effect on agricultural modernisation and rural development, because it allows for the rise of a private domain of behaviour within which people can make their own decisions on land usage, regardless of public opinion. Communal systems do not provide this facility, because everyone has some interest in the way in which the land is used.

To substantiate my contention that freehold ownership has such an enabling effect on development, I examine in chapter two, three examples of freehold systems in Africa, before considering in chapter three the circumstances surrounding the introduction of the purchase lands in Rhodesia in 1930 and subsequent changes affecting these areas. By examining the available material on these four examples of freehold systems established by British or British-inspired administrations, I hope to indicate more precisely the nature of the relationship between land ownership and rural development in these societies, before considering in Part II the process of development through individual accumulation that has occurred in Msengezi itself.

## CHAPTER TWO

### FREEHOLD TENURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

In the previous chapter, I discussed in general terms the dependence of rural development on agricultural modernisation through individual effort, particularly in Africa. One factor thought to influence changes in agricultural production is land tenure and in this chapter, therefore, I examine the issue of private ownership of the land itself in certain African societies, in an attempt to isolate the various components of the relationship between individual land tenure and development in rural areas. I look first at systems of private ownership which apparently arose spontaneously in indigenous societies and then at systems of freehold ownership introduced by colonial administrations. Unfortunately, there is relatively little information available on either type: in particular, data on social organisation in these societies are minimal, which means that I cannot compare them directly with my own material in most cases. Nevertheless, certain principles associated with freehold ownership of land can be isolated, that are relevant to the establishment of the purchase land system in Rhodesia and to changes in this system since its inception.

The relationship of individual land tenure to agricultural modernisation and development has been subject to many interpretations. On the one hand, there is 'the belief that the magic of property turns sand into gold' quoted, in the Rhodesian context, by Hughes (1974:223) and, on the other, the belief that communal tenure is quite as appropriate for rural development as individual ownership is (cf. Nyerere, 1969). The truth, as usual, lies somewhere between these two extremes, though possibly nearer to one than to the other. In an attempt to determine more closely where it does lie, I begin with Sturrock's recent suggestion that the concept of a continuum of agricultural modernisation, on which subsistence cultivators, peasants and commercial farmers may all be located, is misleading (Richards et al., 1973:306). Instead, Sturrock avers, there are actually two very distinct stages involved in the shift from subsistence cultivator to modern farmer. The first stage involves the incorporation of small areas of cash crops into the pattern of subsistence production, in order to meet small but recurrent cash needs, and generally does not require any marked change in systems of land tenure. This stage is where most third world producers will currently be found and has formed the focus of development efforts to date. The second stage of agricultural development, however, involves a qualitative,



not simply quantitative, change in production.

As yet, very few African producers have made this leap from small-scale supplementary cash-cropping to large-scale production wholly for the market. I would suggest that possibly the major reason for this situation lies in the fact that acreages tilled by producers under systems of communal tenure are generally too small for purely commercial production. It is probable that the majority of farmers who have become large-scale market producers have done so in freehold areas, because the largest farms are freeholdings, although not all freeholdings are larger than landholdings in areas of tribal or communal tenure (cf. the sections below on the Ciskei and Buganda). Freehold tenure also confers the greatest degree of individual control of the land, permitting the owner to use the land without cost (except, usually, rates); to dispose of the land by sale, gift, bequest or lease, without reference to others; and to encumber the land by mortgage if he so desires (cf. Hill, 1962).

Whether or not freehold ownership is the form of land tenure most suited to large-scale production, it certainly confers some distinct advantages on enterprising producers. Most importantly, land ownership permits the individual innovator to make his own decisions regarding production, without having to concoct justifications to make his actions appear to conform to customary expectations of behaviour. Indeed, it would appear that individual ownership of production resources, including land, may in any case result from indigenously-generated development (cf. Hill, 1962; Parkin, 1972).

#### Indigenous Systems of Individual Land Tenure

In general, according to Polly Hill (1962), many earlier anthropologists believed that the principle of individual ownership of production resources in African societies applied only to personal belongings. Even cattle, in many societies, supposedly belonged to lineage or family groups rather than to specific persons, because of the rules governing bridewealth transactions. As for land, the basic means of subsistence, it was available to all: individuals had a right to use the land for crop production or grazing, but individual alienation of it was not, apparently, characteristic of indigenous African societies. From the work of these earlier social anthropologists in African societies, there arose 'a widespread belief that chiefs who hold land in trust for their people are necessarily prevented by custom from selling that land outright to strangers' (Hill, 1962:12).

Nevertheless, it is now clear that such customary rules were not always followed even in precolonial times. Some chiefs did sell unoccupied land to individuals. Certain of the kabakas of Buganda, for example, 'began to sell small pieces of land to chiefs and notables for ivory' (Richards et al, 1973:56) in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Probably from the early nineteenth century, chiefs in present-day Ghana could legitimately sell unoccupied land to pay for debts incurred by their 'stools' (Hill, 1962:139) and around the middle of the nineteenth century they began to sell land without this excuse, to men of the Krobo tribe. Any commoners who objected to such sales were 'bought off' with some of the proceeds (Hill, 1962:2). The practice of selling land freehold spread and Hill (1962:109) notes that 'customary law, in many parts of Ghana, has for long recognised, or tolerated, the practice of the outright sale of land'. Kenyatta (1938:25) notes a similar system of land purchase by individual Gikuyu from the Ndorobo tribe, while Parkin (1972) states that the sale of palm trees and land has occurred among the Giriama of Kenya for up to fifty years, long before British administrators introduced land reform based on freehold tenure in the 1950s. And although there is no specific evidence of transactions in land, individual tenure is said to have existed in precolonial times among the Kikuyu (Barber, 1970; Bohannan, 1964; Kenyatta, 1938), the Mbeere (Brokensha and Glazier, 1973) and among the Chagga, Haya and Meru (Segal, 1968). It is also possible that the equivalent of freehold tenure was found among most of the interlacustrine kingdoms. Further north, in Ethiopia, the existence of individually-owned feudal estates was at the root of the 1974 revolution.

Even in southern Africa, where individual tenure has never been reported in any form among indigenous societies, members of various tribal categories accepted the concept of freehold tenure with alacrity when it was introduced by colonial administrations. In South Africa, the demand for land under the Glen Grey Act of 1894 exceeded the amount made available. Between 1898 and 1924, some 46 000 acres of farmland were alienated to individual Africans in Southern Rhodesia (Palmer, 1968: 34) and evidence presented to the Land Commission<sup>1</sup> in that country in 1924-5 shows that the vast majority of Africans who gave evidence, including the chiefs, thought that the idea of freehold ownership was a good one, providing that some land was reserved for those who, for whatever reason, might not want to buy their own holding. Later, Holleman (1968) found evidence, in 1949-51, of compensation payments in cash from new to previous holders of tribal land in Buhera district, Rhodesia. The transfer of land and grazing rights, acquired under the

Land Husbandry Act of 1951, to others for financial gain also occurred: by 1963, 700 such land rights and 19 600 grazing rights had been sold (Holleman, 1968:333).

Clearly, then, it would seem that the concept of individual land tenure was more acceptable to Africans than was generally realised. It was suggested to me recently<sup>2</sup> that anthropologists perhaps tended, in the past, to overemphasise the ideal of communal tenure and ignore the extent to which de facto individual holdings existed in indigenous societies. But for the most part, freehold tenure has been introduced by colonial administrations in African societies. I discuss three of these freehold schemes in this chapter, in an attempt to assess the validity of the assertion by white Rhodesian administrators, among others, that freehold tenure has 'failed' to promote development in African societies as its initiators envisaged. These three examples come from the Eastern Cape (South Africa), Buganda Province (Uganda) and the former 'White Highlands' (Kenya). My reasons for selecting these particular examples include the availability of data; the fact that all of these schemes were introduced by British administrations, while the Rhodesian purchase land experiment (to be considered in the following chapter) was British-inspired; and the fact that these four areas have broadly similar geographical environments.

#### The Eastern Cape: Ciskei and Transkei

The Cape Colony was among the first British-controlled African countries to introduce a system of freehold land tenure for Africans, under the Kaffrarian Land Regulations proclaimed in 1858 (Elton-Mills & Wilson, 1952). Even earlier, however, in 1855, the first freehold land grants had been made to twenty-nine 'mission natives' who settled on land adjoining the Lovedale Mission, near Alice (Wilson, 1971). These early landholders belonged to the Mfengu (Fingo) tribe, whose members fled southwards from Shaka during the upheaval of the 1830s period. Perhaps unwittingly, the Mfengu fled from one battle area to another, moving into the zone of the so-called 'Kaffir Wars' between Xhosa and British, which continued for nearly 100 years. The refugees settled on mission stations in the battle zone, and supported the British in the ongoing conflict. Because of their loyalty to the administration, they were used, along with white settlers, to populate a buffer zone between the Xhosa and the towns of the Eastern Cape. Like the whites, they were given title to the land they occupied. On Sir George Grey's assumption that 'natives' could best be 'civilised' by intermingling with whites,

these buffer farms were not grouped separately on a racial basis (Wilson, 1971). It is difficult to establish the exact limits of the acreages purchased by Africans, at an approximate price of £1 per acre, but it appears to have varied up to about 100 acres (Elton-Mills and Wilson, 1952). Many farmers later acquired more land, on a quitrent basis, for their sons.

For forty years, the Ciskei remained the only part of the Cape Colony in which Africans could own freehold land. In 1894, however, Rhodes was responsible for widening the scope of this experiment, under the Glen Grey Act of 1894, to include seven magisterial districts in the Transkei and two in Natal. No longer, however, could a man purchase as much land as he wanted and could afford:

Each married man who wished to take up individual tenure [under the Glen Grey Act] was granted an arable plot of about eight acres and a building site, on freehold or quitrent tenure, together with grazing rights on pasture land demarcated for the village or 'location' in which he built (Wilson, 1971:60).

The reason for restricting acreages and also for prohibiting sub-division under the Glen Grey Act was to provide what was thought to be an adequate standard of living for a restricted number of small families and to force any natural increase in the population - which would be landless - to work on European-owned farms and mines and in the towns. From the viewpoint of modernising agriculture, these apparently harsh measures might have been justified had they been supplemented by the provision of trained advisors and financial assistance for the landholders.

As it was, the experiment in extending individual tenure did not work as Rhodes had intended. Landholdings were treated as lineage land, being sub-divided in practice if not in law when the original owners died; transfers of ownership were not effected; productivity was not noticeably higher than that of communally-held land; the chiefs opposed individual tenure, for they had no authority over land-owners; and the problem of landlessness grew (Wilson, 1971). In 1923, land allocation under the Glen Grey Act was discontinued, the main reason being that the authorities themselves wished to settle Africans in the reserves and individual tenure hampered such settlement. In 1936, the entire land issue was frozen with the passage of the Native Trust and Land Act, which still governs the division of land between black and white in South Africa and which remains a source of bitter contention in the demarcation of the so-called 'Bantustans'.



There is very little information, recent or otherwise, on the areas of individual tenure in the Transkei and Natal, with the exception of that offered by Fazan (1944). However, there is some material, which is now twenty-five years old, pertaining to the Ciskei. Allowing for the possibility that significant changes may have occurred since 1949, when the study was done, the volume by Elton-Mills & Wilson (1952) nevertheless provides some data on a freehold area in the Keiskammahoek district, where the first freehold farms were alienated to Africans in 1866. The original farms were of varying size, but the average seems to have been approximately thirty acres.

In 1949, most of these farms were owned jointly by lineage groups, although title deeds generally remained in the names of deceased individuals. Within these lineage groups, the average size of individual holdings was roughly fourteen acres, of which less than nine acres were arable (Elton-Mills & Wilson, 1952:63). Despite de facto lineage ownership, nearly three-fifths of the married men were officially landless. One-quarter of all landholders were absent from the area, generally working as migrant labourers in towns, and, as a result of this absenteeism, lease-renting and share-cropping were widespread because most men earned a better living from semi-skilled employment than they could from working their land. Finally, the land was largely undeveloped: few holdings were fenced; an average of 35 per cent of each individual holding was uncultivated; and there was no evidence of greater investment in the land than had occurred in areas of communal tenure, except for a substantial difference in housing standards. In short, it was difficult to tell apart the areas of individual tenure from those held communally.

Each of these rather depressing findings may be regarded as an aspect of one of two main problems: land fragmentation as a result of inheritance and lack of capital to develop these holdings, so that they might yield economic return. Both the search for land security, evident in the de facto sub-division, and the lack of capital result from the position of Africans in the wider South African society. When there is no spare land in the reserves, and when they do not have security of residence in urban areas, people cling to whatever land rights they do have, for security. This process of sub-division - which was never legally prohibited in the early freehold allocations in the Ciskei - cannot, therefore, be divorced from the conditions in the country as a whole.

As for development capital, it is quite unrealistic to suppose that improvements may be made to a ten-acre holding purely from



production profits, without some form of loan finance. It is generally accepted that agricultural loan finance should be provided by governments, because the returns are inadequate to attract private investment on the necessary scale. However, not only has government loan finance never been available to African producers in South Africa, but also the government itself has in recent years forbidden private, white-owned companies to provide this service for semi-altruistic reasons (Wilson, 1971). Hence pressure on undeveloped smallholdings continues to increase, catching these areas in a vicious cycle of poverty from which it is impossible to escape without major structural alterations to the entire system.

These small, freehold farms in various parts of South Africa are possibly the best example of a colonial administration assuming that the way to modernise agriculture is to introduce freehold tenure and, having instituted this system, then leaving the owners completely to their own devices. Sir George Grey's assumption that African land-owners would learn by precept from their European neighbours in the Ciskei was naive in the extreme, given the racial attitudes of most white settlers. Given, too, that the Mfengu were originally pastoralists whose interest in agriculture was, at the best of times, slight, the administration's failure to provide advisory services would have been a gross oversight, had these freehold areas genuinely been intended to promote agricultural modernisation. The extent to which the entire situation has deteriorated over time is shown in Wilson's statement that, in the mid-twentieth century, when agricultural advisory personnel were provided, 'opposition to new agricultural techniques (which are desperately needed to save the soil and provide more food for the people) ... became identified with opposition to a hated form of government' (Wilson, 1971:62).

It is important, I think, to emphasise that the experiment with individual tenure in South Africa was not intended primarily as an exercise in modernising agricultural production among Africans. Settling Mfengu landholders among white farmers in the Eastern Cape buffer zone was primarily a political move with military implications. Granting them freehold tenure was essentially a reward for their loyalty to the British administration. If they happened to glean useful tips regarding crop production from white neighbours, so much the better. But these land grants were not the first stage of a process of planned development.

Moreover, although the Glen Grey Act was designed to prevent subdivision and over-population of agricultural land held under freehold tenure, it was not intended to develop agricultural production techniques. The restriction on the size of plots was explicitly meant to cater for a

limited number of peasant families, and to force the remainder of the population into the labour market to serve the expanding, white-controlled economy. Not even the best European producers would have been expected to produce crops commercially on eight acres of land in areas remote from transport links and market centres, with no capital and no loans for development. Freehold tenure for Africans was therefore quite a different matter from that of freehold title for whites, and this case shows quite plainly that freehold ownership of small plots, without extension advice or loan finance or, as in the Ciskei, prohibition on sub-division, does not in itself lead to agricultural modernisation and development.

### Uganda: Mailo Land in Buganda<sup>3</sup>

In 1894, the British government declared a protectorate over the territory of Uganda and for the next six years sought to impose order on the country, in which the interlacustrine kingdoms were fighting one another as well as the British. Successive governors experienced very little success in this attempt until, in 1900, Sir Harry Johnstone persuaded the kabaka of Buganda, together with his most important chiefs, to sign the Uganda Agreement.

Among other provisions, which are of no concern here, the Uganda Agreement altered the system of land tenure in Buganda province, where some 45 per cent of the total area became known as mailo land (deriving from the British term 'mile'). Approximately 9 000 of Buganda's nearly 20 000 square miles were alienated, at no cost apart from survey and registration fees, to individuals or public offices, under a system which did not differ, in essence, from freehold tenure. The mailo concept, according to Segal (1968), later spread throughout most of southern Uganda without much official encouragement.

Originally there were two types of mailo land in Buganda: official and private. Official mailo absorbed nearly 600 square miles of land in public estates attaching to various administrative offices (the kingship and most of the chiefships). This category of mailo land was controlled by the particular incumbent of a public office during his period of office, but the land itself belonged to Buganda. The controllers of public mailo could use the land but not dispose of it, by sale or bequest. Official mailo was thus a form of state land. Following the 1966 disturbances in Buganda province and the deposition of the kabaka, all official mailo land was appropriated by the state of Uganda and sold, to individuals, as unencumbered freehold land.

Private mailo land, in contrast to official mailo, was to all intents and purposes freehold land. Private mailo could be sold to Ugandans, though not (theoretically) to non-Ugandans; it could be leased to anyone, even to non-Ugandans provided that the prior consent of the Governor and the Buganda Council was obtained; and it could be given away or bequeathed at will. Title deeds were issued. A total of 8 430 square miles of private mailo was allocated to the kabaka's relatives, chiefs and notables at no cost. In terms of the later Buganda Land Law of 1908, no single individual was permitted to own more than thirty square miles of mailo, although the Uganda Agreement itself, which made provision for private allocations to 1 000 individuals, contained no such restriction.

The Uganda Agreement thus created huge estates, both public and private, on which those peasants working the land became sitting tenants, whose rights of usufruct were entrenched by the Busulu and Envujjo Law of 1928, which not only fixed rents in favour of these kibanja tenants, but also made their eviction impossible. A mailo land-owner had to accept as tenants those who were working the land that he bought, inherited or was given: the position of these tenants was protected in the event of the land being sold, even though they had no say in such sales. From being an important patron surrounded by followers and clients to whom he looked for services in return for land usufruct, as occurred in the traditional system, the mailo holder suddenly found himself able to rent or even give land to his clients, but once he had done so, he could not get rid of them.

In essence, the Uganda Agreement was a means of buying political support from the traditional administrative hierarchy in Buganda. It consolidated the pattern of individual ownership which had begun to emerge some decades earlier in land sales between the kabaka and certain chiefs, and consolidated the economic position of the private mailo land-owners. But clearly the creation of mailo land was not intended as a stimulus to agricultural production any more than were the land grants to Africans in the Cape Colony forty years earlier.

However, although the mailo system was not instituted specifically to promote agricultural development, some of the landholders seized the opportunity for large-scale production at a very early stage, beginning to grow cotton in 1904 and rubber in 1912. Before the first world war, most export production came from large-scale estates, but after the war, peasant-tenant production increased significantly. Cocoa, coffee and tea joined earlier cash crops for export, which increased steadily until the slump in commodity prices after the second world war. Buganda became the most important province in Uganda for agricultural production and, by



rural African standards, relatively prosperous. It seems likely that this steady development was, in part at least, a function of the freehold system, for the possibility of buying the land that they worked from the mailo owners seems to have stimulated cash-crop production by peasant-tenants seeking to accumulate capital for this purpose. A favourable climate, good soils and the early development of transport routes undoubtedly contributed to this process.

One factor which may have been detrimental to overall production, however, was the process of land fragmentation, which began almost as soon as the mailo titles were registered. Starting with 1 000 mailo land-owners in 1900, this figure had increased to 4 085 by 1905 and 4 138 by 1920. By 1967, the total number of mailo titleholders was estimated to be approximately 112 000 (Richards *et al.*, 1973:69 and 81). In 1965, West (1965:44) considered that there were probably no more than 200 people who owned land in excess of 1 000 acres. Clearly, the term mailo is an historical relic, bearing no relationship to the size of present-day holdings. During the 1963-4 season, it was estimated that nearly 57 per cent of all individual holdings were less than five acres in extent, although an unknown number of land-owners held more than one holding.<sup>4</sup>

Three major problems have resulted from the process of fragmentation of mailo holdings in Buganda. The first problem is that the majority of holdings are not large enough to support a man and his family much above subsistence level. The second problem, following from the first, is absentee landlordism: men leave their holdings to be worked by their wives, or lease them and themselves seek employment in Kampala, Jinja and smaller towns in the district. The third problem is that of scattered holdings which cannot be consolidated, thus making both management and development of these holdings difficult and costly.

Fragmentation of the original large estates arose initially through inheritance, as land-owners sought to ensure the future security of all their sons and, sometimes, daughters. Nevertheless, as Richards (1963:275) indicates, 'there is a marked tendency for Ganda to leave the greater part of an estate to one main heir', so that some relatively large estates still exist. As in the Ciskei, sub-division was not prohibited in Buganda, whether through inheritance or sale. Indeed, sale of holdings also contributed to the fragmentation process, as sitting tenants accumulated sufficient cash to buy the land they were working from the owners.

In Buganda, as in the Ciskei, the process of sub-division and fragmentation has now gone so far that most holdings, even though they are held under freehold title, are no larger than the majority of plots in areas where tribal systems of land tenure still prevail. Most producers in Buganda thus face the same problems of development, whether or not they own land, because where holdings are between five and ten acres, size and not tenure is the main problem. Because people with such meagre land resources do not have the basic requirements for large-scale production, they will never be in a position to make the leap from peasant production to wholly commercial farming on their own.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, some Ganda land-owners apparently consider themselves to be constrained by insufficient land, since it is reported (Richards *et al.*, 1973:124-7, 145) that some men were buying additional holdings in order to increase the scale of their operations. There thus appears to be a trend towards consolidation among some land-owners in Buganda which, to some extent, counters the more widespread process of sub-division. Unfortunately, however, such consolidation seems to be restricted to those who have ready cash, who are usually businessmen or professional people in well-paid, urban jobs. Most rural producers remain trapped in the cycle of poverty which small-scale production - and sub-division of holdings - causes. Hence in Buganda as in Msengezi, one finds that the most productive farmers are not 'farmers' at all, but urban businessmen and professional workers who have access to resources greater than those of the ordinary, full-time farmer. Provided that they can solve their management and labour problems, these absentee farm owners are, somewhat paradoxically, the largest producers. This situation does not, however, hold for those land-owners who are urban workers in lower-level employment, for their access to resources is considerably diminished.

Whether this trend towards consolidation is a phenomenon of one generation which will turn once more into sub-division when the consolidator dies, is as yet unknown. It appears that no large, developed farm had been sold as a going concern in Buganda up to 1967, whereas in Msengezi, where sub-division is prohibited, the frequency of such sales is increasing.<sup>6</sup> However, the situation in Buganda today, following the 1971 coup d'état, is presumably very different from that in 1966-67 and any further speculation here on what the trend will be in the future is unprofitable.

In the Buganda case, then, one notes the dangers of sub-division through inheritance and sale. Nevertheless, the facts of much larger holdings in the initial instance and greater concentration on cash crops for export have meant that the worst effects of sub-division, seen in

the South African case, have so far been avoided. Some producers at least have managed to retain commercially viable holdings, while even the smaller holdings are more productive than holdings of similar size in the Ciskei. Freehold tenure in Buganda, in conjunction with extension advice and the development of transport facilities, has been quite successful, despite the fact that it was established for political and not development ends.

#### Kenya: Land Reform in the Highlands

Freehold land tenure among Africans in Kenya was introduced in the early 1950s by British administrators as a counter-revolutionary strategy against Mau Mau insurgency. Originally only the Luo tribe opposed this move and the government was unable to cope with the demand for individual title deeds to consolidated agricultural land (Segal, 1968). Initially, the reform programme was concerned only with land in the so-called 'African area', in which fragmented holdings were regarded as a major drawback to increased production (Barber, 1970)<sup>7</sup>: this programme has not yet been completed. No redistribution of European-owned land was envisaged in the early stages of reform, however, and many producers were thus allocated less than the four acres which were considered to be an 'economic holding'.

By 1960, the reform process had been extended to include the 'scheduled area', of white-owned land, in an attempt to reduce the problems of landlessness and urban unemployment. Nearly two million acres were involved and compensation for this land was paid to the former owners of farms in the 'White Highlands'.

In the Highlands, where resettlement began in 1960, two types of freehold scheme were initiated, based on populations of high and low density. Most of the land - some 200 000 acres per annum - was allocated to high density settlement, where individual families received a minimum allotment of five acres apiece. However, some 30 000 acres were set aside each year for low density settlement, on three rather different types of scheme: low density settlement, yeoman farmer areas, and assisted owner schemes. Target average incomes were set for each of these different schemes. Whereas high density plots were intended to yield a cash income of EA£25 each year, low density farms were to produce EA£100 and the yeoman farmer scheme, EA£250, all of these figures being in addition to subsistence. No target income was assessed for farms alienated under the assisted ownership scheme, since these were much larger than those in the yeoman scheme. The differential target incomes



of holdings in the other categories were, of course, a function of the varying farm sizes. Around 1963, the larger yeoman farmer and assisted ownership schemes were discouraged, because they absorbed large amounts of loan capital for very few producers and it was felt that resources could better be spent on the high density schemes (Belshaw, 1964). Some idea of the differences in size of farms between high and low density schemes may be seen in Clough's (1968) figures of 30 and 750 acres respectively.

By opting for such widespread freehold ownership, the Kenyan government committed itself 'to maintain the structure of the colonial economy ... with private property and the profit motive as the key institution and the prime mover in social and economic change' (Leys, 1972:1), particularly in respect of agriculture. As Barber (1970:10) put it, 'the creation of a secure class of propertied peasants was held to be in the interests of political and social stabilisation', by colonial administration and independent black government alike. Freehold tenure is now found throughout Kenya, which is the only African country to have decided on agricultural development in the 'British' model: this decision is almost certainly also related to 'traditional' forms of individual landholding, particularly among the Kikuyu (see Kenyatta, 1938).

Although it is too early to draw any firm conclusions concerning the outcome of this experiment with freehold ownership, there is some information available pertaining to production. Wheat production in 1967, for example, exceeded the 1970 target figure; and maize production went from deficiency into surplus in the same year (Sinclair, 1968). Overall, Kenya has been among the most successful of Africa's independent states in respect of agricultural production. Apart from the role of freehold tenure in promoting this development, agricultural advisory services are good, loan finance has been made available, and marketing facilities have been vastly improved.

However, as Barber (1970) indicates, it is extremely difficult to express the impact of land reform itself in actual production figures, because, firstly, no reliable data exist for pre-reform production; secondly, the effect of the introduction of freehold ownership cannot be disentangled from the cluster of modernising influences introduced simultaneously, including extension services, marketing facilities and loan finance; thirdly, sub-economic holdings in the former 'African area' distort the present production picture; and finally, agriculture is regarded as the 'residual employer' in Kenya as in most developing countries, which means that those who cannot find employment elsewhere

must return to the land for subsistence. This system means that a certain proportion of producers will inevitably be transient, uninterested and inefficient in comparison to those for whom the land is their permanent livelihood.

However, Barber (1970:23) does assert that: 'it is acknowledged that sub-division and refragmentation are under way on newly-consolidated plots ... Land transactions have long been a part of Kikuyu life; the award of negotiable titles may simply accelerate the rate at which land is transferred.' Barber does not, however, give any supporting data for this alleged sub-division and refragmentation, so there is no way of telling whether Kenyan freehold is already subject to the process which occurred in the Ciskei and Buganda, or whether this alleged 'sub-division' is simply a temporary, seasonal allocation of usufructuary rights to those who have no other means of subsistence, as indeed occurs in Msengezi (cf. chapter six). To refer to such temporary allocation of usufructuary rights as 'sub-division' is in fact highly misleading and it seems unlikely that men would attempt permanently to sub-divide four-acre plots, particularly when such sub-division is legally prohibited.

Furthermore, it seems that the smaller Kenyan farms are more productive per acre than are the larger holdings (Clough, 1968; Steele, 1972). Presumably the larger farms are underused, a fairly common phenomenon for which both management practices and the lack of working capital may be responsible. However, in view of the greater productivity of smaller producers, the Kenyan government's concentration on these men would appear to be justified. Barber's expressed fear that population pressure and alleged sub-division may lead to 'the destruction of a self-reliant peasantry and the creation of some form of tenancy' (1970:23) would thus appear to be misplaced in the light of these production trends, at least in the present.

In the absence of any detailed anthropological studies of the various types of freehold scheme in Kenya, it is difficult to assess the effects of the land reform programme on social organisation.<sup>8</sup> Until such information becomes available, therefore, predictions about future production trends must remain tentative.

### The Implications of Freehold Tenure for Development

From the cases that I have considered, it may be seen how difficult it is to make a precise assessment of the efficacy of freehold land tenure in the development process. There are no accurate production figures, for example, which could be used for 'before and after' comparisons; different types of area have received varying amounts of



extension advice and loan finance; non-agricultural factors, such as the cash required to educate children, affect production; and, perhaps most importantly of all, because development is an ongoing process, data gained at one point in time bear very little relationship to previous and subsequent periods. Thus what information we have on the Ciskei, Buganda and Kenya is all dated: the material on the Ciskei predates the Nationalist government in South Africa; the 1971 coup d'état in Uganda and its consequences have probably rendered the otherwise valuable compendium by Richards et al (1973) useless as a guide to what is happening in Buganda today; and all of the information on Kenya is at least five years old. In development terms, five years is a long time: in Msengezi, for example, the value of marketed output rose by more than 60 per cent in the five years between 1969 and 1973 (Cheater, 1974b:88). In many respects, then, any study of a developing society will be outdated in a relatively short period of time. However, certain generalised facts have emerged from these cases.

Firstly, it is clear that individual forms of land tenure are by no means unknown or unacceptable in African societies. In some cases, individual land ownership arose spontaneously in old-established societies and in other cases it was readily adopted, once it had been introduced.

Secondly, where freehold tenure was introduced by British colonial administrations, it was primarily for political reasons. Agricultural modernisation and rural development were secondary considerations, where they existed. In South Africa, Uganda, Rhodesia (as I shall show in the next chapter) and Kenya, the creation of freehold areas specifically for blacks was, in each case, some form of political quid pro quo. Planned selection procedures, agricultural advisory services and financial assistance, where these were provided, were introduced years after the introduction of freehold tenure itself. Even in Kenya, where the interval between land reform and the provision of such services was shortest, the scale on which these services were provided was, as in most developing countries, inadequate. Considerably more advice and financial resources were, of course, expended on the African farmers who were settled in the Highlands of Kenya, than were made available to colonial subjects in Rhodesia, Uganda and South Africa one, two and three generations earlier. Only the Kenyan experiment, therefore, can justifiably be assessed agriculturally to determine its degree of success or failure regarding present-day production. As I have shown, the necessary data are not readily available to make such an assessment. So to assert that freehold tenure 'fails' among African producers on the grounds of the South

African evidence, for example, is impermissible, given the conditions under which freehold was introduced in the Ciskei, Transkei and Natal.

Thirdly, unless legal provision is made to prevent sub-division of freehold land, fragmentation of landholdings will undoubtedly occur. In the final analysis, this process of sub-division is detrimental to increased production and rural development. Pressure towards sub-division, however, frequently arises at the national level, through urban unemployment, for example, although inheritance provides the most commonly used mechanism for effecting such division of land. Men try to ensure that their children, particularly their sons, will have secure homes, especially when insecurity is a problem in the wider society.<sup>9</sup> Freehold tenure lends itself to such sub-division, because it provides ultimate, unshakeable security - or nothing. One either has land or is landless in a freehold society, for the latent security of communal tenure does not exist. However, it is important to distinguish between formal sub-division of title on a permanent basis and the temporary allocation of usufructuary rights: the latter is considerably less detrimental to development than the former.

These three major findings will be partially confirmed in my examination of the system of African land ownership in Rhodesia. Here I simply note that purchase land farms in this country have an important scarcity value, but that despite their scarcity, sub-division has not been permitted, although temporary allocations of usufructuary rights are made by many farmers. The details of the Rhodesian freehold system and how it operates in one particular purchase land are considered at length in subsequent chapters, but the reader should note the broad similarity to the systems of individual tenure and the circumstances under which they were introduced which have been discussed in this chapter.

In summary, then, individual ownership of land is not the magical formula for development that some ethnocentric enthusiasts have supposed it to be, but it can have an important enabling effect on the development process, when complemented by individual entrepreneurship among farmers and the provision by government of development advisors, agencies and loan finance, as my examination of Msengezi will show.

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#### Footnotes

1. File ZAH 1/1 parts 1-4, Rhodesian National Archives, Salisbury.
2. Verbal communication from Professor Michael Lipton, Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex.

3. Unless otherwise stated, the information in this section is taken from Richards et al., (1973).
4. Mafeje (Richards et al., 1973:198-231) identifies various types of farmer in Buganda, including small cultivators (balimi batono) and 'new commercial men' (balimi balungi). The latter are divided into big and not-so-big farmers, as well as into 'men of affairs', who are tradition-oriented, and 'men of profit', which term is self-explanatory: these categories do not overlap perfectly. Mafeje makes no reference at all to the derivation of the term balimi balungi, although the stem -lung- denotes, in many Bantu languages, a reference to whites and balimi balungi may, therefore, imply some form of comparison and possibly identification of the men who are so described with Europeans, probably European farmers. In Msengezi, a clear distinction is drawn between varimi (cultivators) and mafarmers, which term includes both purchase land producers and white farmers. To refer to a man as murimi is, in Msengezi, somewhat disparaging: certainly the largest producers would never refer to themselves as anything but mafarmers. In this particular instance, one sees linguistic identification with a European model to the point of adopting the English term itself, which would never be applied to a mere cultivator. It should be noted that all tribal producers are varimi because of the scale of their production as well as their cultivation techniques and - I suspect - the form of land tenure under which they operate. A clear status difference is thus asserted between purchase land and tribal producers, which parallels the distinction outlined above for Buganda.
5. Although Mafeje (Richards et al., 1973:199) states that the 'new commercial men' in Buganda are not necessarily the largest land-owners, 80 per cent of his selection own at least ten acres and 30 per cent own 100 acres or more. Clearly, as a category compared to all land-owners, they control considerably larger land resources than average. In Msengezi, because sub-division is illegal, farms are generally larger, ranging from 100 to 400 acres (approximately). Perhaps because Msengezi farms are roughly comparable in size, farmers are distinguished in terms of their output, which depends largely on the way in which farmland is divided between livestock and cropping enterprises. As in Buganda, there is a triple classification scheme: farmers, good farmers and very good farmers - mafarmers, mafarmers yakanaka, and mafarmers yakanaka chaizvo or, more colloquially, mafarmers yakanaka sterrik. ('Sterrik' is a term found, to the best of my knowledge, only in southern Africa and is used by blacks and whites alike. I am told that it originally came from Khoisan and was incorporated into the Afrikaans language as sterk, meaning strong. 'Sterrik' itself is untranslatable, but is used to lend emphasis to an assertion.)
6. To date, the maximum price paid for such a developed farm in Msengezi has been Rh\$10 400, although a similar farm in Marirangwe recently changed hands for over Rh\$13 000.
7. Land reform in the 'African area' of Kenya was very similar to the attempted land reform in the tribal areas of Southern Rhodesia under the Land Husbandry Act of 1951 (for an account of this act, see Garbett, 1963). While the Kenyan reform programme was successful, however, land reform in Rhodesia was abandoned in 1963.
8. Although fieldwork among the Mbeere was done recently (1969-71), the land reform programme in this area was bogged down at the stage of defining clan land boundaries (Brokensha and Glazier, 1973). The effects of reform on social organisation thus remain unknown.

9. Indeed, in indigenous systems of individual ownership (cf. Hill, 1962; Kenyatta, 1938), individually owned land tends to become lineage territory in the second and subsequent generations: only the original owner has exclusive claim to the land as a result of clearing or purchase.



CHAPTER THREELAND TENURE AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN RHODESIA

In order to understand the present land situation in Rhodesia, one must know something of the history of land policy in this country. However, Palmer (1968) has already published a detailed account of land policy during the first forty years following European settlement and I do not, therefore, attempt to cover this general issue here. Instead, in this chapter I examine in some detail the specific factors affecting the establishment of the purchase lands as a separate land category, in 1930. Such consideration is necessary in order to identify the prevailing assumptions and general climate of administrative opinion during the period in which these African freehold areas were established, because official attitudes and policies concerning the purchase lands have changed significantly over the past fifty years. I shall examine these changes and their relevance to purchase land development in some detail later in this chapter, but first I wish briefly to review the overall land situation in Rhodesia.

The Racial Division of Land

Ever since the Pioneer Column arrived in the country today known as Rhodesia, late in 1890, the issue of land has consistently affected relationships between Africans and Europeans. Individual members of the Pioneer Column claimed large tracts of potential farming land promised to them by Rhodes, while the British South Africa Company laid general claim to both land and mineral rights in Mashonaland and Matabeleland, in terms of the Lippert and Rudd Concessions. These land claims meant that the land available to Africans decreased: in some cases, chiefs and their people became 'squatters' on land their forefathers had worked, when this same land was alienated to European settlers by the Company; in other cases, Africans working land alienated to whites were required to leave their homes and move elsewhere. Relatively few historical rights of usufruct were left undisturbed by the arrival of the whites, particularly in the central watershed area. This desire for land on the part of the white settlers, which was part cause of the African 'rebellions' of 1893 and 1896, eventually led the Company to protect African land rights in areas of existing settlement: these areas became the 'native reserves' within which no land purchase was permitted. Unpopulated land outside the defined boundaries of these reserves could, however, be purchased by

anyone, black or white, as from 1898<sup>1</sup>. As Palmer (1968:34) shows, however, blacks were generally prevented from exercising this right through the administrative policies of the Company and, by 1925, only some 46 000 acres of non-reserve land had been alienated to nineteen African farmers, compared to some three million acres alienated to whites.

However, the alienation of agricultural land to Africans, even on this small scale, caused concern among whites, particularly farmers, who feared the threat of black competition and, in 1924, the Land Commission was established, under the chairmanship of Sir Morris Carter,

to enquire into and report upon the expediency and practicability of setting apart defined areas outside the boundaries of the Native Reserves, (a) within which Natives only shall be permitted to acquire ownership of or interest in land, and (b) within which only Europeans shall be permitted to acquire ownership of or interest in land.<sup>2</sup>

But this push for segregation in fact began much earlier, in 1908, when the first motion to deprive Africans of the right to purchase land was tabled in the Legislative Council (Palmer, 1968:35). Similar motions were tabled again in 1915 and 1921, and when Southern Rhodesia became self-governing in 1923, the stage was set for the passage of discriminatory legislation regarding land. As Palmer (1968:39 and 35) notes:

... when the Land Commission began its work in 1925, nearly everyone was committed to some form of segregation and the only real point at issue was the nature of the compensation to be offered to Africans for the withdrawal of a right which they had effectively been barred from exercising ...  
... the majority [of white farmers] clearly felt that no compensation was called for, but the more astute recognised that the Imperial Government would not agree to amend the law unless separate areas were assigned in which Africans alone could purchase land ...

In 1925, having taken evidence from 233 Europeans and 1 753 'natives', the Commission reported that an 'overwhelming majority of those who understand the question' were in favour of the establishment of a racial division of land in the non-reserve areas.<sup>3</sup> No mention is made of the reasons for this situation, although an examination of the evidence, particularly oral evidence, presented to the Commission<sup>4</sup>, shows very clearly that problems with white neighbours, especially stock trespass and labour enticement, were the main reasons why blacks preferred to live among themselves. Europeans wanted segregation allegedly to protect land values, although there is no objective evidence that land values fell as a result of black neighbours: actually, many of the whites who gave evidence to the Commission made explicit their desire to protect themselves from black competition, both as regards production and labour

supplies. Explicit racial prejudice, frequently brought north from South Africa, also influenced farmers' motivation regarding the segregation issue.

As a result of the Land Commission's recommendations, the Land Apportionment Act was passed in 1930, which legalised the classification of all land in the colony into 'European' and 'Native' areas, apart from a small proportion which was 'unreserved' land. The motives behind this legislation were complex, but included the justifiable view that, if some land was not reserved specifically for Africans to purchase in future years, all the land would be bought up by land-hungry whites within a couple of decades. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the Land Apportionment Act deprived Africans of their right to buy land anywhere outside the reserves - that is, then in some 60 to 70 per cent of the total land area of Rhodesia - and gave them in return the right to buy land without competition from whites in some 7 per cent of the country, most of which was well removed from the line of rail and major roads. This exchange can hardly be regarded as equitable: that the whites drove a hard bargain may be seen in the tenacity with which they have clung to this legislation ever since it was passed, as well as in the under-utilisation of white-owned land, which is now such a problem that the present government has recently made legislative provision for state appropriation of unused land and re-lease even where title has already been granted.<sup>5</sup>

Since its inception in 1930, the Land Apportionment Act has been amended many times, though never substantially. Although moves were begun, under Federal influence, in the late 1950s to repeal this Act, this attempt was quashed when the Rhodesian Front took over government after the 1962 elections. The latest amendment was in 1969, when the Act was renamed: it is now known as the Land Tenure Act. At present, of course, the Land Tenure Act is crucial to the negotiations between black and white concerning Rhodesia's political future, as was the Land Apportionment Act in 1960, and similar legislation in Kenya in the mid-1950s.

At present, the Land Tenure Act defines approximately half of Rhodesia as 'African area': tribal trust land covers some 41 per cent of the country and African purchase land approximately 3,7 per cent, while the remaining 5 per cent of land belonging to the African area is divided into forest area, national parkland and specially designated land, most of which is mission-owned. No urban land falls into the 'African area': as in South Africa, all towns in Rhodesia are included in the 'European area'.



The tribal trust lands are basically the old 'native reserves' under a new name. They are areas of communal land tenure in which usufructuary rights are allocated to individual cultivators by the chiefs and headmen. Most tribal areas are heavily populated, some are over-populated and already subject to ecological degeneration which only a slackening of population pressure will alleviate. Agricultural practices forbidden by the Natural Resources Act, such as streambank cultivation, vleis cultivation and substandard contouring, are continual cause for concern in these areas, as is the extremely high rate of natural population growth. With few exceptions, tribal area cultivators are caught in the cycle of poverty which makes agricultural modernisation and rural development so difficult in most third world countries. Development problems in these areas are enormous, partly because there has been little concerted development effort since the failure of land reform under the Land Husbandry Act, some fifteen years ago.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast to the tribal areas, the purchase lands are relatively well-developed already: development capital and population controls (on settlement and immigration) have ensured that poverty such as that found in the tribal areas is virtually non-existent in the purchase lands. It is, therefore, a great pity that the total area available for individual settlement was virtually halved in 1960, in anticipation of the repeal of the Land Apportionment Act: nearly three million acres of potential purchase land farms were redefined, on the recommendations of the Select Committee on the Resettlement of Natives, as communal land.<sup>7</sup> The Act was not repealed, of course, nor were the three million acres returned to the purchase land category, despite protests by the Native Land Board, which had been responsible for administration and settlement of the purchase lands since their inception.<sup>8</sup>

#### Purchase Lands: Establishment Phase

In 1925, the Land Commission recommended that 'Native Purchase Areas' should be set aside specifically for Africans who wished to buy agricultural land under freehold title. The Commission was impressed with the type of African farmer defined in the Glen Grey Act of 1894, in the Cape Colony, and sought to introduce a similar model in Southern Rhodesia - disregarding the fact that allocation of land under the Glen Grey Act had been suspended in 1923 (see chapter two, p.14). The Commission therefore anticipated that most producers would be 'small peasants' working their own small arable holdings and grazing stock on adjacent commonages,<sup>9</sup> recommending that an upper limit of 1 000 acres should be placed on the freehold allocation to any one individual and



that any additional land required should be granted under leasehold only.<sup>10</sup> This recommendation was made in spite of the evidence presented to the Commission that a number of Africans had already bought or leased farms of up to 5 000 acres and were working these holdings as efficiently as white producers on similar acreages. The Commission's attitude to African farmers is reflected in the suggestion that provision should be made for the proposed purchase land producers to own 'a reasonable amount of stock' (which amount was never specified), but 'that provision must be final, and they must learn, as Europeans have done, that their holding of cattle must depend on the capacity of the land they possess to support it.'<sup>11</sup> The following example shows how this statement translated into administrative practice.

In 1937 an African bought a 350-acre farm in Msengezi, having been forced to relinquish his lease on a European-owned farm by the provisions of the Land Apportionment Act. His request to the Native Land Board for a 1 000 acre farm (the maximum freehold allotment) had earlier been refused. In 1938, he built a diptank on his Msengezi farm, before transferring his herd there. This particular farmer was a cattleman, whose herd numbered 240 head of crossbred Shorthorn-Herefords, and he knew that the farm he had purchased was too small to accommodate them. So he applied for permission to graze them on an adjacent European-owned farm: the farm owner agreed, but the Department of Lands refused to give its approval. Eventually, two years after his initial application, the man was given a short-term grazing lease on vacant Crown Land in Msengezi. The Assistant Director of Native Lands, who gave this permission, commented with some degree of short-temper: 'Of course, even now he will have to dispose of a good number of his surplus stock' (my emphasis).<sup>12</sup> Large-scale stock-farming at an economic level was, quite obviously, not envisaged in the purchase lands. The final irony of this situation is reflected in the 1968 Report of the Rural Land Board, which complains that the present-day contribution of livestock enterprises to the economics of purchase land farming is 'comparatively small'. Given the necessary historical data, one can appreciate why livestock production is today underdeveloped in the purchase lands: white administrators generally ignore such historical influences, if indeed they are aware of their existence.

The Land Commission also recommended that the purchase areas should, as far as possible, be established adjacent to the 'native reserves', so that the example of the farm-owners might be appreciated by traditional producers. However, it is also possible that the Commission favoured a buffer zone between black and white, along South African lines: although

never stated explicitly in the Report itself, a number of Europeans who gave evidence before the Commission certainly favoured such a system.

Although the Land Commission recommended that freehold title to purchase land farms should be granted eventually, it also suggested many control measures before such title was granted. Persistent failure to occupy the land or sub-letting of it was to result in forfeiture of the farm. Recommended reasons for delaying the granting of title were to include farmers allowing persons other than members of their own families or hired servants to live on the farm, or failing to undertake certain improvements, of which the only one specified was 'the building of a reasonably good substantial and sanitary house'<sup>13</sup>. All transfers were to be subject to prior government approval, whether or not title had been granted. The recommendations regarding occupancy and transfer were, however, the only ones incorporated in the 1930 Land Apportionment Act, although the others have been mentioned to give some indication of the prevailing white conceptions of the proposed African freehold areas at that time.

It is important to note that the establishment of the purchase lands in Rhodesia, like the establishment of black freehold areas in other British colonies in Africa, was essentially a political act, with some overtones of protection: protection of the African potential for (restricted) land ownership in the future and protection of white producers from black competition. Just how significant this latter aspect (of protecting whites from black competition) was, may be gauged from the Land Commission's statement that 'no unnecessary bar should be placed on the agricultural development of the native and in his own sphere he [should] be given every opportunity to progress'.<sup>14</sup> It would seem, from this statement, that the Commission was concerned, not to promote development but to ensure that no 'unnecessary' obstacles were put in the way of development in these areas. Indeed, one would presume that their remoteness and lack of transport routes for marketing produce would have been such hindrances that no one would want to add others, but the Commission did not, apparently, share this view.

From the entire tone and wording of the Land Commission Report, I do not think it is possible to argue, as writers such as Gann (1965) and Murray (1970) do, that the Rhodesian purchase lands were established with the goal of agricultural development prominently in mind. At best, in the Rhodesian case, the mortgage of land to provide development capital was acknowledged by some to be necessary for farm capitalisation. Because of the racial division of land, however, the raising of mortgage bonds on African-owned farmland had to be channelled through the Land



and Agricultural Bank rather than private banking institutions, thus reducing the development value of even this small point. The creation of the purchase lands was a political move: concern for their development crept in years later. These conflicting motivations have, of course, affected government attitudes towards purchase land farmers and their development requirements: in Msengezi, for example, farmers had to ask that agricultural advisors be provided since, in 1938, government expressed very little interest in purchase land production.

#### Changes in the Official Conception of Purchase Land Farming

After the establishment of the purchase lands in 1930, eleven years passed before any official mention of agricultural practices in these areas was made. In 1942, the Native Land Board noted in its annual report that no more than a third of the farmers had adopted improved agricultural techniques such as applying manure or compost and following a crop rotation plan. Erosion and overstocking were causing concern to some officials, but the tone of this report does not convey any serious anxiety. It is worth noting that, if Msengezi is a typical example, agricultural advisors were not provided until they were requested, hence it is hardly surprising that most farmers were not using new techniques at this stage.

Subsequent reports voice similar reservations about production techniques, but it was not until 1948 that the Native Land Board became more selective in its allocation of farms, 'discouraging applications by Natives with no agricultural background'.<sup>15</sup> For seventeen years, then, purchase land farms had been allocated somewhat indiscriminately, with very little regard to the motives, interests, or agricultural experience of applicants. In itself, this mode of allocation suggests that official concern with agricultural development in these areas was scant. Only when the numbers of applicants increased substantially following the passage of the Land Husbandry Act through Parliament in 1951, was some form of agricultural selection adopted. In 1953, twenty-three years after the purchase lands had been established, a recognised agricultural training finally became a prerequisite for all applicants for farms. This training itself was, however, hardly tailored to the requirements of managing a 200-acre farm, since both the Master Farmer scheme and the two-year training course at a government agricultural training centre were designed for the tribal producer working up to ten acres, and emphasised crop rotations and manure applications rather than management decisions. Nevertheless, this training was better than nothing, even if it does suggest further lack of foresight and planning as far as the purchase lands were concerned.

It took over twenty years, therefore, for administrators to realise that the purchase lands were not to be regarded as freehold havens for those 'advanced' Africans who did not wish to retire from civil service or mission employment to the tribal areas and that the available freehold land should be used in an economically efficient manner with due regard to preserving the soil for future generations. But once this change in official attitudes had occurred, the concept of freehold tenure for Africans was threatened: it is only within the last few months that this threat has receded.

The initial threat became more defined as administrators stated the requirements for successful production in more and more detail. At first these requirements were negatively defined: non-occupation by the farm owner; failure to repay loans; failure to protect the land against erosion; and the presence of 'squatters' on purchase land farms have all been cited, in past official reports, as evidence that the purchase lands 'failed' to produce the 'yeoman' farmers which the Land Commission and Land Apportionment Act were supposed to have envisaged.

In the mid-1960s, however, government adopted a positive definition of successful production by applying to purchase land farms the concept of 'economic viability'. The 1966 Report of the Rural Land Board (which was then responsible for allocating purchase land farms) asserted that 'purchase area farms are designed for those who wish to enter the field of economic farming',<sup>16</sup> and, in 1967, this Board arbitrarily defined an 'economically viable' purchase land farm as one producing a gross profit margin of Rh\$600 per annum. Although the Board conceded that 'in the earlier days some farms were cut up with little consideration of their agricultural potential, and the selection of applicants was often completely unrelated to their farming ability',<sup>17</sup> it failed to recognise that the vast majority of these farms had been allocated before government had accepted this definition of economic viability. Clearly, then, most purchase land farms were not 'designed for those who wish to enter the field of economic farming'. Equally clearly, a gross profit margin of Rh\$600 annually would not be regarded as 'economic farming' by white farmers in Rhodesia, even though it represents a per acre profit similar to that produced on European-owned farms - which are up to twenty-five times larger than purchase land farms and, therefore, enjoy economies of scale in production which are impossible in African freehold areas.

This emphasis on farm viability in fact signals the second major change in official attitudes to the purchase lands, this time from the general concern with production, dating from 1948, to a specific definition of productivity regarded as acceptable by government. With such a clearly-



defined productivity norm, any farmer may be adjudged 'objectively' as successful or unsuccessful. If an individual farmer is defined as 'unsuccessful' and does not have title to his land, holding it on initial lease or later agreement to purchase, he may be thrown off the farm, which may then be re-allocated to a more suitable applicant. If the unsuccessful farmer does have title to his land, however, he cannot, as an individual, be removed in this way, at least under the present rules. But collective abolition of freehold is feasible and, in the past eight years, government has seriously considered such abolition. In his address to the 1975 conference of purchase land Intensive Conservation Area committees, on 3 September 1975, the Minister for Internal Affairs, Mr. Jack Mussett, admitted publicly that government had been considering 'other forms' of tenure in the purchase lands, but had finally decided to continue with freehold ownership.

#### The Recent Threat to African Freehold Tenure in Rhodesia

The justification for government's reconsideration of African freehold was the alleged 'failure' of freehold to promote agricultural development, as reported (without consideration of historical factors) by the Rural Land Board. In 1968, for example, this Board asserted that 'very few [purchase land farmers] have been able to appreciate the significance of commercialised farming and the profit motive'.<sup>18</sup> This allegation may be shown to be incorrect by figures published by two, separate, government sources: the Central Statistical Office, which has produced the annual Agricultural Censuses for purchase lands since 1969; and the Registrar of Co-operatives, whose annual reports since 1957 show steady increases in the amount of crops marketed through official channels in all purchase lands. Indeed, Hunt (1960) showed that, as early as 1958, approximately two-thirds of all purchase land produce was marketed, at a time when marketing facilities were rudimentary in comparison to those existing now. In the light of these sources, then, this allegation by the Rural Land Board is patently untrue.

Likewise, a second allegation that 'there is a universal preference for the growing of traditional crops ... rather than the more lucrative crops such as cotton and tobacco',<sup>19</sup> may also be shown to be untrue by the same sources. In respect of this particular assertion, moreover, one should note, firstly, that tobacco production came under strict government control following the 1965 Unilateral Declaration of Independence and the concomitant sharp fall in profitability of this crop; and, secondly, that cotton was only introduced to marginal

production areas - which include most of the purchase lands - after the tobacco slump. In Msengezi, for example, the land development officer recommended in 1959, after extensive field testing in the 1958-9 season, that cotton was unsuitable for production on Msengezi soils and should not be introduced into this area.<sup>20</sup> Yet, in 1968, economic necessity overruled this recommendation and cotton was introduced: table 3.1 shows how relative acreages under this crop have been expanded over the past six years and how important cotton is now in comparison to 'traditional' grain production. One must note further, of course, that hybrid maize is in fact not a 'traditional food crop' but a very important cash crop of which only a proportion is consumed by purchase land families and their stock. In Msengezi in normal years, some 65-70 per cent of all maize is sold, while in drought years this proportion drops to 40-50 per cent of production.

Table 3.1 Acreage ratio of maize to cotton in Msengezi, 1968-74<sup>21</sup>

year	1968-9	<del>1969</del> -70	1970-1	1971-2	1972-3	1973-4
ratio 1 :	0,03	0,18	0,33	0,41	0,54	0,69

Similarly false allegations concerning the 'squatter problem' and the ineffectiveness of Intensive Conservation Area committees in the purchase lands were also made in the 1968 Report of the Rural Land Board, while, in 1969, the Board further alleged that the purchase lands 'contain the twin seeds of their own destruction: low productivity and communal encroachment'.<sup>22</sup> The allegation of 'communal encroachment' has never been demonstrated: indeed, my own work (cf. chapter six) is the only detailed indication, for a single purchase land, of the extent and significance of the allocation of usufructuary rights to persons other than the farm owners. Of the other sixty-five purchase lands, nothing substantive is known on this subject.

Concerning the allegation of 'low productivity' - which, again, was not demonstrated by reference to any official report or publication - one must consider purchase land production in comparison to that from tribal areas, in order to assess the success or otherwise of freehold among Africans in Rhodesia. Less than 10 000 purchase land farmers account for one-third of the total value of marketed produce from African growers, the remaining two-thirds coming from approximately 600 000 tribal trust land cultivators (Dunlop, 1970). From a different perspective, some 7 per cent of the total 'African area' accounts for one-third of its production for the national market, the remaining two-thirds coming from over 80 per cent of the land involved. From either viewpoint, it is

quite clear that purchase land farmers use their resources more productively than tribal producers use theirs and these figures refute the implication in the Rural Land Board reports that the majority of purchase land farmers are little better than tribal cultivators.

Given that these inaccuracies have now been enshrined in official reports, one must ask why, particularly since they are contradicted by information available from other government sources. The answer, I think, lies in the political status of the purchase lands, which were originally established in order to restrict African land ownership. Despite their insignificance in terms of population and total land area in the country as a whole, the purchase lands have in fact been relatively successful in providing a model for an alternative form of African society in Rhodesia: black people want to buy freehold farms in areas outside the jurisdiction of the chiefs, to move away from 'traditional' forms of social organisation. The model of society provided by the purchase lands would, of course, be extremely expensive in terms of white land interests if it were extended throughout the country. Hence in the light of the alleged 'failure' of the purchase lands to stimulate development in agriculture, one can see why the Rural Land Board suggested 'a new approach, adapted to the needs of the African personality - a revised system of land tenure ...'.<sup>23</sup> However, given that African freehold tenure is, to some extent, unacceptable to the present Rhodesian government, one must ask further why the decision to retain the purchase lands in their present freehold form has been made. Again, I think that, politically, the government had no alternative, since many black politicians own farms, the African Farmers' Union executive was aware of the threat to African freehold, and to abolish freehold would have alienated an important section of the black community at a time when the government could not afford such further alienation. Indeed, I would go further and suggest that the government is, in the future, likely to extend freehold among blacks in an attempt to retain its political position. Already there are signs that the government accepts, however unwillingly, that many purchase land farmers have been very successful, especially in view of the difficulties they have faced in the past: the Department of Information, for example, recently published in the Sunday Mail an article on successful production in the purchase lands.<sup>24</sup> Such articles are intended to mould white public opinion, I suspect, towards acceptance of the amendment, if not repeal, of the Land Tenure Act within the next few years.



### Factors Influencing Purchase Land Development

From this detailed account of the history of African freehold in Rhodesia, one notes the recurring influence of white politics on African rural development. The purchase lands were established for political reasons; the total purchase land area was reduced (in 1960) for political reasons; and within the last eight years the purchase lands have been threatened with redefinition, again for reasons related to the political process among whites. Not only has their very existence been a political football, but white political attitudes have also affected the development process in these black freehold areas: African farmers had to ask for extension advice to be provided; for twenty years their access to loan finance was negligible; organised marketing facilities only became available in the late 1950s, after African farmers had pestered government to provide roads in order that their produce could reach the national market. Yet, despite the official lack of concern with development in these areas, two-thirds of total production was being sold by 1958 and since then the absolute value of marketed produce has grown to some Rh\$10 000 000 annually.<sup>25</sup>

The reason for recent increases in production is closely related to the provision of development agencies in the purchase lands in the last twenty years. Co-operative societies, for example, were started in 1956; by 1963, there were 23 extension officers (European) and 155 extension assistants (African) employed full-time in the purchase lands<sup>26</sup>; in the mid-1960s, seasonal loan finance (for seed, fertilisers, chemicals, etc.) became available from the African Loan and Development Trust, at first on a small scale but increasing as the experiment proved successful. All of these factors contributed towards accelerated development, which in turn has led to demands from black farmers for more sophisticated services: for example, for better qualified and more specialised extension workers, especially in the field of livestock production.

Other factors have also affected the degree of success attained by farmers in individual purchase lands, including the type of soil, average rainfall, and other ecological factors (tsetse infestation, for example, means that farmers in certain purchase areas cannot keep livestock). The availability of labour may also affect production levels, as I show later. Most important of all, though, are the farmers themselves and the strategies they adopt in using the resources that are available to them at any given time. In Part II of this thesis, therefore, I attempt to show how different resources are used in different ways by different types of successful farmer in Msengezi. Msengezi may, perhaps, be regarded as an example of a successful, developing purchase land (despite



its inauspicious beginnings in the period before concern regarding agricultural production in these areas had developed among administrators), because the majority of its farmers display marked entrepreneurial characteristics. The enabling effect of freehold tenure is thus seen quite clearly in this particular case.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Footnotes

1. Order in Council, 1898, Article 83.
2. Report of the Land Commission, p.1 para 1 (1).
3. op. cit. p.4, para 49.
4. File ZAH 1/1 parts 1 to 4. Rhodesia National Archives, Salisbury.
5. In September 1974, the Minister for Agriculture in the Rhodesian Front government, Mr. David Smith, presented to Parliament a bill to amend the existing Agricultural Land Settlement Act. This bill will enable the Minister to determine whether or not (white-held) agricultural land is being used beneficially, and to appropriate and re-lease the land in cases where it is not. (Rhodesia Herald 25.9.74, p.1).
6. For an account of the Land Husbandry Act, see Garbett (1963).
7. With this reduction in the potential number of purchase land farms, the scarcity value of the existing farms increased considerably. This increase is reflected in the upward trend of free market prices for these farms. In Msengezi, where farms have the added advantage of being close to Salisbury, prices paid for farms to which titles have been granted, have increased tenfold in the past twenty years. The average price per acre for such farms is now approximately Rh\$20, compared to an average alienation price for Crown Land of not more than Rh\$2 per acre in the newer purchase lands now being settled. The average alienation price paid by Msengezi farmers themselves twenty-five and more years ago was nearer Rh\$1 per acre. One man who paid a total alienation price of less than Rh\$300 for his farm, sold it in 1973 for over Rh\$10 000. Altogether, forty farms in Msengezi have been sold on the free market.
8. '... the principle on which land apportionment was first introduced must be honoured ... If areas ... set aside ... cannot now be made available, then other land of equal agricultural potential must be found to replace it ...' Report of the NLB and NAA 1959, p.154 of Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs.
9. Report of the Land Commission, p.25, para 285.
10. op. cit. p.25, para 287.
11. op. cit. p.27, para 300.

12. Asst. Director of Native Lands, Salisbury to NC Hartley, 31.10.1941: in file S 1033/4, Rhodesia National Archives, Salisbury.
13. Report of the Land Commission, p.23, para 264.
14. op. cit. p.25, para 288.
15. Report of the NLB and NAA 1948: p.27 of the Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs.
16. Report of the Rural Land Board, 1966, p.7.
17. op. cit. 1967, p.5.
18. op. cit. 1968, p.7.
19. op. cit. 1968, pp.7-8.
20. LDO Msengezi to Provincial Agriculturist Salisbury, 18.9.1959: and Msengezi Area Plan, 1963, A 13, p.2.
21. Figures derived from data provided by the Central Statistical Office, Salisbury.
22. Report of the Rural Land Board, 1969, p.13.
23. op. cit. 1968, p.8.
24. Sunday Mail, 6.7.1975, p.12: the article was entitled 'Rhodesia's Forgotten Farmers: African purchase farms contribute to economy'.
25. ibid.
26. Ministry of Agriculture Annual Report, 1963, p.21.

PART II

FARM DEVELOPMENT IN MSENGEZI : THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ACCUMULATION IN A NEW SOCIETY

Msengezi is a newly-established society, celebrating its fortieth year of existence in 1975. It therefore has no real historical antecedents, because settlers came from widely diverse places and cultures to create this new society, which is largely free from customary constraints, both social and political, on individual behaviour. These settlers bought relatively large tracts of freehold land in an area over which no African chief had any legal power, some to escape tribal authority, but most to accumulate wealth.

Yet, as I have already mentioned in chapter one, even in this new setting, two differing idioms of accumulation have arisen among Msengezi farmers: one, which may be called 'traditional', is based on forms of entrepreneurship found in African societies in the past, while the other, which may be termed 'modern', is based on western modes of capital accumulation. In this chapter, I shall indicate the basic differences between these two idioms before proceeding, in the remaining chapters of Part II, to examine in some detail the statistical differences between farmers using each of these two idioms and the ways in which each may influence the differing use of available resources.

Regarding the first idiom of accumulation, based on 'traditional' entrepreneurship, the most important reflection of wealth in redistributive economies was the custom of polygyny. Crop surpluses and livestock were converted into the more durable, though less tangible, asset of control over people, particularly over wives and children. One Msengezi farmer, himself a polygynist, explained the mechanics of such accumulation as follows. For a short while, a man works on his own account to accumulate sufficient resources to marry for the first time. He and his wife then work in order that he can marry a second wife. The three of them then co-operate in order to finance a third marriage. And so the process continues. Because there are more workers with each marriage, the time interval for the necessary accumulation is reduced at each step. Eventually the man has a large labour force producing a substantial crop surplus or cash profit each year, as well as children who will become workers in the future. The man must, however, remain on good terms with all of his wives, especially the first, otherwise his labour force may mutiny! This view of the senior wife as shop steward-cum-'bossboy', as well as co-director of the family farm, is widespread among polygynists in Msengezi and, in two cases, the senior wife has remained on the farm



to fulfil these roles after divorce.

In the market economy of Msengezi, this 'traditional' idiom of accumulation is not constrained by expectations of the redistribution of wealth, as occurred in African societies in the past. Instead, wealth is accumulated in the form of farm machinery, housing, motor vehicles, business investments and even children's education, as well as bank accounts and, of course, wives. Nor, for that matter, are those using this 'traditional' idiom 'traditionalists' in the sense of adhering to customary expectations of behaviour in most social contexts. What is actually happening is that some men are using selected aspects of traditional entrepreneurship in order to accumulate without becoming subject to any redistribution of their accumulated capital. The selected elements which comprise what I have called this traditional idiom of accumulation include polygyny, large families and households, and labour co-operation among farmers in order to produce crops. The fact that these modes of behaviour do originate in 'traditional' societies is reflected in most Msengezi farmers' classification of those using this idiom of accumulation as 'old-fashioned'.

The elements of behaviour comprising the traditional idiom of accumulation in Msengezi are thus very general, applying to virtually all African societies irrespective of ethnic distinctions. This situation reflects the polyethnic nature of purchase land society: in Msengezi, there is no one set of specific norms of behaviour accepted by all farmers as 'custom'. The traditional idiom of accumulation is thus used by Karanga, Zezuru and Ndebele farmers alike, though not, it should be noted, by Manyika or Fingo men, none of whom in Msengezi is a polygynist.

In long-established societies, however, traditional idioms of behaviour may have more specific referents within the single, or dominant, culture associated with that locality. Among the Giriama of Kenya, for example, Parkin (1972:2) notes that those producers who are trying to accumulate 'are grappling with the problem of how to introduce new idioms into the common language of custom without going so far as to cut themselves off'. In this old society, then, people are concerned to promote new idioms of behaviour under cover of accepted, 'traditional' norms, in order to free themselves from the redistributive aspects of accumulation. For example, the growing economic cleavage between successful and unsuccessful producers among the Giriama, is 'explained' in terms of the known idiom of intergenerational conflict, with which the economic conflict does, to some extent, overlap. By using a known explanatory idiom, then, the changes producing this economic differentiation and conflict are at least partially disguised from most Giriama and are thus

allowed to continue.

In Msengezi, however, such use of traditional idioms of behaviour to explain, in 'known' terms, a new, economic conflict between the more and the less successful, is unnecessary: in this new society, people are largely immune from levelling mechanisms which still operate in old-established societies, having bought their farms in order to accumulate wealth. Nevertheless, in one sense the traditional idiom of accumulation, as defined above, can be said to act as a type of 'cover' for change, for there is something of a paradox in the fact that those men who appear to order their behaviour in terms of customary precepts are in fact among the most successful farmers. Polygynists are among the earliest innovators in the adoption of new seed varieties, equipment and techniques of production; they are regarded by the extension staff as 'the best farmers'; and their farms are more developed than most. Clearly, then, these men are not 'traditional' at all, despite their adoption of the traditional idiom of accumulation: in this sense the generalised traditional idiom does act as a 'cover' for change in Msengezi. This pattern of differential modernisation is explained by the fact that the traditional idiom of accumulation allows its users access to a stable, low-cost labour supply, which is essential for successful farming on a large scale, but the use of this traditional idiom does not imply a commitment to customary behaviour in general. In its very selectiveness, then, the traditional idiom of accumulation is potentially misleading, especially to the casual observer of purchase land farming. Although it may offer a thin disguise for reality, then, this 'cover' is not really comparable to that afforded by specific idioms of customary behaviour among the Giriama.

However, there is a further resemblance between traditional idioms in old and new societies, which relates to the part played by religious organisations in promoting change. The role of religious institutions in protecting changes occurring in old-established societies has been extensively documented for certain African communities: Garbett (1967), Long (1968) and Parkin (1972) have all examined this relationship in some detail. It seems that individual innovators in old societies tend to cluster around a particular religious ideology which, inter alia, provides justification for ignoring pressures towards redistribution of wealth, as well as offering social and psychological support for these innovators in a potentially hostile society. However, in Msengezi, which is a new society, such religious justification for accumulation is largely unnecessary, again because farmers bought their land in order to accumulate free from the constraints of old-established redistributive economies.

Nevertheless, it is possible that the use of the traditional idiom of accumulation in this new society requires 'protection' of a similar nature to that needed by modernising changes in old societies, because in Msengezi the modern idiom of accumulation (which I discuss below) is the norm accepted by the majority of the population. I make this suggestion because a significant proportion of Msengezi polygynists belong to separatist or fundamentalist sects, whereas most people belong to orthodox denominations. One-quarter of all polygynists belong to the Vapostori we Maranke (the African Apostolic Church of Johane Maranke), while a further 12 per cent belong to the Seventh Day Adventist organisation. The Vapostori sect in particular may be regarded as protecting the traditional idiom of accumulation in Msengezi, for it is a closed sect which justifies its emphasis on polygyny by reference to the old testament: fourteen of the fifteen farmers who belong to this sect are polygynists. Moreover, the Vapostori organisation has lost four members over the past five years and all of these ex-members are now ex-polygynists belonging to orthodox Christian denominations, three of the four having developed their farms to what I define (in chapter eight) as the semi-capitalised stage. It is possible, then, that the Vapostori sect may act as a stepping-stone to successful accumulation for certain men, protecting them from the demands of kin living in tribal areas during the early years of purchase land farming and from disapproval or even ridicule by other Msengezi farmers, either until such time as they can afford to use the modern idiom, or until they have established their reputations as successful producers. The Vapostori sect is the only religious organisation in Msengezi which shows a strong association with farm capitalisation: 80 per cent of vapostori have developed their farms at least to the semi-capitalised stage, compared to 35 per cent of all farmers. Clearly, then, despite the small numbers involved, membership of this sect shows certain similarities to the process of conversion to Islam among the Giriama and to membership of the Watchtower movement in Zambia, in its association with capital accumulation. Yet in this case, the association between religious identity and accumulation is confined to farmers using the traditional idiom of accumulation, not to those seeking to introduce change into the wider society.

In general, then, specific religious ideologies may provide some form of protection for unusual behaviour in both old and new societies. In Msengezi specifically, 'old-fashioned' behaviour is shielded, among a small but significant proportion of polygynous farmers, by membership of the Vapostori we Maranke sect. By protecting the traditional idiom of accumulation in this way, this sect allows the process of capital



accumulation to be couched in familiar terms to men of little education from a tribal background. More importantly, however, membership of this sect legitimises their access, through polygyny, to low-cost labour, which is the single most important requirement for successful farming, as opposed to small-scale cultivation. The use of the traditional idiom of accumulation in Msengezi and other purchase lands is thus an important adaptive mechanism in large-scale agriculture for men who had little personal acquaintance with modern idioms of behaviour before settling on their farms.

For the majority of Msengezi farmers, however, who do not find this traditional idiom of accumulation acceptable, the alternative is the modern idiom, which is based on the behaviour patterns of white Rhodesians and, in a wider context, all Europeans. This 'European' model includes monogamous marriage, relatively small families and few dependants, and increasing reliance on hired labourers to perform the actual tasks of agricultural production. In Msengezi at least and probably in other purchase lands as well, these labourers are often financed from non-agricultural sources of income, such as salaries, pensions, business investments and thoughtful children. The farmer who attempts to accumulate using this modern idiom is in fact most unlikely to succeed if he does not have such external financial resources, particularly in the early stages of farming, as a number of farmers have found to their cost. Nevertheless, despite its inherent difficulties (which are considered in detail in later chapters), the use of this modern idiom of accumulation realises more prestige in Msengezi than does the use of the traditional idiom, for prestige accrues to those showing the greatest familiarity with 'this new civilisation'. Such familiarity is assessed partly in terms of material possessions, but mainly in terms of behaviour. So the man who has chosen to accumulate using the traditional idiom may be respected for his wealth and his shrewdness as an agricultural entrepreneur, but he is still regarded as 'old-fashioned' on account of his marital status and sources of labour, and his leadership potential is restricted to the fields of production and, perhaps, marketing, where his expertise is seen to lie.

The importance of patterns of behaviour generated by the example of white settlers in colonial societies should not be underestimated. The life-style of white Rhodesians, for example, is characterised by high incomes, large homes, many material possessions, the employment of servants and workers, and politico-economic power. Few Africans do not envy this life-style, though equally few have actually achieved it. To live like a white man is, in itself, to lay claim to prestige beyond that attaching to the highest point in traditional society, the chiefship.



For despite current political events, power appears, to blacks at the lower levels of the total Rhodesian society, to be firmly in the hands of the whites and those who can compete with them on more-or-less equal terms. The relevance of the white settler model to development in Africa has also been noted for Kenya (e.g. Leys, 1972) and is reflected in Kenya's decision to attempt to develop along the lines of this 'British' model established during the colonial period. A handful of Africans in Kenya and Rhodesia have in fact achieved this life-style: it is, therefore, seen to be possible by the majority and may thus act as a positive incentive to development. From the negative viewpoint, however, this model may breed a consumer society which drains off savings in patterns of conspicuous consumption. Nevertheless, despite its potential negative effects on development at the national level, at the local level the white settler model undoubtedly provides a powerful incentive to many to increase their cash incomes. To participate in the wider, modernising society itself requires money, even when people are not attempting to emulate the white settler model of behaviour, and Msengezi farmers boast that they and other purchase land producers know how to make money from the soil, without having to work for wages as tribal cultivators do. They are proud of the fact that they are independent producers of wealth, as are many whites: their reference group is white Rhodesian society, which they consider to be responsible for 'this new civilisation'.

Besides the relative prestige attaching to modern and traditional idioms of accumulation, there are a number of other factors influencing the choice of idiom by any individual producer, including his socio-cultural background, his available resources, the way in which he explains his behaviour to himself, and the individuals and groups with whom he identifies. In general, the decision to adopt the traditional idiom is made by those who recognise that they are not in a position to use the modern idiom successfully - by men who have had little formal education and who are familiar with the traditional idiom through their home backgrounds. The modern idiom is generally chosen by those who are 'educated', who have previously accumulated capital in business or professional employment, and who aspire to the living standards of whites. The majority of practising Christians affiliated to orthodox denominations opt for the modern idiom, too, even though, in many cases, they could accumulate more by selecting the traditional idiom. Indeed, it seems that, as income levels and educational standards rise, fewer farmers opt to use the traditional idiom of accumulation, for the incidence of polygyny in Msengezi has fallen steadily over the past decade as original settlers have died and their sons have inherited their farms.

In the following chapters, I examine some of the more important antecedents and consequences of the choice of accumulatory idiom, examining the settlement process and population structure, the use of land, labour and capital, and the influence of inheritance on the development process in Msengezi. Before doing so, however, I must specify the meanings of certain terms which will appear throughout these chapters. I have already explained what I mean by traditional and modern idioms of accumulation: in some places I use the terms 'polygynist' and 'monogamist' as shorter synonyms for accumulators in these respective idioms. Msengezi people themselves refer to polygynists as 'old-fashioned' and 'uneducated' and to monogamists as 'civilised' or, in some cases of high educational qualifications, 'educated': in places I have adopted these local classifications to avoid repetitious phrasing. I have not used the term 'traditionalist' at all, however, and I have tried to avoid using 'modernist', because these terms imply a dichotomy that does not really exist in Msengezi, where the general orientation is towards bureaucratic rather than tribal forms of behaviour and organisation. Similarly, I have tried to avoid referring to 'traditional society' because of its inexact referents: instead, I have used 'old-established society' to refer to one which, although it may have changed considerably in the intervening years, has its roots in precolonial days. Likewise, throughout this thesis, I refer to Msengezi (and other purchase lands) as 'new' rather than 'modern' societies. A summary of some of these different terms is given in tabular form below:

idiom of accumulation	traditional	modern
type of marriage	polygynous	monogamous
sources of labour	family + labour co-operation	family + hired workers
-----		
local classifications	'old-fashioned'	'civilised'
	'uneducated'	'educated'

I must emphasise that this apparently dichotomous system is not as rigid as the tabular lay-out suggests. Furthermore, the distinctions between farmers based on the idiom of accumulation chosen, are cross-cut by at least four other factors: success in farming; entrepreneurship; wealth; and religious affiliation. A number of different classification systems thus operate in Msengezi, only some of which overlap. The identification of different types of farmer is, therefore, not easy, because some differences are more apparent than substantive. Nevertheless, in the following chapters I attempt to present a systematic account of production on Msengezi farms and to indicate the range of differences among farmers, particularly those arising from the choice of accumulation strategy.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SETTLEMENT AND POPULATION STRUCTURE

Msengezi was not the first purchase land in Rhodesia in which farms were surveyed and allocated. Other areas, such as Dowa and Chitomborgwizi, had experienced their initial settlement before the first seven Msengezi farms were allocated in 1934-5. The earliest settlers came to an unpopulated area, despite the evidence of previous habitation, in the form of old grinding stones, found on some farms. Settlement in Msengezi began slowly: less than eighty farms were allocated before the outbreak of war in 1939, when many of the government surveyors were called up for military service. After the war, however, Msengezi was among those purchase lands which received priority for survey and allocation. In 1946, approximately 100 Msengezi farms were allocated and, in 1949-50, a further 160<sup>1</sup>. Except for the six new farms allocated in 1967-8, then, settlement in Msengezi was completed before the introduction, in 1953, of the system under which applicants had to have agricultural qualifications in order to obtain a farm. Settlement began in the east and spread westwards, because MAKWIRO railway station, some six miles to the east of the purchase land boundary, was the nearest point of public transport in an era when travel was difficult and internal roads did not exist.

#### The Immigration Process and Settlers' Backgrounds

People came to Msengezi as immigrants once their applications had been approved by the various land boards responsible for African agricultural settlement.<sup>2</sup> However, despite the degree of control over settlement exercised by these land boards, the immigrants were largely self-selected and, as would be expected in such a situation, came from widely diverse geographical and cultural backgrounds. Table 5.1 indicates the main areas from which all settlers came; more detailed information on ethnic identity may be found in table 8.10, p.127.

The degrees to which these settlers of diverse origins had been exposed to the processes of 'modernisation' and 'Christianisation' differed. Such differential exposure to these forces of change was probably more significant than differences in tribal cultural background, at least in respect of the type of society which the settlers shaped in Msengezi itself. To some extent, exposure to modernising influences was related to the type of area in which the settlers were born and raised.



Table 5.1 Areas from which Msengezi settlers came \*

administrative district	area of origin	main ethnic identity
Sinoia	Zwimba reserve	Zezuru
Hartley	Mondoro reserve	Zezuru
Hartley	Marshall Hartley Mission	mixed
Salisbury:Norton	Sandringham Mission	mixed; Xhosa immigrants
Salisbury: town	town	mixed
Marandellas	Chihota reserve	Zezuru
Selukwe	Selukwe reserve	Karanga; Fingo
Bulawayo	town	mixed

\* In order of increasing distance from Msengezi

From table 5.2, one sees that some 23 per cent of settlers were born outside tribal areas and few of these men ever experienced tribal life at first hand: many were in fact the sons of black immigrants to Rhodesia, who came from South Africa with or shortly after the Pioneer Column in the last decade of the nineteenth century. A significant proportion of the pre-war and immediate post-war settlers, had thus experienced modernising changes in their natal homes: some settlers' families had been Christian for two or three generations. Although these men were a minority among all Msengezi settlers, their influence on this new society has been very considerable, both individually and collectively, as I shall show in part III of this thesis.

Table 5.2 Farm-holders' birthplaces by land category

land category	%
reserves/tribal trust lands	75,6
mission stations	9,3
European-owned farms	3,8
purchase lands	4,5 *
towns	5,5
outside Rhodesia	1,4

\* Includes inheritor owners

From table 5.2, one might nevertheless conclude that, however important the non-traditional settlers may have been in Msengezi, the vast majority were less open to change, having come from tribal backgrounds. However, although three-quarters of all settlers were born in the reserves, few remained untouched by the changes introduced by white



settlers in Rhodesia. Most of these men were employed as wage labourers at some stage of their lives and some, through education, became more involved in the modern Rhodesian economy. Indeed, most settlers did not come to Msengezi directly from their places of birth, but moved towards the purchase land in a series of stages, in the pattern known as multiple-step migration which is, in this case, usually a result of past employment. Table 5.3 shows this gross movement towards Msengezi from the settlers' birthplaces, but it does not reflect the many interim changes which sometimes took these men out of Rhodesia altogether.

Table 5.3    Distances from which settlers moved to Msengezi

distance from Msengezi	birthplace %	'last port of call' %
less than 100 mls	58,5	71,2
100 - 200 mls	33,2	26,2
200 mls or more	8,3	2,6

The fact that these settlers had travelled quite widely and experienced living in societies and cultures other than those into which they had been born, is very important, for such experience seems to be associated positively with large-scale farming in other parts of Africa as well, such as Buganda (Richards *et al.*, 1973) and Kenya (Fliedner, 1965). This wider experience includes employment as well as travel, thus giving these men some insights into the structure and principles of European-dominated settler economies, in addition to the more mundane aspects of controlling and using cash, operating machines, and participating in the new technology. Some 36 per cent of Msengezi farmers have had past or present experience in the Rhodesian economy at relatively high levels, as indicated in table 5.4. The importance of such high-level employment to agricultural development has again been noted for Buganda and Kenya and may be part of the reason why development has proceeded so far in Msengezi, even though the settlers were not selected on the basis of their farming experience. Being able to read, having some knowledge of government facilities, and having lost the peasant suspicion of government may in fact be more helpful to the agricultural entrepreneur than a lifetime of subsistence cultivation, as Sturrock (Richards *et al.*, 1973) indicates.

Two examples may convey some of the breadth of experience of Msengezi settlers. Mr. Mapolisa (pseudonym), a Kalanga man born about 1896 in the Plumtree district some 250 miles from Msengezi, attended school at Tekwani Mission, near his home village. Later he studied for a teaching qualification at Waddilove Mission, over 300 miles from his home, in

Table 5.4 Highest level of employment among Msengezi farmers

job category	number	%
no data	5	1,7
never employed	21	7,0
rural unskilled	38	12,6
urban unskilled, semi-skilled or skilled *	124	41,2
white-collar, lower professional or uniformed services	101	33,6
self-employed only **	4	1,3
administrative, higher professional	8	2,7
total	301	100,1

\* Skilled employment in this context is a relative rather than an absolute term, including such occupations as cobbling, simple carpentry and driving, none of which would normally be classified as 'skilled' in industrial economies.

\*\* That is, never employed by another person or organisation, but earning a cash income through contracting out one's services or from independent business enterprises.

ZeZuru territory. As a teacher-evangelist, Mr. Mapolisa worked in tribal areas among ZeZuru, Karanga and Ndebele communities, in addition to working for three years in the Central and Barotseland provinces of Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia). In 1937, when he applied for his farm in Msengezi, he was teaching in Mondoro tribal trust land, some sixty miles from Msengezi. His migratory experience, all in rural areas, covers thousands of miles, several tribal cultures, and a number of European-controlled mission stations.

In contrast, Mr. Machisi's (pseudonym) employment experience was mainly in town. He left 'kraal school' in his home district of Mondoro after completing four years of primary schooling and went to work in Marandellas, a small town over 100 miles from his home. He was employed as an assistant to a European carpenter and picked up some skills in woodwork, which interested him. He therefore returned to school, as an adult, at the Marshall Hartley Mission on the north-eastern boundary of Msengezi, where he studied practical building and carpentry, as well as continuing his primary schooling for a further two years. He was then employed by the mission as a carpenter for some years before buying his farm in 1946. Mr. Machisi's employment was thus at the unskilled and semi-skilled levels in European-controlled private enterprises. His contact with other tribal cultures, since he worked exclusively in ZeZuru territory, was minimal in comparison to the previous case, although his contact with whites in town was more frequent and more direct. Mr.

Machisi's employment experience was thus qualitatively different from Mr. Mapolisa's, although comparable in breadth.

The employment experience of these two men is by no means atypical of Msengezi settlers in general, although relatively few were employed in teaching. Besides their work experience in the European-dominated modern economy, however, one in five of these farmers has, at some stage, owned his own business. Nearly 9 per cent had been wholly dependent, at least for short periods, on their own ability to generate cash in some form of trade or business, while a further 11 per cent own or owned businesses which gave them supplementary incomes additional to their wages or salaries. Not all of these business enterprises were successful, particularly in the long term, but the extent of entrepreneurial experience is notable. Indeed, the most successful entrepreneurs in the field of commerce, who are now managing directors of their own, fairly substantial firms, are among the most productive and innovative farmers. Again, although such entrepreneurs are a small minority in the total society, their example and influence are greater than their numbers would suggest.

In this section I have deliberately focussed on the non-traditional factors in the socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of Msengezi farmers, because these factors have been extremely important in shaping this new society. Even those men who came from relatively 'traditional' cultures and occupations had been exposed, to some minimal degree at least, to the changes brought about in Rhodesia by European settlers: the very fact that they used cash savings to buy agricultural land is one indication of their exposure to new ideas and new behaviour patterns. Nevertheless, one should not assume that the settlers' motives for investing money in land purchase necessarily coincided with the modern administrative view that purchase land farms are for 'economic farming'. The reasons for which these men bought their farms are extremely varied: in many cases, a combination of factors influenced their decision to purchase land to which title would be granted.

#### Reasons for Settlement in Msengezi

My concern here is with the reasons given by the farmers themselves for buying their farms. I realise that stated reasons may not always be entirely accurate, although I believe that very few farmers deliberately tried to deceive me on this issue. I also realise that their reasons for purchasing farms may be considerably different from their reasons for developing these farms: possibly the most important stimulus to farm development has been the need for large cash sums to finance children's higher education, but this factor is relatively unimportant in the range of reasons given for actually buying farms.



Table 5.5 shows all of the various reasons given for purchasing farms in Msengezi, in order of frequency. It is also possible to group these individual but related reasons into categories, the most important of which include long-term security; dissatisfaction with previous conditions of agricultural production; investment factors; and social factors.

Three important points arise from the data contained in table 5.5. Firstly, the desire for security occurs, in six rather different forms, 131 times, which suggests that many of the settlers considered themselves and their families to be relatively insecure in the long term. This felt insecurity reflects, as far back as the 1930s in Rhodesia, land shortage, insecurity of tenure and lack of adequate provision for retirement among African workers in the modern sector of the national economy. Since there has been very little improvement in this aspect of national welfare during the past thirty years, the desire for security may well be partly responsible for the present tremendous demand for purchase land farms.

Table 5.5 Farm owners' reasons for buying or occupying their farms \*

farm inherited or ceded without cost	95
security : own retirement	78
inadequate land allotment on mission farm or in reserve	78
followed example of kin or friends	55
interested in farming/business investment	49
dislike of constraints in reserve	41
production factors : soils/water/transport/markets	40
security : children	34
external advice from employer/advisor/extension worker	29
strained social relationships with family or neighbours	26
proximity to original home	17
offered farm by government : ex-servicemen	13
wanted to run more cattle	10
security : home for ageing parents	5
security : moved before pending resettlement	5
security : foreign nationality and no land rights in reserves	5
financial investment for children's education	5
Land Apportionment Act provisions : had to relinquish lease on European-owned farm	4
security : freehold title	4
wife wanted farm	3
other	14
reasons for purchase unknown	18

\* Includes all reasons given, hence total is more than 301.



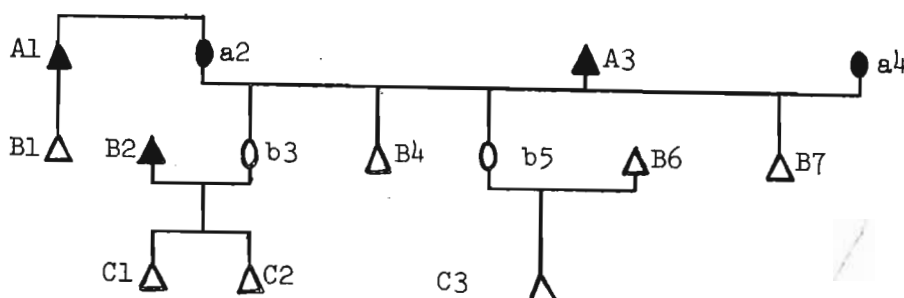
Secondly, some of those farmers who claimed to have bought their farms as business investments may have given this reason because of the present official emphasis on farm viability and productivity, reflected in the popular slogan 'farming is business'. Certainly many who gave this reason have not made the profits one might expect in the light of this apparent motivation, although they are undoubtedly better off than they would have been had they stayed in the tribal areas. It is also possible that land speculation was involved in such investment, at least among some farmers. One should also note the converse of this caveat: that those who claimed to have bought their farms primarily for security in retirement are by no means the least productive farmers in Msengezi, some being among the most successful in terms of farm development and capitalisation.

Thirdly, it is clear that an important demonstration effect operated during the settlement process in Msengezi. People applied for farms partly because kinsmen had already done so, or because friends suggested it. This demonstration effect is reflected in the kin clusters found in most purchase lands today.

#### Cluster Settlement

The clusters associated with settlement in Msengezi are small, involving only a few families in each case, up to a maximum of half a dozen. They are generally based on kinship links of a consanguineal or affinal nature, although sometimes classificatory links which overlap with the statuses of neighbour and friend are also found. In all, fifty-two small clusters, involving 145 individual families presently living on separate farms, may be identified. Typical relationships linking the men in such clusters include those of brothers, fathers and sons, patrilineal parallel cousins, brothers-in-law and men and their sons-in-law. Matrilineal links are not uncommon, though they are found less frequently than those already specified. Most families in any given cluster came to Msengezi simultaneously, although some followed at a later date. The inter-relationship of families in these clusters, together with their various reasons for settling in Msengezi, are illustrated in the following example.

Diagram i. A typical kin-based cluster



This cluster, from the settlement viewpoint, began in 1938 with B2, a minister in the British Methodist church who bought his farm in order to retire in an area in which his Christian identity would not force him into social conflict with neighbours. His son, C1, bought the farm immediately adjacent to his father's, intending to make a decent living from cash cropping. His wife's younger brother, B4, who was a teacher, bought the second adjacent farm in order to have a secure home for his eventual retirement. Because B4 had no intention of becoming a full-time farmer, he installed his younger sister, b5, and her husband, B6, as managers of his farm. Some fifteen years later, B6 managed to buy his own farm in Msengezi, both for his own security and because he realised that there was money in large-scale farming. At about the same time, C1's lease was cancelled because of poor conservation practices on this farm and, as a result of strained family relationships, he left for Zambia. (His farm was re-allocated to an unrelated immigrant.) Meanwhile, in 1947, B1 (B2's wife's mother's brother's son) had retired from the police force and followed the example of his patrilineal kinsmen in applying for a farm. He did not wish to settle in the reserve because, as a policeman, he did not get on well with ordinary people and envisaged considerable difficulties in social relationships with neighbours. Many years later, B7 bought his farm on the open market from a previous titleholder for precisely the same stated reasons, when he retired from the plain clothes branch of the police force.

At present, the cluster comprises B1, b3, B4, B7 and C3, who is managing his father's farm while B6 looks after his retail business interests in Zwimba tribal trust land. C2 has inherited the farm from the cluster founder, B2, although his mother b3 manages the farm: he himself lives in America, where he is on the staff of one of the 'Ivy League' universities. The present cluster members form a fairly close-knit group which operates as a family council in respect of matters affecting any individual member or nuclear unit. They all maintain close ties with other members of the family still resident in Zwimba TTL: the lineage stemming from B4's deceased grandfather is a functioning unit which includes the purchase land families because they are not geographically distant. However, the lineage relationship must not be confused with the family organisation in Msengezi itself which, as shown above, includes non-patrilineal kin.

These kin-based clusters in Msengezi are constituted on the basis of kinship proximity, irrespective of the nature of the individual links. They are not built up on a patrilineal basis, even among people of Nguni descent. This emphasis on individual rather than categorical relationships is evident throughout the social fabric in Msengezi, and

is probably an emergent characteristic of social organisation in the Rhodesian purchase lands, if not in freehold areas elsewhere in Africa.

#### Present Population Structure

In 1973, 4 124 persons lived as permanent residents on 324 farms in Msengezi. This figure includes resident labourers but excludes temporary workers, children at boarding school, and visitors to Msengezi normally living elsewhere. Since I did not attempt to estimate the ages of farm personnel who were not members of the farm owners' immediate families, and because most women have only vague conceptions of their ages, the construction of an accurate age-sex distribution pyramid for Msengezi is impossible. However, the age distribution of the farmers themselves, given in table 5.6 below, together with the age distribution of everyone living on these farms among labour-relevant categories, shown in table 5.7, give some indication of the age structure as this relates to the ability to do farm work. The high proportion of farm owners over 70 years of age (over 20% of all farm owners) should be noted: a large majority were still actively involved in production, while those who were not were physically incapacitated in some way, usually as a result of blindness.

Table 5.6    Age distribution of farm owners\*

age category	number	%
no data	2	0,6
minor	6	2,0
21 - 29 years	7	2,3
30 - 39 "	24	8,0
40 - 49 "	47	15,6
50 - 59 "	90	30,0
60 - 69 "	58	19,3
70 - 79 "	47	15,6
80 years or more	20	6,7
total	301	100,1

\* Includes 4 women farm-owners

Table 5.7 Labour-relevant categories of all farm personnel

category of personnel	number	%
children under 8 years	1 233	29,8
children 8 - 15 years	956	23,2
able-bodied men	816	19,8
able-bodied women	1 021	24,8
incapacitated men	32	0,8
incapacitated women	66	1,6
total	4 124	100,0

Although age in itself is not particularly relevant to the provision of farm labour, because even children and the elderly contribute their labour, the age of the farmholder does affect the structure of the farm population in two respects. Firstly, the family developmental cycle usually means that older men have the larger families, and there is an inverse relationship between family size and the use of hired labourers. Secondly, and more specifically, 86 per cent of all polygynists are over fifty years old and the average population size on farms owned by polygynists is, at 17,8 persons, considerably larger than the overall average of 12,7 persons reflected in table 5.8.

Table 5.8 Size of farm populations

no. of persons	no. of farms	%
0 - 4	23	7,1
5 - 9	94	29,0
10 - 14	101	31,2
15 - 19	59	18,2
20 - 24	25	7,7
25 - 29	10	3,1
30 - 34	7	2,2
35 plus	5	1,5
-----		
average 12,7 persons	range 1 - 42	

However, the rate of polygynous marriage among Msengezi farmers is lower than that found in other purchase lands, where it ranges from 43 per cent in Tokwe (Weinrich, 1975) to 23 per cent in Gwatemba (Bembridge, 1972). In Msengezi, it is well under 20 per cent among all farm owners and probably lower in the population as a whole, suggesting that Msengezi farmers generally reject accumulation in terms of a traditional idiom.<sup>3</sup> The exact break-down of marital status in



Msengezi is shown in table 5.9 below. One interesting point concerning polygyny in Msengezi is that it is closely associated with Karanga or Rozwi ethnic identity: although farmers claiming such ethnic identity comprise only 20,6 per cent of all farmholders, they account for over 45 per cent of all existing cases of polygyny among land-holders. And as a result of the historical pattern of settlement whereby the later, less educated settlers took farms in the western half of Msengezi, the polygyny rate varies from less than 10 per cent in one of the eastern Intensive Conservation Areas to 37 per cent in one of the western ICAs, where many Karanga farmers settled.

Table 5.9 Marital status among Msengezi farm owners

marital status	number	%
effectively single *	22	6,7
monogamous **	226	69,3
two wives	35	10,7
three wives	8	2,5
four wives	9	2,9
five wives	2	0,6
six wives	3	1,0
seven wives	1	0,3
not classifiable ***	19	5,8

\* includes never married, separated, divorced and widowed

\*\* includes ex-polygynists

\*\*\* cases pending inheritance

The larger populations on polygynists' farms reflect their increased reliance on women and children to supply labour inputs, in line with their use of the traditional idiom of accumulation described in chapter 4. Table 5.10 shows that polygynists have increased their share of women and children by between 40 and 51 per cent over the random expectation based on the percentage of Msengezi farms owned by them.

Table 5.10 All residents on polygynists' farms

category	percentage of total in Msengezi
farms owned by polygynists	17,6
adult males	18,4
adult females	26,6
children 8 - 15 yrs	24,7
children under 8 yrs	25,2

Reynolds (1969) and Paraiwa (1972) have already noted that African farmers in Rhodesia who are involved in cash cropping may regard wives and children as the most satisfactory source of labour, since they are bound to the farmer by much stronger ties than are hired workers. Absenteeism and desertion are, therefore, reduced, while the farmer's authority over his labour force is increased. Many polygynous farmers in Msengezi concurred with this view and the logic of the argument was appreciated by some monogamous farmers, especially those who had experienced labour difficulties. But most farmers, possibly as a result of their commitment to Christianity in its various forms, felt that the negative considerations outweighed the positive benefits of the use of a traditional idiom: 'But what will happen to the next generation? The land will not increase. Ah no!' Indeed, it seems that the incidence of polygynous marriage is declining in Msengezi among second-generation farmholders, since only 7,4 per cent of inheritor owners are polygynists, compared to 19,0 per cent of all farm owners (excluding cases of pending inheritance). However, because polygyny is generally associated with the older age categories and the majority of inheritors are still relatively young men, this apparent decline in the rate of polygynous marriage is not conclusive. Nevertheless, since the majority of extant polygynists were married to more than one wife when they came to Msengezi, at a relatively young age, these figures suggest strongly that the rate of polygyny is falling in this area.

#### Farm Populations and the Family Developmental Cycle

Different types of farm population exist in Msengezi, not all of which can satisfactorily be subsumed under the concept of the family developmental cycle. The wider 'ecological' context of Rhodesia as a whole (which obviously cannot be handled here), including the rates of unemployment and divorce, is perhaps more useful in explaining why certain farm population variants occur, particularly lateral extensions, than is the developmental cycle. However, lineal extensions are explicable in terms of the family developmental cycle.

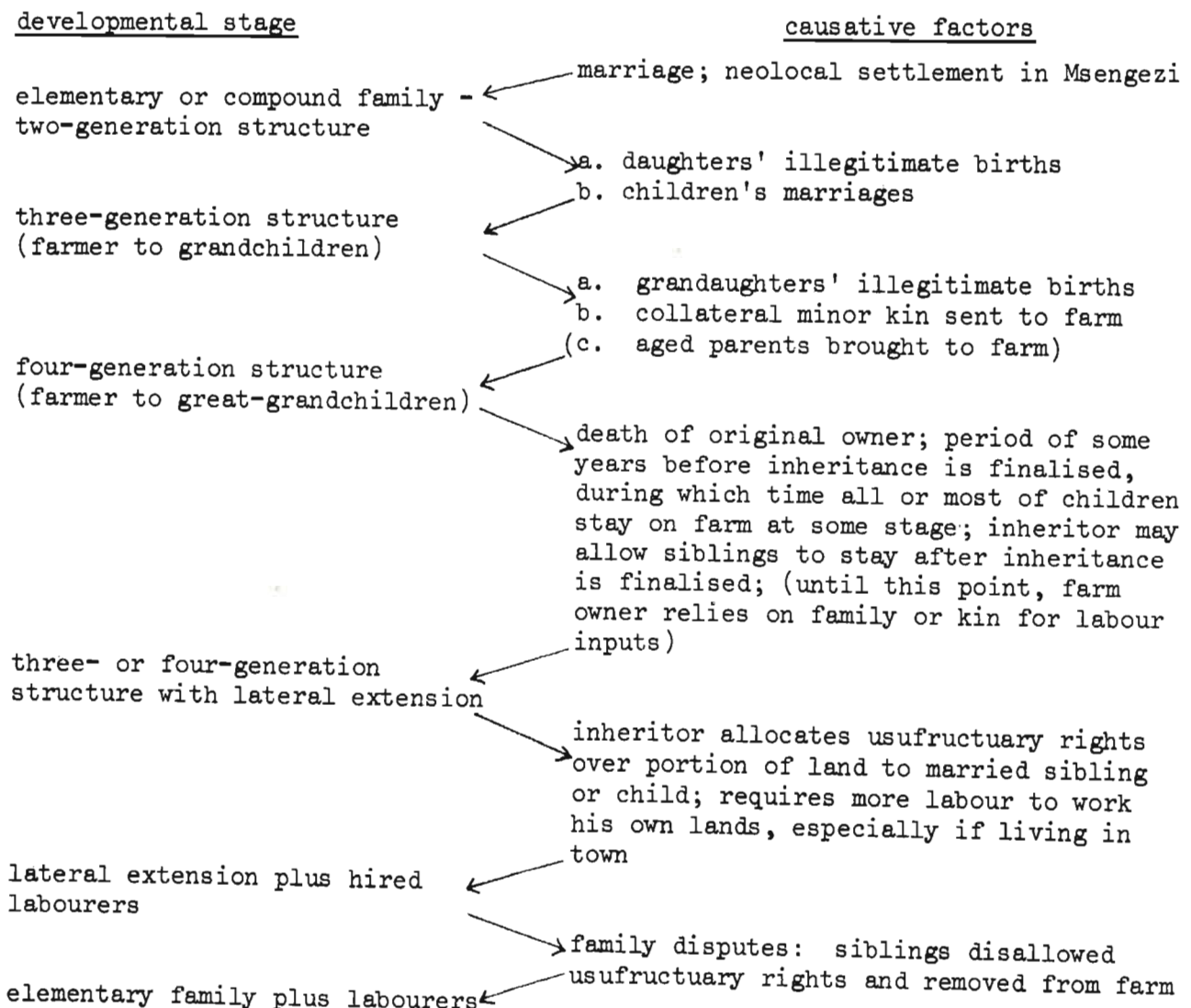
With the exception of unrelated hired workers, all of the components of Msengezi farm populations may be located within egocentric kinship networks centred on the farm owners. The following broad categories of farm residents may be identified: the farm owner's family of procreation, - himself, his wife or wives and their children, together with any adopted children; the farm owner's children's spouses and children; the farm owner's parents; those related collaterally to the farm owner - his siblings, his parents' siblings, and their descendants, together with spouses and children; affines of the farm owner related to him through

his wife, his siblings' spouses, or his children's spouses; unrelated labourers and their families.

In the first five of these categories, not every linking individual in the network will necessarily be present on the farm. To attempt to draw up a typology of farm populations is, therefore, difficult and irrelevant. All one needs to note is that farm populations are not composed exclusively of the farm owners' nuclear families and that they may be extended either laterally in kinship space or lineally over the generations, or in both of these directions simultaneously. These extensions occur partly as a result of conditions in the wider economy, partly as a normal process in the developmental cycle, and partly as a result of the farmers' chronic shortage of labour at peak agricultural periods.

Some of these extensions clearly result from developmental cycle changes, which I have attempted to summarise in diagram ii below.

Diagram ii. The Developmental Cycle and Farm Population Structure in Msengezi



Clearly, not all farmers go through all stages in this diagram: the developmental sequence may be cut short by sale of the farm, for example, whether by the original owner or an inheritor; or well-educated and professionally qualified children may leave the farm permanently before marriage, in which case the farm population is not extended lineally over the generations. Nevertheless, the sequence of growth shown above does account for many of the different categories of kinsfolk of the farm owner found on the farm. It does not, however, account for lateral extensions through affines or through consanguines of a generational level senior to that of the farmer himself.

Virtually all of these remaining lateral extensions occur as a result of insecurity in the wider society (unemployment, divorce, death) in conjunction with the emphasis on kinship proximity, irrespective of the nature of the kinship link, which is found in Msengezi, and with the chronic labour shortage experienced by most farmers. A close relative may require a home and some means of subsistence because he has lost his job, or she has divorced her husband. The farmer usually needs labour. Especially if the relative stands in a non-patrilineal relationship to the farmer, the farmer may agree to shelter and feed him or her in return for labour. Non-patrilineal relationships are preferred in this situation because a new type of economic relationship can be established without interference from traditionally-defined role expectations, rights and obligations relating to the kinship link itself. If the new economic relationship proves successful, the farmer may go one stage further and allow such kin to cultivate small portions of land to provide for their own, semi-independent subsistence. The extent to which non-patrilineal relationships are preferred in such circumstances, is shown by the fact that less than half of all lateral extensions to farm populations follow the patrilineal principle.

The extension of farm populations laterally, like the employment of hired labour, is usually short-term on a season-to-season basis. The structure of the farm population changes in response to variables arising outside the farm, as shown above, and the composition of any given farm population is not necessarily a result of intra-family quarrels and disputes, although these are usually at the root of the fission process which follows inheritance.

#### Population Changes

It is difficult to assess the accuracy of population figures, since data from different sources differ even though they were calculated at roughly the same time. The first available Census figures for Msengezi,



for 1962, give a total population for Msengezi of 5 570. Later in the same year, the total farm population was assessed at 3 983<sup>4</sup>. The discrepancy between these figures arises from the inclusion of the township population and temporary visitors to Msengezi in the Census figure.

In 1969, the Census reflected a total population of 6 490 in Msengezi, while the agricultural census for the same year indicated that the total farm population was 3 904 - a rise in the total population, but a slight decline in the farm population from the 1962 figures. By 1973, the agricultural census indicated a total farm population of 4 582, but my own figures for the total permanent farm population collected during the same year, reflect only 4 124 persons. This relatively small discrepancy of 458 indicates the difference between core population and total numbers: my own figure omits four farms, children at boarding school, temporary visitors and temporary workers. In general, then, it seems that discrepancies between different sets of figures for farm population are within tolerable limits and the figures themselves fall within acceptable limits of accuracy. It appears, then, that the non-farm population of Msengezi is increasing at a faster rate than the farm population, which has been relatively stable for the past fifteen years, as table 5.11 indicates.

Table 5.11 Average farm population, 1956-1973

year	per farm average
1956	7,0
1957	9,6
1958	10,6
1959	11,5
1960	11,6
1961	11,5
1962 *	11,9
-----	-----
1969	11,7
1970	13,8
1971	13,6
1972	13,8
1973 **	13,7
-----	-----
1973 ***	12,7

\* 1956-62 figures taken from the Msengezi Area Plan, 1963

\*\* 1969-73 figures derived from the agricultural censuses: the Central Statistical Office regards these figures, collected by extension assistants, as subject to some considerable degree of error, at least potentially. I therefore regard my own figures as more accurate.

\*\*\* figures collected by me personally

The overall stability of the farm population from 1959, following the period of very rapid growth from 1956-58, may be explained partly in terms of migration into and away from Msengezi. Adult sons move to town seeking work, adult daughters marry, fission occurs following inheritance; and the unemployed return, women marry into purchase land families, labourers pass through. However, irrespective of the effects of such migration on the total size of the farming population, the composition of the total and per farm average populations has changed significantly during the past thirteen years, as table 5.12 shows.

Table 5.12 Composition of farm population: total and average

category of personnel	1962 total	1973* total	1962 average per farm	1973 average per farm	% change 1962 - 1973
adult males (including resident workers)	512	848	1,5	2,6	+ 65,6
adult females	722	1 087	2,1	3,3	+ 50,6
children under 16 yrs on farm permanently **	2 493	2 189	7,4	6,7	- 12,2

\* my own figures

\*\* excluding those at boarding school (= 256 in 1962 and 73 in 1973)

Clearly, there has been a distinct shift in the composition of Msengezi farm populations in the past decade, with a marked decrease in the total number of children occurring in conjunction with large increases in the total numbers of men and, more significantly, women.<sup>5</sup> It is possible that the decline in the number of children is associated with irregular population growth,<sup>6</sup> but it seems unlikely that such irregular growth, in a stable farm population of approximately 4 000, could account by itself for the numerical gap between adult women and children under 16 years of age lessening by over 800 during a twelve-year period.

The decline in the proportion of children in the total population is thus most probably the result of a declining birth rate in this purchase land. A similar, apparently spontaneous decline in Zvinyaningwe and Tokwe purchase lands is noted by Weinrich (1975). In Msengezi, such a decline would fit in well with the general rise in prosperity over the same period: the numbers of privately-owned dams, boreholes, tractors, motor vehicles and mechanised equipment have risen sharply: larger acreages have been brought under crops; tobacco and later cotton have been planted instead of grain crops to an increasing extent; and facilities in the purchase land as a whole have improved considerably. These development indices

have affected farm owners and their families to a much greater extent than the wage-labourers and salaried workers. Possibly Msengezi and other purchase lands afford some measure of support for the thesis that 'development is the best form of contraception'.

Indeed, it seems most likely that the use of modern techniques of contraception is the main reason for this apparent decline in fecundity in Msengezi. Although family planning services were not introduced into Msengezi itself until 1971, when the new clinic was opened, such services have been available in the nearby urban centres of Hartley and Salisbury for much longer, and have been used by women from Msengezi. By early 1974, some eighty women were attending the weekly family planning clinics in Msengezi, despite opposition from the senior generation of women. In the past three years, two young women have died as a result of self-induced abortions: in a small population, these highly visible cases have been widely discussed and many younger women favour extending modern contraceptive techniques to all who wish to use them. Illegitimacy is socially disapproved by all farmers and their families and increasingly is coming to be regarded as economically undesirable as well. Younger women are using modern contraceptive techniques to an increasing extent, even in families where they are subject to the authority of older women.

At this stage, it is impossible to say whether or not the farming population of Msengezi will actually decline, in absolute terms, in the future. Whether the present average of approximately 13 persons per farm will increase, decrease or be maintained in the longer term, probably depends on factors external to the purchase land itself, such as crop product prices, political change, labour supplies and employment opportunities, among others. If educational levels continue to rise and employment increases, it seems likely that the birth rate may continue to decline, in which case farmers will face increased costs of production and decreased profit margins as a result of greater reliance on hired labour. Given that the average number of permanent hired workers per farm in Msengezi is greater than in Zowa or Chitomborgwizi (cf. Paraiwa, 1972) and that development in Msengezi has proceeded further than in these areas, it seems possible that Msengezi has already entered the phase of declining population and increasing mechanisation that has occurred in many European countries since the second world war. In this situation, the relatively low polygyny rate and the rejection of the traditional idiom of accumulation are relevant, because the farmers who are most likely to experience difficulties in acquiring adequate labour for production are those married monogamously - the majority of Msengezi farmers. A declining birth rate, then, may well affect future production levels in Msengezi, if labour-intensive techniques using hired workers

become too costly and mechanisation is not possible.<sup>7</sup> Present patterns of land use, which will be considered in the next chapter, may thus change if labour costs escalate as a result of the changing population structure.

\* \* \* \*

#### Footnotes

1. Settlement in Msengezi was thus completed earlier than in those purchase lands in which allocation had begun earlier.
2. In chronological order, these were: the Native Land Board (1931-1964); the Rural Land Board (1965-69); the Agricultural Land Settlement Board (1970-74); and the Department of Purchase Land Administration, Ministry for Internal Affairs, which performs this function at present.
3. These figures are based on total enumerations of farmholders. In each case, the polygyny rate is calculated as a percentage of the total number of farmers, irrespective of their actual marital status.
4. Msengezi Area Plan, 1963, A8.
5. The fact that the number of adult men has increased proportionately more than the number of adult women may be explained by the increasing use of hired labour over this period. The majority of permanent employees are effectively single men.
6. Irregular population growth is associated with abnormal (usually bimodal) distributions of women in the range of childbearing age. As a result of such abnormal distributions, one may find sudden, abnormally high numbers of children born in certain years. Since it was not possible to collect accurate data on women's ages, I cannot conclusively rule out the possibility of such irregular population growth in Msengezi. Nevertheless, my impression is that this possibility is remote.
7. Farm machinery, like similar, expensive, imported goods, is difficult to obtain in Rhodesia at present because of economic sanctions operating against this country. For African farmers, because of their limited financial resources as well as their racial status, the position is exacerbated.



## CHAPTER SIX

### PATTERNS OF LAND USE

Having considered in chapter five the population structure of Msengezi, in this chapter I examine the various ways in which farmers use their basic capital resource - land - in the process of accumulation. But before considering the different uses to which Msengezi farmers do put their land, namely the production of crops and livestock and the economic support of certain relatives, some background information will assist the reader to understand production in this area more fully.

#### Ecological Background to Land Usage

In the Rhodesian agro-ecological classification scheme, Msengezi as a whole falls into category II (B), which is suitable for intensive crop production supported by livestock enterprises. This land category is effectively (in terms of output) the most important in Rhodesia as far as crop production is concerned. Msengezi covers nearly one-tenth of all the purchase land area falling into this category. However, only 4 per cent of all the land falling into agro-ecological category II is in the purchase lands: most of this land is European-owned.

The topography in Msengezi is gently undulating, ranging between 4 200 feet above sea level in the east and 3 800 feet in the west. The land is dissected by numerous west-flowing rivers and streams which drain into the Umfuli system and, eventually, into the Zambezi river. Normally these rivers are small, but they swell quickly during summer downpours, frequently blocking travel for hours at a time before subsiding below the low-level bridges. The average rainfall varies between twenty-two and twenty-eight inches annually in normal seasons, but there are wide fluctuations: in the 1973-4 season, at least one farm recorded over sixty inches, while twice in the past seven seasons the government has distributed drought relief payments in this area. In seasons of heavy rainfall, considerable leaching of the soil occurs and contour ridges frequently burst under the stress of dammed water, while roads and paths leading to the public dip-tanks suffer considerable wash-away erosion. For this reason, soil conservation measures are extremely important, as will be seen later.

The main soil type in Msengezi is sandveld, which covers 95 per cent of the purchase land. The remaining 5 per cent are sandy-loam soils, slightly more productive and found mainly in the West ICA (see map 2 for Intensive Conservation Area divisions). These soils, derived from granite sand, are 'low in organic matter, ranging from well-drained

to water-logged'.<sup>1</sup> The average farm in Msengezi has only forty acres of land which are not subject to waterlogging in a normal rainy season, and the generally poor quality of the soils is apparent from table 6.1.

Table 6.1    Soil classification on Msengezi farms<sup>2</sup>

soil category *	number of farms	%
some class 1	-	-
some class 2	24	7,4
some class 3	151	45,1
class 4 or 5 only **	155	47,5

\*    class 1 is good agricultural soil, class 5 poor

\*\*    subject to waterlogging

In an area where the soils are of inherently low fertility and liable to waterlogging, crop production is a hazardous business: as the Farmers'Co-op advertisement puts it, 'farming is one big gamble'. And yet Msengezi is located very favourably in comparison to most purchase lands in respect of soils and economic potential. Clearly, many purchase land farms cannot make a gross annual profit of \$600 and are thus 'unviable' at present, partly because they carry a much higher risk in production than do most European-owned farms. To expect purchase land farmers to compete on equal terms with Europeans, therefore, is to ignore the very obvious differences between these two categories in terms of the quality as well as the quantity of the land each tills. Differences in soil types and qualities are clearly apparent from an aerial view of African and European farming areas.

However, the application of fertilisers and organic matter to sandveld soils raises their fertility quite markedly. Subsidiary methods of increasing soil fertility in Msengezi include the destruction and spreading over fields of anthills (zvuru), which act similarly to gypsum in altering the pH value of the soil; and the cutting and burning of tree branches, which yield potash. This latter system, which is in many respects similar to the chitimene systems of the Zambian Mambwe and Bemba tribes, has no simple vernacular description in Msengezi. Very few farmers use this system, although I am told it is well-known in the tribal trust lands in north-eastern Rhodesia. The use of medicines (mishonga; muti) to increase soil fertility is today virtually unknown in Msengezi. Farmers' attitudes to such practices may be summarised in the words of one relatively unsuccessful farmer who, having visited different herbalists for three successive years in the 1950s to obtain

such medicines which had no effect on his yields, turned sceptic: 'Mishonga versus manure and fertiliser? Manure and fertiliser will always win!'<sup>3</sup>

Because sandveld soils are easily eroded, soil conservation works in these areas are important. In Msengezi, the standards of soil conservation are good. During 1973, for example, only one order in terms of the Natural Resources Act was served in Msengezi for inadequate contouring. One Lands Inspector at least regarded his tours in Msengezi as 'a pleasure'.<sup>4</sup> The standard of conservation works has always been good, despite the length of time these farms have been under cultivation: the longer the cropping cycle, the more friable and liable to erosion sandveld soils become. The problem of contour maintenance, however, involves farmers in considerable time and expense, despite the recent introduction of tractor-and-plough contouring. The ngongo method, introduced in 1967 and described in the following quotation, is a local response to this problem:

A purchase area farmer has revolutionised the laborious task of building contour ridges. Using his method, two men can complete in one hour what it takes two men using the old method a day to do ... Mr. Nelson Gwai, who has about 200 acres in the Msengezi purchase area ... had this labour problem. His farm needed contour ridges. He knew that on average one man could only construct 25 yards of contour in a day using a shovel; his ridges would require many man hours and a big wage bill. Mr. Gwai borrowed his neighbour's dam scoop [and] experimented with the scoop and two oxen. With a leader at the head he drove the oxen down the furrow of the contour filling the scoop with soil, then drove the oxen over the line ... The process [was] repeated further along the contour leaving separate heaps of soil along the line of the ridge. Using the same method, he then commenced to fill in the spaces between the heaps, until the ridge was complete. Mr. Gwai has called his new method ngongo [Shona: ideophone meaning 'throbbing', referring to the state of one's body after such work].

The Engineering Department of Conservation and Extension are experimenting with a dam scoop in an attempt to find modifications which will improve its efficiency for contour ridging.<sup>5</sup>

The ngongo method is now quite widely used by young, able-bodied farmers, and innovations such as this one are not uncommon in Msengezi. Time-saving or labour-saving modifications to standard, mass-produced equipment are also ingenious: cotton spray-pumps have been fitted with cross-booms allowing four instead of two rows to be sprayed simultaneously; row-marks for the exact spacing of cotton seeds have been made from old bicycle frames, wheel-barrow wheels and strips of baling steel, thus cutting down on seed wastage and speeding up planting. Behind all of these innovations has lain some farmer's worry about wasting his scarce resources, for producing crops is an expensive process and Msengezi conditions are far from ideal.



## Crop Production

Msengezi farms are, on average, 180 acres in extent, but range from 80 to 400 acres. These figures include recent allocations of riverine and state land, added in an attempt to render some of the farms more nearly viable (in the sense of being able to produce a gross profit margin of Rh.\$600 p.a.) than they had previously been. Since the area as a whole is suited to a form of mixed farming, most farmers divide their land, their time and their resources between crops and livestock, although a handful of producers rely exclusively on one or the other.

On average during the 1972-3 season, thirty-six areas were under various crops on each farm, the range being from 2 to 169 acres, while 144 acres were devoted to grazing. Although this division of land seems uneven, one must remember that cattle in particular require large tracts of land for grazing in most parts of Africa. The fact that a farmer uses only a small proportion of his total acreage for cropping does not necessarily mean that the remainder is unproductive. The man who grows only three acres of maize on his 200-acre farm, for example, may be paddocking and planting grasses and using his maize crop exclusively for supplementary winter feeding for his cattle, of which he may sell up to twelve head each year. Even if a man is not selling crops, then, he may still be producing in an efficient manner for the market. Nevertheless, on most Msengezi farms, crops do constitute the most important source of income.

Despite the difficulties of crop production on farms liable to water-logging and erosion, the total acreage under crops on Msengezi farms has increased by 70 per cent over the last twelve years. In 1962, 6 777 acres were cultivated,<sup>6</sup> compared to 11 510 in 1972-3.<sup>7</sup> In this same period, the overall adult population increase has been only 56.8 per cent, suggesting that there has been a steady increase in labour productivity, even if yields have not altered substantially (cf. table 6.3, p. 73). This increase in labour productivity is calculated simply on the increased acreages planted to crops, and takes no account of the greater labour intensiveness of crops such as groundnuts and cotton compared to maize and other grains.

Ignoring such differential labour requirements, however, the rank order of crop production, in terms of average acreages, in the 1972-3 season was: maize, cotton, groundnuts, sorghum, sunflowers, soya beans, sunhemp (all of which are either cash or stock fodder crops); followed by edible beans, rice, bambara nuts (nyimo), rapoko and munga (which are primarily food crops); and finally Burley tobacco, mangoes, vegetables and tomatoes (which are perishable minor crops: cf. table 6.2). Farmers therefore concentrate today on marketable rather than consumption crops in Msengezi.



However, this concentration has entailed a considerable change in production patterns over the past ten years. During the 1961-2 season, the rank order was: maize, groundnuts, rapoko, green manure, munga, rice, sunhemp, green maize, sorghum, beans, Turkish tobacco and bean hay. The earlier dependence on food crops (of which some 60 per cent was sold [Hunt, 1960]) has clearly given way to a much greater reliance on purely cash crops. Price changes and the re-introduction of cotton have caused this shift. During 1974, for example, all vegetable oils were in great demand, and the prices for cotton seed, groundnuts, and sunflowers rose accordingly. Where previously these crops were used purely for stock-feed, Msengezi farmers are now growing them for sale as well.

Table 6.2    Average cropping area per farmer, 1972-3 season<sup>8</sup>

crop	acreage (average) per producer	% of all producers
maize	15,0	100,0
cotton	10,0	80,3
groundnuts	5,0	95,8
sorghum	4,0	54,6
sunflowers	4,0	21,8
soya beans	3,0	3,3
sunhemp	3,0	2,1
edible beans	2,5	9,0
rice	2,0	23,9
bambara nuts/ <u>nyimo</u>	2,0	20,6
rapoko	2,0	20,3
<u>munga</u>	1,5	3,3
Burley tobacco	1,5	0,9
mangoes	1,0	4,5
tomatoes	0,5	6,3
green vegetables	0,5	10,1

Maize and cotton, because of their importance as cash crops, absorb nearly all of the fertiliser used on Msengezi farms. Maize requires heavy fertilisation for successful production, but over the past five years the proportion of the total fertiliser applications used on cotton has increased significantly as the profitability of this crop has become more and more apparent (cf. Cheater, 1974b: 68). Very little fertiliser is applied to crops grown primarily for consumption on the farms, such as rice, bambara nuts, rapoko, edible beans and munga, nor to those planted for stock-feed, such as sunflowers, sunhemp and soya beans, because these crops have, until recently, yielded no monetary

return. The scarce resource of expensive fertiliser is reserved for those areas of production which give the highest cash return.

Even on maize and cotton, however, the average fertilisation rate is below that recommended, particularly in seasons of abnormal weather conditions, when farmers refuse to 'waste' this expensive resource because expected profit margins have fallen (cf. table 6.3). In the light of the increased production risk on these farms and the continuing necessity to repay loans, emphasised by extension workers and loan finance companies alike, such low applications of fertiliser are economically rational. Most farmers in Msengezi use short-term seasonal loans (which are repaid by stop-orders on marketed produce) to produce their crops. Hence, as one farmer emphasised, they must be certain that, in the event of everything going wrong, they can still repay those loans, otherwise they run the risk of having cattle, equipment or even their farms sold to recover these debts, as well as wrecking their chances of obtaining further loan finance.

Table 6.3 Maize: fertilisation and productivity, 1968-1973<sup>9</sup>

season	acreage planted	av. fertiliser applications per acre in Kgs	av. yield per acre (80 Kg bags)	total yield (80 Kg bags)
1961-62	3 447	unknown	8	26 702
1968-69	5 250	170	11	56 825
1969-70	5 600	42	3	17 737 *
1970-71	4 810	89	8	39 550
1971-72	4 080	96	12	50 550
1972-73	5 120	59	2	10 587 *
1973-74	4 150	63	7	27 950 **

\* drought seasons

\*\* abnormally heavy rainy season

These average rates for fertiliser applications nevertheless hide a considerable range in actual applications. Those farmers who do not have to rely on loan finance to produce their crops generally fertilise to recommended rates (up to 250 Kg per acre for maize), using both planting compounds and top-dressing. Those who rely on loan finance generally omit most of the planting compounds. Those who cannot obtain loan finance, for whatever reason, make a token application of top-dressing if possible. Again, such differences in fertilisation practices are economically rational, for it is the top-dressing (ammonium nitrate) which gives the maximum improvement in yields.

Agro-economically, Msengezi's sandveld soils are best suited to tobacco. However, because of Rhodesia's position in the international

community, tobacco production has been controlled very strictly since the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965 and the profit margins on tobacco production are only now beginning to rise again. Whereas in 1965 more than half of Msengezi farmers were growing either Turkish or Burley tobacco, introduced to Msengezi in 1952 and 1963 respectively, only four farmers were registered tobacco growers in 1973. Virtually all farmers had switched to cotton as the major cash crop. However, one or two farmers have specialised in crops other than cotton or tobacco, having seized the opportunity to exploit and, in certain cases, to create particular market outlets in or around Msengezi. One man, for example, planted six acres of deciduous and citrus fruit trees and sold the fruit in Hartley, from which he realised enough money to educate his five children beyond secondary school level: others have followed his example. Some farmers have grown vegetables to sell both in Hartley and on the internal market (which includes the two boarding schools within or on the boundaries of the purchase land). Two farmers at least have specialised in producing groundnuts. Most of these crop specialisations require greater labour inputs than do grains, yet most of these producers are monogamous entrepreneurs.

The perspicacity of certain farmers, or their wives, in identifying such potential specific markets for certain crops, is clearly illustrated in the case of the Basa family (pseudonym). Five years ago, Mrs. Basa realised that the peanut butter she made for her family might be a marketable commodity, so she took samples of it to the headmasters of both boarding schools. Both men were impressed and, within a year, the family had orders for fifty gallons of peanut butter at the beginning of each term from both schools. The total of 300 gallons annually gives the family a guaranteed income of Rh\$630 from the peanut butter alone. They now plant eighteen acres of groundnuts each year and hand sort the shelled nuts into best quality nuts suitable for marketing as grade A produce to the Grain Marketing Board, and damaged or reject nuts, which are processed into the peanut butter. These second-grade nuts are lightly roasted, crushed in a wood-block mortar, then ground a number of times between granite stones to produce a smooth peanut butter. The butter is then left for up to 8 weeks for the oil to rise to the surface, before it is removed for use in cooking. The Basa family - husband, wife and four adolescent children - undertake the entire process themselves, employing no additional workers who might cause their profits to diminish, even though groundnuts are an extremely labour-intensive crop and the manufacture of the peanut butter is equally demanding. They have cornered an assured market, and their other crops simply supplement the peanut butter cottage industry.

In the years before the co-operative society was formed, in 1957, I suspect that the search for individual markets of this type was considerably more important than it is now. Today most farmers sell their controlled crops to the statutory marketing boards, either directly or through the co-operative society. Nevertheless, some farmers continue to use their own, specially demarcated markets as their major source of income, as do the Basa family. This entrepreneurial marketing tends, however, to be confined to those using the modern idiom to accumulate, in the same way as livestock specialisations are confined to this category of farmer, as I shall show later. Accumulators using the traditional idiom tend instead to use established marketing channels to dispose of large quantities of grain and cotton, rather than seeking their own individual, unusual and limited outlets, which yield a somewhat higher return for greater labour demands. The 'old-fashioned' accumulators reap these larger harvests from considerably larger acreages than average: the average polygynist has fifty-three acres under crops on his farm, compared to thirty-six acres overall, an increase of nearly 50 per cent. In order to accumulate, then, he relies on the extensive production of crops for which there is a nationally-controlled market, offering prices fixed in advance which do not fluctuate greatly from one season to the next. He minimises his risks by adopting this crop production strategy, whereas modern accumulators are prepared to take somewhat greater risks to achieve somewhat larger returns.

However, although farmers using a traditional idiom of accumulation take fewer risks in their crop production than do the modern entrepreneurs, their entrepreneurial spirit does reveal itself in their propensity to make money from hiring out their machinery, which the modern accumulators also do. Land preparation, planting and transporting are all profitable sidelines to farming for the man who has mechanised his production: the demand for tractor-ploughing and transport of goods by truck is considerable, for the majority of farmers still rely on ox-drawn ploughs and scotch carts, which are too slow and too small to meet all of their needs all of the time. As acreages are expanded, time becomes more valuable and mechanised production more economic: farmers owning tractors and other machinery and who are prepared to undertake contract work are, therefore, seen as important assets to the community at large as the inefficiencies of total reliance on cattle become increasingly apparent.

#### Livestock Enterprises

While crops provide most Msengezi farmers with the greater proportion of their farming income, cattle form the basis of most livestock production. In 1973, only four farmers ran no cattle at all on their farms, whereas most farmers relied on cattle to provide a little less



than half of their total income (for details of cattle holdings, see table 6.4). An average of four head of cattle were sold from each farm in Msengezi in 1972-3, as table 6.5 shows. This figure was possibly higher than normal because of the very bad drought during that season, but it seems to have been maintained in the following season. Sales of fattened stock to the Cold Storage Commission accounted for more than half of these sales. The average sum realised per beast was in the region of Rh\$90-100. Both for use on the land and for sale, therefore, cattle are extremely important to the average farmer who has not specialised in any particular line of production. Nevertheless, pigs, sheep, goats and poultry are also important and some farmers or their wives raise such small stock for sale.

Table 6.4    Cattle holdings on Msengezi farms \*

<u>no. of cattle</u>	<u>no. of farms</u>
unknown	8
nil	4
1 - 5	6
6 - 10	19
11 - 15	44
16 - 20	65
21 - 25	57
26 - 30	59
31 - 35	28
36 - 40	10
41 +	25

\* including calves

When considering livestock, particularly cattle, the concept of the carrying capacity of the land is crucial. The carrying capacity depends on such factors as topography, water supplies, soil type, vegetation cover and fencing. Most Msengezi farms have been stumped extensively, thus altering the natural savannah woodland cover to grass cover, but in its natural, unimproved condition - unstumped, unfenced, with no artificial water supplies or planted grasses - this land will carry one 'large stock equivalent' (L.S.E.) on between eight and fifteen acres.<sup>10</sup> That is, the equivalent of one head of cattle requires an area of grazing land between these limits to support it alone throughout one year, without causing deterioration of the veldt. When the land is improved - by stumping trees, fencing paddocks, broadcasting grasses and providing watering points in every paddock - the carrying capacity can be

increased considerably, though probably not beyond four acres per L.S.E., even on the best, short-duration, grazing scheme.

Taking the average carrying capacity to be eight acres per L.S.E. and the average total livestock area to be 144 acres, it is clear that the average farm herd should not exceed twenty head of cattle, assuming that four of these are calves or yearlings. The meat take-off from twenty head, depending on the exact composition of the herd and the calving rate, would vary between three and five head annually if herd size was to be maintained. From the aggregate herd in Msengezi, which numbers approximately 7 500 head, the take-off in 1973 was actually 1 553 (see tables 6.5 and 6.6) - roughly 20 per cent.<sup>11</sup> Of this take-off, nearly 85 per cent was sold and the remainder was consumed.

From the size of the aggregate herd and individual cattle-holdings, it is clear that most farms are overstocked with cattle. The average farm herd in fact numbers twenty-three head, compared to the average carrying capacity of twenty head: on average, each farm is thus overstocked by some 15 per cent. While such overstocking is usually regarded, by white Rhodesians at least, as the inevitable outcome of Africans' 'traditional' attachment to the largest possible number of cattle, irrespective of quality, it is more accurate to see this overstocking in Msengezi as an attempt to increase herd size in order to increase take-off, the problem being that herd ownership is generally fragmented among a number of different individuals - the farmer himself, his wife, his children and possibly his siblings.<sup>12</sup> None of these individual owners can dispose of cattle belonging to any of the others, so what appears to be a single herd, because it is running on one farm, is in fact a number of smaller herds running as one. The basic reason for overstocking is inadequate land to support individually-owned herds large enough to provide an economic take-off every year, the fragmentation of herd ownership being an additional complicating factor. In the same way as farmers may allocate land for cultivation to others, grazing usufruct may thus also be sub-divided on these farms, on a temporary basis.

The economics of cattle production in Msengezi are, therefore, very complex. To begin with, cattle (oxen) are required for ploughing. Only 16 per cent of farmers own tractors, and although the tractor-owners undertake a considerable amount of contract ploughing for those who rely mainly on oxen, most farmers keep a ploughing team of between four and ten oxen. While these oxen are the cheapest method of land preparation, they require large tracts of land for their upkeep and contribute very little to livestock production itself, being old and

tough at the end of their working lives. Ox-ploughing therefore entails a hidden 'opportunity cost' in respect of maintaining the oxen.

Secondly, the sale of well-finished cattle realises greater profits for considerably less labour effort than does cash-cropping on a non-mechanised basis. Nevertheless, cattle require more land to realise this monetary return than do crops, which have the added advantage generally of producing a quicker return on outlay. However, if, instead of rearing his own cattle for sale, the farmer buys 'scrub stock' from neighbouring tribal cultivators and feeds these animals for three to six months before re-selling them, his profits will be greater than those obtained from crop production and he will realise them more quickly. Unfortunately for the shrewd farmers who have seen this opportunity, however, such buying is hindered (though not completely stopped) by the legal requirements for transferring cattle from one district to another, while the Ministry for Internal Affairs has attempted to prevent such 'exploitation' of tribal cultivators, whether by purchase land farmers or Europeans, by encouraging cattle fattening schemes and direct sale to the Cold Storage Commission.

The third point about the economics of livestock production concerns the possibility of changes in the mechanics of such production. If, instead of allowing cattle to range freely within paddocks to obtain their main food requirements, they were stall-fed for most of the year, the carrying capacity of the land could be increased considerably. The capital and recurrent costs of introducing such a feedlot system would be high, and labour requirements would be greatly increased. Nevertheless, at least one businessman-farmer is presently investing in such a system and the question of a feedlot to be run by the cooperative society has already arisen. In the final analysis, some form of feedlot system is the only means of making these small, sandveld farms viable and worthwhile, given that economies of scale in cropping are impossible, but such changes in production emphasis will require heavy loan capitalisation, access to specialist advice and greater knowledge on the part of farmers than exists at present. Specialisation in cattle is presently restricted to a small number of farmers who have concentrated their production efforts on beef and one man who has exploited a small market for dairy products, notably fresh and soured milk, on the nearby Marshall Hartley Mission. He is the only one to organise his production around dairying, based on a Friesland herd, although many other farmers sell excess milk to non-farm people at the schools and in Dombwe township. Few farmers, therefore, have sufficient knowledge of specialist animal husbandry techniques at present to be able to switch their production emphasis.<sup>13</sup>

Table 6.5 Livestock sales from Msengezi, 1969-1974<sup>14</sup>

animal	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74
cattle	509	663	601	742	1 313	1 232
pigs	79	49	64	31	24	39
sheep	103	117	131	145	124	223
goats	71	71	77	83	87	146

Table 6.6 Home slaughterings of livestock in Msengezi, 1969-1974<sup>15</sup>

animal	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74
cattle	154	172	170	231	240	230
pigs	54	55	54	50	43	44
sheep	212	221	241	375	243	222
goats	54	102	127	206	168	154

Turning from cattle to other livestock, pig production in Msengezi is declining in importance at present, largely because the climate is unsuitable and because they require considerable tending. More pigs are slaughtered for home consumption now than are sold, as a comparison of tables 6.5 and 6.6 shows. During the past decade many farmers experimented with pigs before deciding that other lines of production were less troublesome and at least as profitable.

Although pigs are kept by relatively few farmers in Msengezi, the raising of sheep and goats is widespread, on a small scale. Women usually control such stock, because they can tend the flocks while doing household chores. Sheep in particular are kept for home consumption and the internal market: demand for them is greatest at Christmas and Easter, when family gatherings are common. Goats are sold mainly to people in Zwimba TTL who use them for ritual purposes. The total number of small stock in Msengezi is considerably less than the number of cattle, for the following reasons: firstly, they are mainly women's investments, for 'pocket money'; secondly, they require herding even if the farm is fenced and paddocked, and have a considerable nuisance value; thirdly, they crop the veldt so closely as to cause an erosion hazard; fourthly, they are not as profitable as other lines of production, such as cattle and poultry.

Chickens and, to a much lesser extent, ducks have been raised for sale for many years, again mainly by women. The internal market for poultry meat and eggs is good, and there are also small European market



outlets for such products at Makwiro, Gadzema and Hartley. The idea of an egg cooperative has been raised recently, in an attempt to exploit these markets more fully. Poultry production is fashionable in Msengezi at present, as a result of the boost given to this specialisation by two businessmen-farmers in their early forties, old school friends, who acquired their farms at roughly the same time, one by purchase on the open market and the other by inheritance.

The demonstration effect in poultry production began with the man who bought his farm in order to exploit what he considered to be a virtually untapped market for chicken meat among residents of Salisbury's African townships. Having no experience of farming himself, he started on a small scale, using extension services fully. Inevitably, he experienced many costly problems, including the dishonesty of farm managers, although he has overcome these now. His production is now geared to a monthly turnover of 200 birds and he is in the process of installing his own incubators in order to breed his birds himself. His crop production, apart from a recent experiment with cotton, is geared entirely to feeding the chickens and his nine labourers.

The second businessman-farmer took up his friend's idea but concentrated his efforts on egg production. With greater financial resources to back his farming, he was less cautious in his experiment than his friend, and he also sought the advice and expertise of some of the biggest European producers in Rhodesia before completing his plans. He now has 1 200 layers, producing an average of 24 000 eggs each month, which are retailed (at 40-50 cents per dozen) through his own supermarkets in Bulawayo and Salisbury. In contrast, the poultry pioneer sells his birds to middlemen operating in the open markets in the townships at a price of \$1-\$1.50 per bird. Both of these poultry specialisations thus yield high returns.

I have shown earlier that unusual marketing of crops is almost always undertaken by accumulators using the modern idiom. Likewise, all livestock specialisations, without exception - dairying, 'ranching' and poultry - have been undertaken by 'modern capitalists'. I would suggest that the reason for this situation lies in the degree of specialisation required for these enterprises, which require access to knowledge and capital rather than access to labour as the critical factor in production. Because large-scale livestock enterprises are regarded as innovative and trend-setting in Msengezi, those who have introduced such specialisations have derived considerable prestige from their actions, as have those who

have been quick to follow their example. Such men are thought to have advanced the 'new civilisation' one step further in this area. However, those who have specialised in large-scale beef production in particular have had to negotiate grazing rights from other farmers, because their own farms are too small to support large herds (large enough to allow an annual take-off of at least 12 head, that is) on a free-range system. These men have thus become involved in the system of allocating usufructuary rights, as recipients rather than allocators. Although I have only fragmentary data on the extent to which grazing usufruct may be subdivided, my material on the allocation of cultivation usufruct is comprehensive, and it is to this aspect of land use that I shall now turn.

#### The Allocation of Usufructuary Rights to Arable Land

Although the allocation of usufructuary rights is hardly a form of land use comparable to cropping or grazing, the fact that some fifteen per cent of the total land under cultivation in Msengezi during the 1972-3 season was not under the direct control of the farm owners, requires examination. During this season, the allocation of cultivation rights by the farm owner to other persons had occurred on 164 of the 324 farms investigated (50.6 per cent of the total). There were 324 of these additional cultivators, an average of two on each of the farms affected. Clearly, this pattern of land use is important.

The allocation of these cultivation rights did not vary with the marital status of the farm owner: the idiom of accumulation adopted, therefore, apparently did not affect the likelihood of such allocation occurring. However, as I shall show in detail in chapter eight, the most successful accumulators using either idiom were less likely to have allocated usufructuary rights to other people than were relatively unsuccessful farmers. Inheritor owners were more likely than original settlers to have allocated such rights to others: nearly 43 per cent of all farms on which such rights had been allocated, belonged to inheritor owners, although inherited farms constitute only 29 per cent of all farms in Msengezi (cf. chapter ten).

These additional cultivators are the people to whom various land boards have referred as 'squatters', complaining of 'illegal subdivision'. To attach the label 'squatter' to all of these people is, however, hardly justified, even though the farmers themselves use this term, for there exists a definite gradation in the degree to which usufructuary rights are actually divided. In the first instance, where responsibility for running the farm is transferred in toto to a

related farm manager while the owner is absent, there is actually no 'division' of land rights as such, for the farm continues to be worked as a single unit, even though the proceeds from farming accrue to the manager and not the owner. The owner does, however, remain ultimately responsible for the farm and continues to pay the Council rates as an indication of this interest and responsibility as well as his legal obligations. Of the 324 additional cultivators during 1972-3, nine fell into this first category: four were the owners' mothers, two their younger brothers and three their fathers' younger brothers (two of whom were legal guardians to farm owners who were minors).

In the second degree of land division, one finds the 'pointing out' of limited responsibility for a particular section of a field, usually to a wife married polygynously or to an unmarried adult son. In these cases, the farm is actually worked as a single unit, the farmer himself assuming responsibility for all land preparation, planning, inputs and marketing. But for the area pointed out, the particular wife or son will be responsible for providing all labour inputs for planting, weeding and reaping and the monetary proceeds from that particular portion of land will accrue to her or him alone. Thus the land itself remains undivided: the rights of the wife or son lie in that particular portion of the crops, not the land on which they were produced. This system of 'pointing out' should perhaps be regarded as a form of wage rather than a division of usufructuary rights per se. During the 1972-3 season, some sixty additional cultivators had assumed such limited responsibility for crop production.

Thirdly, there is the complete allocation of rights to work a clearly-demarcated portion of the farm, involving the majority of additional cultivators. Once such allocation has been made, the farmer himself retains no responsibility for production and cannot interfere with it, except to insist on a sufficiently high standard of soil conservation practices that he will not be liable to prosecution under the Natural Resources Act. The person to whom the land has been allotted assumes responsibility for ploughing, planting, the purchase of seed and fertilisers, the provision of labour, and marketing arrangements.

However, even within this category of complete allocation of rights to the use of land, there are varying degrees of permanency about the allocation. The arrangement is most permanent in the case of mothers and married sons (together some 35 per cent of all additional cultivators), and in these cases the division is likely to stand until



such time as the mother is too old to want her own fields or the son decides he is no longer interested in cultivation, at which point his rights will become latent and may (or may not) be reactivated later, at the discretion of the farm owner. For other close kinsmen and affines, the allocation of usufructuary rights to land is semi-permanent, until such time as the person can make other, more satisfactory arrangements for his or her subsistence, or until family quarrels cause the failure of this arrangement. Semi-permanent allocations of this nature may last no longer, in fact, than the essentially temporary allocations to resident employees, which are made on a season-to-season basis. Although there would be considerable pressures against a farmer withdrawing semi-permanent or temporary usufructuary rights before crops have been reaped, such withdrawal is by no means impossible. In respect of allotting usufructuary rights to his farm-land, the farm owner has complete control, with the weight of the law behind him should he decide to withdraw such rights. There are precedents for such withdrawal dating back to the early 1950s, in cases of the forcible eviction of siblings and others by determined farm owners.

The majority of additional cultivators are, then, related to the farm owners by ties of kinship or affinity, as table 6.7 shows. Additional cultivators who are either wives of farm owners or in the first degree of kinship to them (actual fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters) number 246, or nearly 76 per cent of the total. Only fifty-four are more distant kinsfolk, including affines, all of whom can trace actual genealogical relationship to the farm owner. Clearly, then, cultivation rights go, firstly, to members of the farm owners' immediate families of orientation and procreation. Secondly, usufructuary rights may go to much smaller numbers of more distant kinsmen in the second or third degrees of kinship, who are linked to the farm owner through members of the first category. Thirdly, a small number of unrelated permanent employees may receive land on a temporary basis only.

The main reason for all allocations of usufructuary rights is pecuniary. By making available the means of subsistence to kin who have a right to expect support from him, the farmer relieves himself of financial responsibility for them. Additional cultivators as a category, then, are not accumulators as are the farm owners, but subsistence-level 'clients'. However, in allocating usufructuary rights to women clients in particular, the farmer allows them to gain a degree of financial independence much greater than was intended in the traditional 'wife's portion' of family land, where small quantities of different relish



Table 6.7 Relationships of additional cultivators to farm owners\*

son	75	
wife	50	
mother/father's wife	49	
brother	45	
sister	20	
other patrilateral	20	
daughter	6	females : 155 : 47,8 per cent
other matrilateral	5	males : 169 : 52,2 per cent
sibling's child	5	
affine	24	
unrelated	25	
<hr/>		
total	324	

\* includes latent usufructuary rights

crops were grown to feed the family. In Msengezi today, women are no longer simply the providers of food: increasingly, 'subsistence' in their eyes includes the cash needs of their children for school fees and clothing. However, women who are additional cultivators generally till small acreages (average 5,8 acres, cf. table 6.8), smaller than those of their male counterparts. They therefore constitute the poorest category of producer in Msengezi, working at best only marginally above subsistence level. Officially, this category of subsistence producer does not exist in the purchase lands: actually, such women, together with male cultivators who generally have access to slightly more land, constitute a significant proportion of all producers in Msengezi, even though their crops form a negligible proportion of the total marketed output from Msengezi.

Since they are unaware of the gradations in allocations of land usufruct described above, white civil servants deplore such allocation, believing that it diminishes the potential viability of purchase land farms. Indeed, the legislation governing purchase land freehold seeks to prevent sub-division and land fragmentation, with all their attendant evils. However, although in principle such allocations appear to constitute de facto sub-division, in practice they are rather different. Firstly, most of these allocations are temporary, made in response to the insecurity of kin in the wider society, and may be revoked at will, which they frequently are. Secondly, the average acreage tilled by an additional cultivator in Msengezi during 1972-3 was just over six acres, a small amount in the context of 180-acre farms. Nevertheless, with an

Table 6.8    Acreages tilled by additional cultivators\*

acres	men	women
unknown	3	3
1,0 - 1,9	4	15
2,0 - 2,9	16	18
3,0 - 3,9	17	25
4,0 - 4,9	24	18
5,0 - 5,9	11	18
6,0 - 6,9	19	18
7,0 - 7,9	10	10
8,0 - 8,9	12	5
9,0 - 9,9	9	3
10,0 - 14,9	16	16
15,0 - 19,9	8	2
20,0 - 29,9	9	3
30 plus	3	1
average	8,0	5,8
total acres tilled	1 290,5	896,9

\* actually under cultivation 1972-3

average of two additional cultivators per farm on half the farms in Msengezi, these people were actually tilling just over 30 per cent of the total arable land in use on these 'divided' farms. In most cases, this substantial proportion of the total arable acreage in use was taken from the 'surplus' cash crop acreage of the farm owners: it is likely, therefore, that the output of crops such as cotton would be increased if the additional cultivators were removed, since the primary focus of their activities is subsistence. But this conjecture is not proven: that the land presently cropped by additional cultivators might simply revert to fallow or to grazing land in the absence of adequate labour to work it, is equally possible. Indeed, the average opportunity cost to the farm owner of each additional cultivator is, in grazing terms, nearly one large stock equivalent.

\* \* \* \*

Until such time as the Rhodesian economic structure no longer requires the black rural areas to underpin present inadequate wage levels and lack of security in respect of unemployment and retirement among African workers, any attempts to prohibit the allocation of usufructuary rights to insecure kinsfolk in the purchase lands will fail. People must eat. If, therefore, a man from a purchase land background loses his job and his cash income, he has to turn to subsistence where he can find it, from close kinsmen. No-one else will help him; he has no land rights, latent or otherwise, in the tribal areas. Until this situation is tackled, any discussion of how to prevent 'illegal sub-division' of purchase land farms is purely academic. Purchase land farmers themselves would welcome a solution to this problem: as I have shown in this chapter, their contribution to relatives' subsistence is at the expense of their own economic interests, for the allocation of land usufruct to others implies a diminution of their own grazing or cropping area and, therefore, a considerable opportunity cost as far as their own accumulation is concerned.

This problem is not, in any case, confined to Rhodesia: Kenya and probably all other developing countries with inadequate welfare facilities and systems of individual land tenure are in precisely the same position, because of the 'all or nothing' security of freehold tenure. Those who have nothing in such systems, the landless, can form a wage-earning, urban working class only so long as work is available for them. When such work is not available, they must be absorbed by the 'residual employer' - agriculture - in order to subsist. Whether they subsist as 'squatters' on freehold land, tribal cultivators, or agricultural labourers, will depend on their access to land-owning kinsmen, land-allocating chiefs or labour-hungry farmers. In freehold areas, only those who have close kinship links to land-owners will obtain land to work themselves; all others will be lucky to be taken on as agricultural labourers under generally poor conditions, as the consideration of farm labour supplies in the following chapter shows.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Footnotes

1. Msengezi Area Plan, 1963, A2, page 2.
2. op. cit. A4, pp. 1-9
3. The association between the use of manure and fertiliser and improved yields has been established among Msengezi farmers by direct observation and personal experience akin to scientific experimentation. Not surprisingly, then, this observation has

resulted in 'so effective an understanding of natural process that he is able to distinguish technological steps from the magical aids he employs in the hope of making reassurance doubly sure' (Marwick, 1973 : 67). The 'magical aids' have in fact been abandoned, for, while fertiliser works every time, medicines are notoriously unreliable in comparison. The source of rainfall is still uncertain, but the source of improved yields is undoubtedly fertiliser as far as Msengezi farmers are concerned. Some farmers may, therefore, participate in rain-making rituals, but none waste their money on 'production charms'.

4. Personal communication from Mr. M. Howe-Ely.
5. The African Times 8.11.1967, vol.2, no.17, pp.1-2. Salisbury, Ministry of Information.
6. Msengezi Area Plan, 1963, A8.
7. I have used an average figure derived from the total reflected in the 1972-3 agricultural census (5 137 hectares = 11 301 acres) and the total derived from my own interviews with the farmers themselves (11 770 acres). My own higher figure is, however, probably more accurate, since it includes all additional cultivators' acreages, some of which may have been omitted for census purposes; and since my figures were collected in acres, in which the farmers themselves work, there is no possibility of calculation errors in these.
8. Calculated from figures supplied by the Central Statistical Office.
9. Calculated from figures supplied by the Central Statistical Office and, for the 1961-62 season, Msengezi Area Plan, 1963, A3, p.1.
10. Msengezi Area Plan, 1963, A4, pp.1-9.
11. This percentage is similar to the average take-off from European-owned cattle.
12. The fragmentation of herd ownership is partly a result of inheritance, for certain farmers divided their herds fairly equally among all of their children or, in certain cases, all of their daughters, in their wills. Others have distributed their cattle to wives and children before their deaths.
13. This lack of knowledge is mainly a result of past lack of animal husbandry specialists in the extension service in purchase lands. Greater specialisation by extension workers in purchase lands is to be encouraged in the future (Rhodesia Herald, 25.7.1975, p.18).
14. Figures supplied by the Central Statistical Office.
15. Figures supplied by the Central Statistical Office.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE PROVISION OF FARM LABOUR

In the past, African cultivators tended to rely largely on family labour, supplemented by various forms of labour co-operation, to produce their crops. Indeed, most Msengezi farmers relied on family labour and co-operative work groups to open up their farms in the years immediately after they had settled in this area. Some farmers - polygynists accumulating in the traditional idiom - still rely heavily if not exclusively on these sources of labour in the present, but 85 per cent of Msengezi farmers hire casual workers in a season of normal weather conditions and 33 per cent employ resident labourers on a supposedly 'permanent' basis. Clearly, then, there has been an important shift towards 'modern' sources of labour among a significant and increasing proportion of these farmers, although most labour inputs still come from family members. Being able to afford 'servants' to undertake the dirty, manual tasks of crop production is, to some extent, a source of prestige in Msengezi, for the farmer who is solely an organiser and supervisor of farming activities, rather than a worker himself, is a successful man: he is seen to be moving towards the European model of the large-scale producer who reaps profits without unduly soiling his own hands in the process. Yet very few Msengezi farmers are rich enough to rely exclusively on hired labour: during 1972-3, only five farmers were in this position. Most farm owners, therefore, draw their labour requirements from a number of different sources, which include family members and resident kin, co-operative work groups of various kinds, and hired labourers.

In this chapter, I examine this changing dependence on different sources of farm labour, relating such dependence to changes in the scale of crop production and the family developmental cycle, as well as to the idiom of accumulation selected by the farmers involved. My consideration of the provision of labour will be based mainly on statistical data gathered from farm owners and managers, in order to give a broad overview of farm labour in Msengezi as a whole: details such as the recruitment and composition of co-operative work groups, for example, are hardly relevant to my general thesis and will not, therefore, be considered here. Before examining the more important aspects of farm labour, however, it is necessary to provide a brief synopsis of labour requirements in Msengezi at different times of the year.

### Seasonal Labour Requirements

Labour requirements change rapidly during the agricultural cycle, as table 7.1 shows. From late October to late January is the busiest period, involving final land preparation, planting, fertilising, hand-weeding while plants are very small, thinning plant stands where necessary, cultivating and spraying against cotton pests. From early February to mid-April there is a fall-off in labour requirements, because maize is too high to cultivate, most of the essential land cleaning has been finished, and cotton is sufficiently mature to be cultivated using oxen or a tractor. Only the spraying of cotton remains essential, at intervals of seven to ten days depending on the level of pest infestation, but groundnuts and other legumes still need some hand-weeding. In mid-April, however, the demand for labour again rises sharply as the harvesting period begins, with legumes, followed by cotton and lastly the various grain crops. Although cotton picking continues into early September, most of the grain reaping is finished by mid-July, when lands are cleared of crop residues and winter-ploughed in preparation for the rains which begin in October or early November. August and September are thus the slackest months of the year in Msengezi, except on those few farms producing vegetables or grain (wheat or maize) under irrigation, throughout the year.

One notices the pressure of labour demand during October to January (and, to a lesser extent, from mid-April to July) in many ways: in the start of the day's work at sunrise; in the eating of breakfast and sometimes lunch at the fields; in ten- and eleven-hour working periods; in disregard of rest days (including chisi day<sup>1</sup>, Saturday afternoons and Sundays, in that order); in a very fluid definition of the types of work which may be undertaken on chisi day; and in truancy from school, especially in November. The farm owner himself is most likely to work in his fields during this period, despite other calls on his time. One farmer has even gone so far as to institute a type of 'clock-out' system on his farm: work begins before 7 a.m. and no-one is permitted to leave the fields until the dismissal bell is rung (at 5 p.m. on weekdays and 12.45 p.m. on Saturdays: the farmer's wife is responsible for checking the exact time on the radio). However, most farmers usually set their workers specific tasks to complete, after which they may go, rather than requiring them to keep set hours: fixed hours of work and close supervision tend to be restricted to those few tasks which require care in their execution.

During the two peak labour periods, from October to January and mid-April to early July, most farmers find family labour inadequate and,

TABLE 7.1 Labour requirements for major crops in Msengezi at different seasons

CROP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
Maize (and other grains)	Final field preparation planting	weeding	cultivating fertilising				cutting/ stooking drying		shelling	winter ploughing		
Cotton	Final field preparation * planting	thinning	weeding (hand) fertilising	spraying cultivating (mechanical)			picking					*plant destruction; ploughing
Groundnuts (and other legumes)	Final field preparation	planting		weeding/ cultivating		uprooting/ drying			shelling	winter ploughing		
Burley Tobacco	Seed-bed germination; ridging & fumigation	transplanting fertilising	weeding ridging				picking	hanging/drying grading baling		winter ploughing		

\*It is illegal to plant cotton before a date specified in the Government Gazette each year; likewise all cotton plants must be destroyed by a specified date. These restrictions are intended to hinder the spread of pests (especially bollworm) which attack cotton.

therefore, compete with one another to secure additional workers on a casual basis. Polygynists with large families and farmers who have mechanised their production have relatively little need of additional labour, but monogamous farmers with small families, whose children are attending school, are at a severe disadvantage during these periods, particularly if they have no external sources of income with which to pay the increased rates for piecework.<sup>2</sup> In such cases, crops suffer from unrestrained weed growth and yields are consequently reduced.

During the relatively slack periods of the agricultural cycle, however, most Msengezi farmers have no need of extra labour, for family members and resident kinsfolk (cf. chapter six) can cope. If necessary, neighbours may assist family members, either as an isolated gesture of goodwill under unusual circumstances or on a regular basis of formal co-operation, as I show in a later section, after considering labour inputs from family members.

### Family Labour

Among Shona-speaking communities in the past, a man was expected to allocate a portion of his fields to each of his wives, where they grew relish crops (especially groundnuts and vegetables) to enliven family meals. Children helped their mothers to produce these crops and both wives and their children were expected to assist in certain agricultural operations (particularly planting, weeding and reaping) in their husbands' fields. Today in Msengezi, both the system of land allocation to wives and the division of labour based on sex have largely disappeared, except on some farms belonging to polygynists. Women may still cultivate small patches of relish crops, but they also obtain rights over cash crops in the system of 'pointing out' discussed in chapter six; and while women still undertake more than half of the weeding done by hand, using a hoe, they also assist in ploughing and most other farm tasks. The requirements of large-scale agriculture, therefore, have changed the nature of women's participation in agriculture, as well as increasing the importance of adolescent children in crop production.

These changes in the involvement of women and children in the production process have, in turn, resulted in changes in household organisation, especially among polygynous families. The farmer's (senior) wife generally assumes responsibility for household organisation during busy periods, looking after small children (including those of her co-wives) and cooking (especially at midday) for the entire farm population. In such circumstances, one finds that eating groups are



composed along the lines of age and sex rather than 'house' affiliation. By freeing junior wives of their domestic responsibilities, the senior wife enables them to spend more hours in the fields. Such rationalisation of domestic organisation may also occur among monogamous families, for the farmer's wife may take over, for certain periods, the domestic duties of her daughter(s)-in-law, in order that fieldwork may not suffer.

Young women (whether junior wives, daughters or daughters-in-law), together with adolescent children of both sexes, comprise the core of most family working units. They are easily controlled, as Msengezi farmers are aware; and unlike young men, generally have little interest in beer or fishing. Instead, they work in order to acquire smart clothes. While women provide labour for farming activities throughout the year, then, young men work mainly during the busy periods: during the slack months they travel around visiting one another and attending beer drinks in Zwimba tribal trust land and on neighbouring European-owned farms, to their fathers' expressed annoyance. However, the farm owners themselves generally contribute even less labour than their adult sons to production, except during very busy periods, because they too are away visiting and attending meetings for a large proportion of the time: the organisation of the annual Farmers' Show, for example, occurs during and just after the harvesting period. Because relatively few farmers work in their own fields, except from October to January, outside observers of purchase land production tend to assume that the men are both lazy and lacking in management expertise (cf. Paraiwa, 1972). However, the man who can organise production such that he makes a profit and is able to do as he wishes with much of his own time, must be a more competent manager than is realised by those who regard him as an idle layabout!

The importance of family labour relative to other sources varies with the marital status of the farmholder and with the stage reached in the family developmental cycle. In general, monogamists rely less on their wives and children than do polygynists; and three-generation monogamous families rely more heavily on family labour (from children and grandchildren) than is possible among two-generation structures headed by relatively young farmholders. Somewhat paradoxically, however (as will be shown in the final section of this chapter), the older the farm owner, the more likely he is to employ hired workers: the transition from reliance on children (and later grandchildren), on the one hand, to hired labour on the other, generally comes fairly suddenly as children leave the farm.

The importance of family labour also depends on the place of

permanent residence of the farm owner. If he lives in town, with his family, then labour inputs from his family of procreation are usually minimal: in these cases, however, other 'family' members (especially siblings) may contribute considerably to the production process, at least as managers if not as workers. In approximately 14 per cent of cases in Msengezi (where the owner does not live on his farm), the farmholders' own families (wives and children) do not contribute labour to the production process, except at very irregular intervals. This figure is nearly three times that of the proportion of farmers (5 per cent) who rely exclusively on family labour to run their farms: all of these men, of course, live on their farms. Clearly, then, most farmers rely on family labour supplemented either by labour co-operation or by hired workers or by both; only one fifth depend wholly or not at all on their families.

One of the main reasons for this widespread, partial reliance on family labour is that it is generally regarded as a low-cost source of labour, because family members do not draw regular cash wages. Direct cash remuneration to wives and children does not usually exceed Rh\$20 per individual, paid after marketing cheques have been received. However, this annual sum is augmented by 'gifts' of new clothes, made at the same time. A second form of payment to family members is the system of 'pointing out' rights over specified portions of cash crops, mentioned in the previous chapter: in these cases, the person to whom such rights have been 'pointed out' receives the cash value of this produce, which is usually in the region of Rh\$50-75. In terms of remuneration, then, family members usually receive less in cash than does the average resident worker; they receive payment in one lump sum, after marketing; and they do not receive payment before the proceeds of their labour accrue to the farm owner himself. In terms of direct costs, then, family labour is cheaper than hiring workers and it has the added advantage of allowing the farmer a form of credit.

Despite the financial advantages of family labour, however, it is clear that the expectation of the 1925 Land Commission Report that the majority of purchase land farmers would be 'yeoman farmers' relying exclusively on their own small families to work the land, is unrealistic. In Msengezi, for example, thirty-six acres are under cultivation on the average farm and over 80 per cent of farmholders are bachelors, widowers, divorcees or monogamists. For the polygynist using the traditional idiom of accumulation, family labour is usually sufficient, but such labour cannot meet the needs of most other farmers, particularly when their children have grown up and left the farm. It is no accident

that four of the five poorest families in Msengezi are headed by young, monogamous, devout Christians with relatively small families of young children, who are committed to the modern idiom of accumulation and caught in the trap of inadequate family labour, no external sources of income to pay hired workers, and the lack of co-operative work groups in the neighbourhoods of their farms. In the fifth case, the farmer is an old man whose children have all left home and who, as a lay preacher in the Methodist church, is equally committed to monogamy. Those farmers who use their farm profits to educate their children to relatively high levels are particularly likely to have to rely on hired workers in their later years, more especially because, among monogamous farmers, co-operative work groups seem to disintegrate within ten to fifteen years of their establishment. Hence new arrivals in an old-established area, as well as older farmers who can no longer rely on family labour, find that the framework of co-operative work groups is absent and they cannot, therefore, become part of such a system. However, in areas where a significant proportion of farmers use the traditional idiom to accumulate, stable forms of labour co-operation do exist. (Cf. table 7.2, which shows little co-operation in East ICA, the area of earliest settlement in Msengezi, but considerable reliance on this source of labour in West ICA, where 37 per cent of farmers are polygynists).

### Labour Co-operation

If family labour is inadequate to meet the farmer's needs, some form of labour co-operation is one alternative source of labour inputs. Various forms of co-operative work groups were and still are common in African societies: among Shona-speakers, there are two traditional forms of co-operation (cf. Hollemann, 1952) - nhimbe, the work-party which revolves around the provision of beer, and janganano, labour exchange on a family basis. Both are found in Msengezi, together with a modified form of the latter, known as machanganano (the plural form of janganano).

In the past, nhimbe depended on the brewing of beer by women whose husbands wished to hold a work-party. Today in Msengezi, however, those farmers who hold nhimbe generally buy 'Chibuku' from the nearest pub. Formal invitations are not usually issued, the attraction of free beer being such that they are largely unnecessary. People simply arrive and work at the task(s) specified by the 'owner of the nhimbe'. At 'lunchtime' (around 4 p.m., when the work is finished), food and beer are served to the workers as a reward for their labour. Although nhimbe is still held occasionally, if not regularly, by some 29 per cent of Msengezi farmers,



most have abandoned it, holding that beer and work do not mix well, that people no longer turn up in adequate numbers, that 'Chibuku' is expensive in the quantities required, and that brewing one's own beer is uneconomic, since brewing diverts the labour of women when it is most desperately needed - that is, during the busiest periods of the agricultural cycle. In their own eyes, then, nhimbe is not the answer to Msengezi farmers' labour problems, although it is still used for certain tasks performed during the slack months, such as erecting buildings.

Jangano, as it is still practised in Zwimba tribal trust land, refers to the system whereby whole families assist one another in their respective fields on a reciprocal basis. (I suspect that there are variations on this definition in other Shona-speaking areas<sup>3</sup> and have, therefore, confined my definition to the area of which, in pre-colonial times, Msengezi was part.) One or two families, originally from Zwimba, still practise this system in Msengezi, but for the most part it has been modified in the purchase land and is now known as machangano, a term which has many different referents.

Machangano means different things to different people. To people from Zwimba, it is simply a linguistic distortion of jangano. To Karanga-speakers, machangano is a synonym for nhimbe, the traditional beer-and-work-party. To people from Manyika territory and to some Zezuru-speakers from parts of Mashonaland beyond Zwimba, machangano is a type of 'nhimbe for the school children' - a work party attended mainly by adolescents, at which mild sweet beer and not 'Chibuku' would be served. To most farmers in Msengezi, however, machangano has come to refer to a system of exact labour reciprocity, which links neighbouring farms (irrespective of ethnic or kinship ties) in machangano groups. These groups are composed of a restricted number of farms, usually between two and five. Each farm owner (or, in a few cases, additional cultivator who is tilling a large acreage: cf. chapter six) calculates exact reciprocity in terms of labour units from all of the others. This calculation of equivalence takes into account factors of age and sex among the workers that each farmer contributes to the group. To take a simple example, let us say three farmers form a machangano group, to which the first contributes the labour of himself and his wife; the second that of himself and one adult, male labourer; and the third that of himself and his two teenage daughters. The farmers themselves, being between the ages of thirty and fifty, are equivalent units for all purposes. For tasks such as weeding, picking cotton, or harvesting grains, the first farmer's wife is equivalent to the second farmer's labourer and to the third farmer's two daughters (aged thirteen and fifteen). For work such as ploughing, however, the first farmer's



wife and the third farmer's daughters would be regarded as less than equivalent to the second farmer's labourer, and the first and third farmers would be required to contribute additional workers, who would most probably be younger children to lead the oxen. Once such equivalence of labour units has been established and agreed by the controlling participants, the entire machangano group moves around the farms involved in strict rotation. On each farm they are served with tea and sadza (stiff maize porridge) or bread - but never beer - although the provision of such refreshments is in no way regarded as a return for labour. In these machangano groups, labour must be returned with its recognised equivalent: no other return is acceptable.

The Msengezi form of machangano is obviously and explicitly an attempt to improve upon the inefficiencies of nhimbe as a form of labour co-operation and to refine and rationalise the traditional form of janganano (in which the reciprocity of labour units was not so finely calculated), in order to ensure the necessary labour resources for large-scale agriculture. But machangano groups also proved inefficient for a number of farmers, who stated that they had abandoned all forms of labour co-operation kare-kare (way back in the past) in favour of hiring workers, because the machangano system itself breaks down and leads to inter-farm quarrels if exact reciprocity is not observed.

The extent to which farmers said that nhimbe and machangano were practised in Msengezi in 1973 is shown in table 7.2. However, these figures represent potential rather than actual co-operation in many cases: some farmers, for example, asserted that they would co-operate with their sahwira (bond friends) but were not actually doing so at that time; others held nhimbe very occasionally (perhaps once in two or three years), for special and unusual tasks, such as building new granaries or sinking wells, but did not use this form of co-operation regularly; many attended other people's nhimbe for free beer while not holding nhimbe themselves for any tasks. Most farmers noted that they would help neighbours if specifically asked to do so, but did not normally co-operate with them on farming tasks. The number of farms involved in working relationships of co-operation, therefore, is smaller than the figures in table 7.2 indicate.

From table 7.2 it is clear that the extent to which farmers in each of the ICAs use labour co-operation varies considerably. In East, Central and Waze ICAs, where relatively few farmers use the traditional idiom of accumulation, co-operative work groups are less important as sources of labour than they are in West ICA, where a much higher proportion

Map 2. Msengezi: Immediate Environs and Intensive Conservation Areas

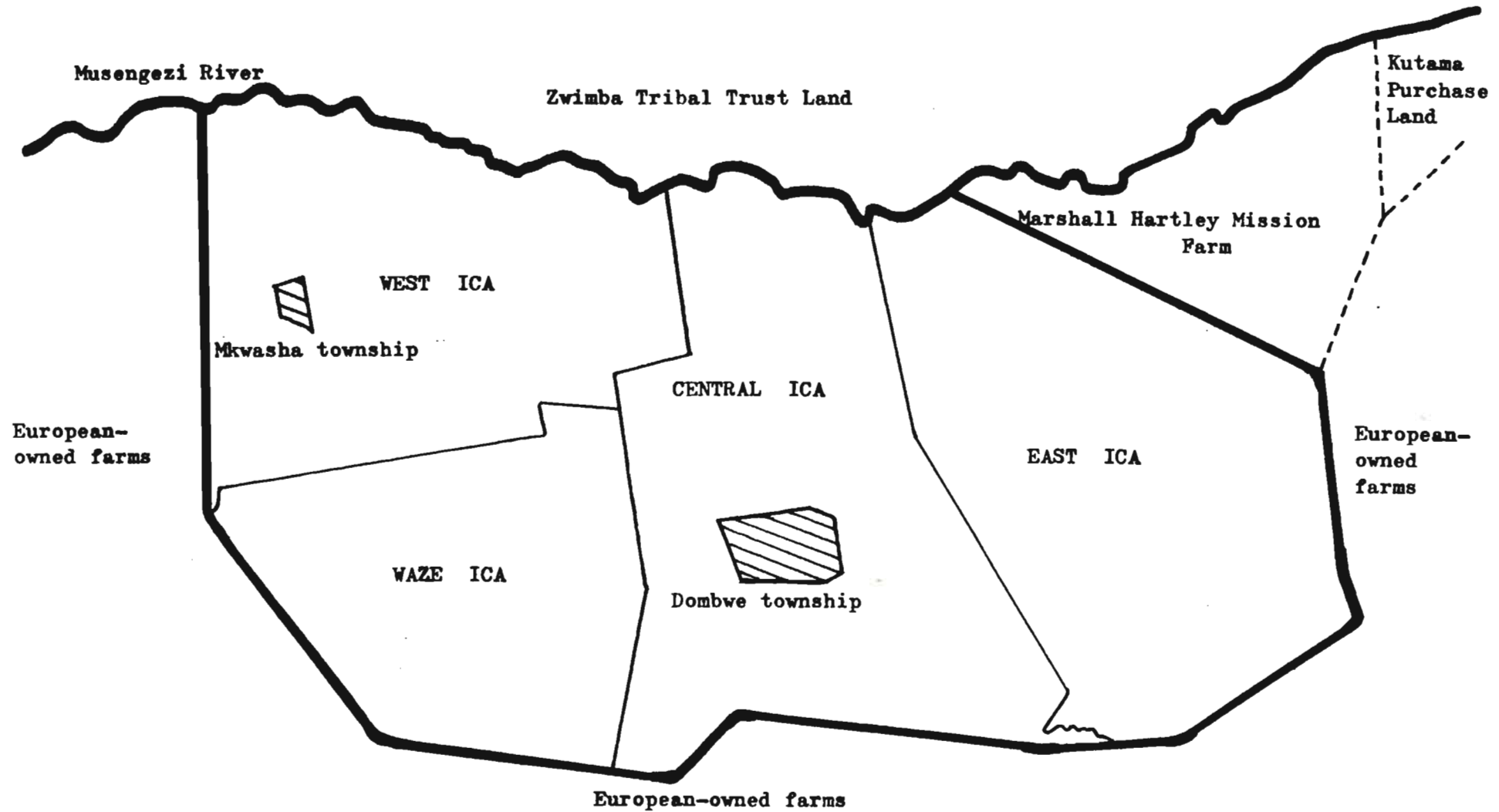


Table 7.2    Geographical distribution of labour co-operation in Msengezi in 1973.

type of co-operation	East ICA	Central ICA	Waze ICA	West ICA	Total
<u>nhimbe</u> only	9	15	12	28	64
<u>machangano</u> only	12	15	14	25	66
both <u>nhimbe</u> and <u>machangano</u>	4	10	7	8	29
total co-operating	25	40	33	61	159
as percentage	31,3	49,4	44,6	68,5	49,1

of farmers have opted for the traditional idiom. However, the use of labour co-operation is also related to the process of inheritance: over 30 per cent of all inherited farms are in the earliest-settled East ICA, compared to less than 20 per cent in the latest-settled West ICA. Relatively few of the second generation of farm owners (especially in the eastern section) have opted for the traditional idiom of accumulation; and since 37 per cent of these inheritor-owners do not live on their farms, these men at least cannot themselves be involved in ongoing relationships of co-operation, although kinsmen on their farms may be. The third factor influencing the use of labour co-operation is the expansion of production: as larger acreages have been brought under cultivation, farmers have found that co-operation becomes less satisfactory as a source of labour inputs. Individuals wish to concentrate on their own expanding production and absenteeism from co-operative work groups results, causing friction and ultimately the break-down of the system.

Although there is no logical reason why nhimbe and machangano should be mutually exclusive forms of labour co-operation, in practice in Msengezi they do appear to exclude one another, as table 7.2 indicates. Only twenty-nine farmers (18,2 per cent) of 159 practising labour co-operation hold nhimbe and are members of machangano groups, compared to 130 (81,8 per cent) who are involved in one or the other but not both. The reason why, in practice, they do tend to be mutually exclusive is that nhimbe involves the consumption of beer, which is generally disapproved by most Christian denominations. For practising (as opposed to nominal) Christians, then, nhimbe is an unacceptable form of co-operation; while for nominal Christians who enjoy their beer, as well as for those who claim membership of the 'beer church' congregated at the local pub, hard physical work divorced from the rewards of alcoholic refreshment is

simply not worth the effort. Such men may, therefore, attend nhimbe but generally do not become involved in machangano groups.

Similarly, although there is no logical reason why labour co-operation and the employment of hired workers should be mutually exclusive, only forty-six farmers (14 per cent) use both, as table 7.3 shows. One might suggest that hiring labour is the prerogative of the wealthy while poorer farmers co-operate, but many of the polygynists who use labour co-operation could certainly afford to hire workers: because they have opted for the cost-efficient, traditional idiom of accumulation, however, they have no need to employ labour. It seems, therefore, that it is the accumulatory idiom selected, rather than financial status, which makes farmers opt either for co-operation or for hired labour. Indeed, the simultaneous use of both hired workers and labour co-operation is more likely to indicate financial distress than is the use of co-operation alone, because this combination shows that the farmer lacks labour from family sources while being unable to rely wholly on employees for his labour requirements.

Table 7.3    Geographical distribution of labour co-operation compared to the use of hired labour in Msengezi \*

type of labour input	East ICA	Central ICA	Waze ICA	West ICA	Total
co-operation without hired workers	16	26	25	47	114
as percentage	19,8	32,1	33,8	52,8	35,1
co-operation with hired workers	9	14	8	14	45
as percentage	11,1	17,3	10,8	15,7	13,8
hired labour without co-operation	51	39	36	20	146
as percentage	63,0	48,0	48,6	22,5	44,9

\* The category of family labour is omitted, hence totals are less than 100%.

### Hired Labour

Conditions under which people are hired by Msengezi farmers vary considerably, but perhaps the most useful division into categories distinguishes between those who are hired: either to complete a specific task, or for a defined period of time (usually not longer than one month), which I shall refer to as casual or temporary labour; or for an indefinite



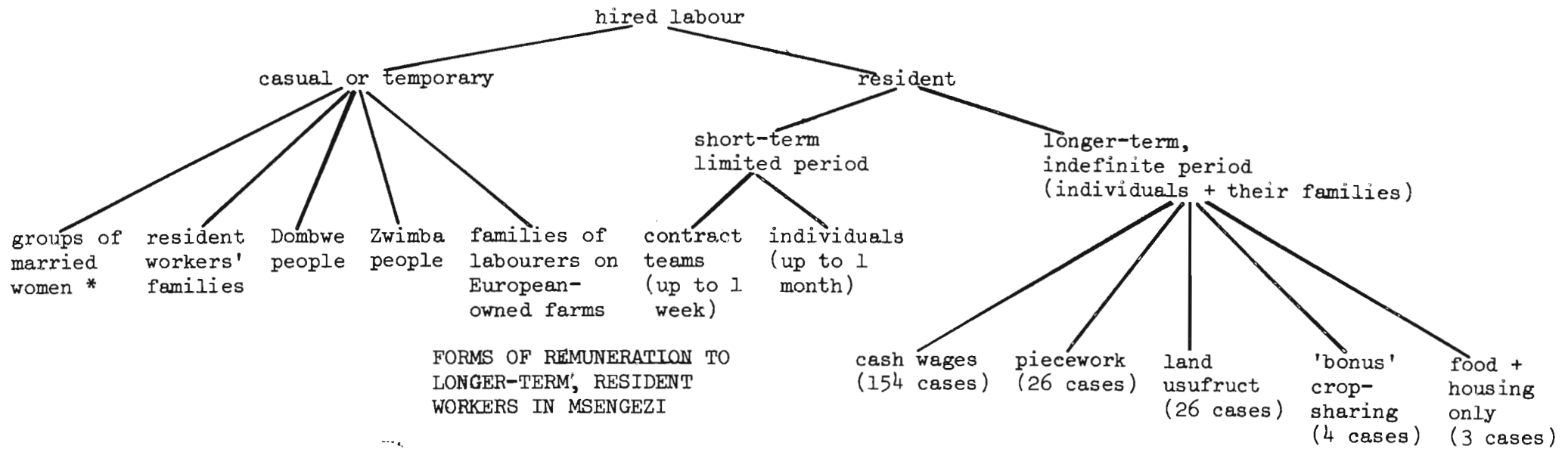
period, during which they must live on the farm itself. This latter type of employment is supposedly of a permanent nature, but since it frequently does not last longer than 6 to 12 months, I shall use the term 'resident labour' for this category, in preference to 'permanent workers'. An indication of the variety of sources from which hired workers are drawn, together with forms of remuneration to resident workers, is given in diagram iii.

#### i. Casual or Temporary Workers

In agricultural seasons of normal weather conditions, some 85 per cent of all Msengezi farmers hire casual workers to supplement family labour at very busy periods (especially in December and January). Such temporary workers assist mainly with hand-weeding, picking cotton and, in a much smaller number of cases, harvesting maize (including cutting and stooking and, later, stripping the cobs).

Although a small number of temporary workers may be hired for up to one month at a time, most do piecework. That is, they undertake to finish a clearly-defined task for a sum of money specified in advance. For example, weeding piecework is paid by the acre or portion of an acre (in which case the acre length, seventy yards, is standard and the number of rows to be weeded will vary). Weeding charges vary slightly with the extent of weed growth, but are generally between Rh\$1,00 and 1,50 per acre, about five cents per row, irrespective of the number of workers. Piecework charges also vary in response to labour demand: during December and early January, irrespective of the extent of weed growth, rates for weeding rise because the supply of casual workers is insufficient to meet the demand. For picking cotton, however, which is done over a much longer period, rates do not vary in this way: the standard payment at the time of fieldwork was twenty-five cents for a well packed fertiliser bag of roughly twenty-five lbs. weight, or one cent per lb. for odd quantities. Nevertheless, farmers did complain of inadequate supplies of casual labour for picking cotton: since European farmers in the Hartley district pay nearly double the Msengezi rate for picking, Zwimba people tend to seek casual work on European-owned farms first. It is probable that the rate for picking cotton will rise in Msengezi in the near future, therefore, especially since more land is planted to cotton each season. However, increasing mechanisation may permit a redistribution of labour: since one businessman-farmer bought a tractor-driven maize-sheller which strips, shells and bags the grain and has hired this machine to other farmers, the demand for casual labour for these aspects of maize harvesting has decreased considerably, thus freeing workers to pick cotton.

Diagram iii. Categories of Hired Worker in Msengezi



\* Including farmers' wives as members of women's clubs or church groups: this form of group labour avoids the loss of face that would otherwise occur in the event of one farm-owner's wife working for cash wages for another farmer, given the social distance between farmers' families and hired workers in Msengezi (see chapter eleven). This form of group labour thus permits individual wives to earn additional pocket money in a socially approved manner.

In the past, payment for grain harvesting - especially to people from Zwimba - was usually made in grain rather than cash.

In addition to cash payments for piecework, casual workers are also fed (on sadza and gravy) at lunchtime, and they may be accommodated (in pole and dagga huts) on the farm as well, particularly if they belong to contract teams of itinerant foreigners. Workers from Zwimba and neighbouring European-owned farms are usually collected and returned daily, by tractor and trailer. The costs to the farmer of casual labour are thus higher than cash wages for piecework.

Whether a farmer hires a temporary worker on piecework or for a fixed wage, depends largely on what work he wants done. If speed of completion is most important (as in weeding), the piecework system is the most satisfactory. But where accuracy rather than speed is important to the successful completion of the job (as in top-dressing with ammonium nitrate), farmers prefer to employ people on a fixed wage under close supervision, because carelessness resulting from haste will affect yields and cause them financial loss. This distinction between requirements of speed and of accuracy may also affect the allocation of tasks to resident workers: on certain days, when weeding, they may be told to finish a particular area and then go, whereas when fertilising or thinning cotton they will be required to work an eight-hour day under the scrutiny of the farmer or his wife.

## ii. Resident Workers

In Msengezi, a resident employee is one who normally lives on the farm and whose labour may be required at any time during daylight hours by the farm owner-employer. This broad definition - which would also apply to family labour - is necessary because of the varying forms remuneration may take (cf. diagram iii). During 1973, 204 resident workers were employed on 108 farms in Msengezi, an average of 1.9 labourers per employer (range: one to twelve per farm). Table 7.4 gives some idea of the importance of resident workers to Msengezi farmers, although the instability of such workers and their frequent movements between farms mean that these figures cannot be regarded as reliable in the longer term: since the interviews were completed, I know of some farmers whose labour force has diminished, while others now employ more resident workers than they did then.

Table 7.4 Numbers of resident workers on Msengezi farms

no. of workers	no. of farms
one	58
two	26
three	16
four to six	3
seven to twelve	3

Msengezi farmers seem to be more dependent on resident workers than are their counterparts in Zowa or Chitomborgwizi purchase lands (cf. Paraiwa, 1972), perhaps because the rate of polygynous marriage in Msengezi (less than 20 per cent) is considerably lower than in these areas (40 per cent and 33 per cent respectively). A greater proportion of Msengezi farmers are thus committed to the modern idiom of accumulation, which may be related to the fact that, of these three purchase lands, settlement was completed first in Msengezi. Certainly within Msengezi itself, table 7.5 shows that the longest-established farms (in East and Central ICAs) are more dependent on resident workers than are the later-settled farms in the two western ICAs, thus suggesting strongly that there is a link between the family developmental cycle, inheritance, and the employment of resident workers.

Of the 204 resident workers in Msengezi, 46 per cent were foreigners and the remainder Rhodesians of various ethnic identities, as table 7.6 shows. The division into foreign and indigenous categories in Msengezi is thus of similar proportions to that found on European-owned farms: in 1969, in the European-controlled agricultural sector, 51 per cent of all farm workers were foreigners<sup>4</sup>.

The preponderance of foreign workers arises partly because these men are prepared to work on farms, in poor conditions, whereas many Rhodesians are not, and it is a source of some amused political scepticism concerning the value of political independence to certain states, among Msengezi farmers. In comparison to national figures for ethnic identity, the under-representation of workers of Nguni descent (Ndebele, Shangane, Fingo, Xhosa) is most probably a result of the fact that Msengezi is in Zezuru territory, although the variety of these workers' ethnic identities confirms the pattern of widespread geographical mobility among black Rhodesians. Neither nationality nor ethnic identity have any relevance to the employer-employee relationship in Msengezi, where farmers are prepared to employ anyone who is prepared to work. However,



Table 7.5 Geographical distribution of resident labourers on Msengezi farms

	East ICA	Central ICA	Waze ICA	West ICA	Total
no. of farms where resident workers are employed	36	32	19	21	108
as percentage	44,4	39,5	25,7	23,6	33,3
no. of workers	61	66	40	37	204
ave. no. of workers per farm on which employed	1,7	2,1	2,1	1,8	1,9

Table 7.6 Nationality and ethnic identity of resident workers \*

nationality	ethnic identity	number
Malawian	unspecified	62
Mocambiqueno	"	15
Zambian	"	15
Angolan	"	2
		94
Rhodesian	Zezuru	34
"	Karanga	19
"	KoreKore	11
"	Manyika	9
"	Shangane	8
"	Ndebele	7
"	Thonga	6
"	Budjga	3
"	Hera	2
"	Shangw	2
"	other	9
		110

\* With few exceptions, all of these workers were men

in similar vein to white employers in southern Africa, most Msengezi farmers believe that foreigners work harder than Rhodesians and that Rhodesians whose homes are a long way from Msengezi make better employees than those whose homes are nearby, because long-distance migrants go home less frequently, have few relatives or friends in the district and, therefore, experience fewer distractions in their working lives. A few farmers, working on these assumptions, deliberately use kin or friends to recruit workers from places such as Gwelo, Bulawayo and Fort Victoria, in an attempt to cut the rate of employee turnover. This preference for strangers as employees is another aspect of the farmer's quest for labour efficiency on his farm, but has no direct relationship to ethnicity as such.

The preference for employing strangers is also seen in the fact that only nine of 204 employees were related to their employers by ties of kinship or affinity: two were clansmen, six were affines (sisters' husbands or wives' brothers), and one was a mother's younger sister's son. As far as possible, Msengezi farmers prefer not to hire kin, because they regard it as unsatisfactory and inefficient. A kinsman-employee is neither kinsman nor employee wholly and this blurring of role definition leads to misunderstandings and conflict. Where farmers do recruit labour among kin beyond their immediate families, it is no accident that they do so among categories of people to whom they have no traditional obligations in respect of economic relationships.<sup>5</sup> This bias against recruiting kinsfolk as farm workers in Msengezi contrasts strongly with the cases described by Long (1968), concerning much smaller farming enterprises in a central Zambian parish, where reliance on matrikin in a traditionally matrilineal society seems to be replaced very slowly by reliance on non-kin to whom the farmer is linked through membership of voluntary associations. The pattern of reliance on hired labour is thus perhaps related to the scale of farming in Msengezi, for a similar pattern exists (or did in 1967) in Buganda on the larger farms (Richards *et al.*, 1973).

I noted earlier that I have used the term 'resident' rather than 'permanent' for those employed indefinitely partly because of the wide variation in forms of payment among such workers. In diagram iii, I have indicated the five main forms of wage: actual cash wages on a fixed monthly basis; piecework payments; seasonal usufructuary rights to land; the 'bonus' system of sharing crops or marketing proceeds between farm owner and farm manager; and the provision of shelter and food on a probationary basis, which usually involves young, foreign, recently-arrived work-seekers. For the purposes of this thesis, I do not think that it is necessary to spell out all the details of these various forms of remuneration, but it is important to consider the problems that farmers experience with hired workers, particularly resident workers, because such problems may influence a farmer's choice of accumulatory idiom.

### iii. Problems Associated with Hired Labour in Msengezi

To hire workers is prestigious among Msengezi farmers, for it is thought to indicate a movement towards modern methods of farm management and away from 'old-fashioned' reliance on family labour. However, farmers admit that hiring labour entails more problems for them than

would reliance on family workers. There are problems of payment, of availability, and of the honesty and reliability of the employees themselves.

These problems have not been solved in Msengezi. The basically unsatisfactory nature of hired labour is reflected, above all, in the high rate of employee turnover. A resident worker who lasts one year on any particular farm is unusual, a man who lasts five years quite exceptional. Nevertheless, all the signs point to an increasing reliance on hired labour in this area, despite the farmers' multiple complaints of desertion, absenteeism, petty theft, disregard for machinery, general unreliability and dishonesty, laziness and irresponsibility on the part of workers. One Sunday, for example, an 'urban' farmer supervising the shelling of his maize crop, had an altercation with one of his three employees, telling me later what had happened.

You saw that chap in the weird clothes I was talking to just now? Well, he claims to be svikiro [a spirit medium] and he was just telling me that he couldn't work today because he must go and look for herbs. You can imagine what gets done when I'm not here when they tell me that sort of thing to my face!

Another farmer complained that 'Because I don't have a proper storeroom, I am buying holes: things go missing when they are not under lock and key'. A third bewailed the fact that even though he did have a locked storeroom, his manager (who had a key) was selling his fertiliser to his neighbours. A fourth muttered 'I'll have no tractor left by the time he's finished with it', after a new employee arrived at the back door carrying the gear shift lever, explaining that it had simply fallen off while he was driving. The potentially intricate nature of problems with employees is illustrated in the following case.

One Sunday, three resident workers on one farm attended a beer-drink on a neighbouring European-owned farm, having been paid the previous week. They all got drunk and two attacked the third, whereupon the 'owner of the beer-drink' threw them all out and sent a letter of complaint to their employer, who reprimanded them all severely - the more so because he flatly disapproves of drinking beer. Two of the labourers then said they must leave the farm, one because he was the admitted cause of the trouble in this instance, and the other because he felt his co-workers were ganging up on him. A letter of apology to the 'owner of the beer-drink' was never delivered by a fourth worker entrusted with this task, as the farmer discovered the following weekend, when the 'owner of the beer-drink' himself beat up two of the three men involved in the previous fracas and, as a result, one of the two men 'deserted' while the farm

owner was in Hartley on business on the Monday. This particular sequence of events caused the farmer - a monogamist with no children and a wife who suffers from hypertension - to lose one of his seven labourers permanently and a whole day's work from the other six, who spent the Monday while he was in Hartley arguing about their differences within the 'compound'. At the root of all the trouble was an implication of witchcraft (actual accusations being strictly illegal in Rhodesia), which involved the most senior and, in the farmer's opinion, most responsible employee of all, who had not actually been present at the beer-drink at which this particular incident started. Some months later, after trouble had continued to simmer among the workers, this man left the farm, much to the farm owner's annoyance, but the problems continued unabated.

The Msengezi stereotype of the farm labourer as an idle, shiftless rascal is built up on cases such as this one. This image of resident workers does not contribute anything positive to labour relations in this area, but it is founded on the farmers' experiences, not on hearsay. One of the reasons for these problems was outlined by an employer as follows:

Before the sanctions, these European tobacco farms [adjoining Msengezi] used to harbour many skellums and rascals. The farmers were so desperate for labour, they took anyone they could find - and hid them in the compounds. Then when the sanctions came, they were dismissed and came to trouble us.

It is perhaps surprising, given such problems with hired labour, that more Msengezi farmers do not opt for the traditional idiom of accumulation, in preference to the modern idiom. I would suggest that the reasons why most Msengezi land owners prefer the modern idiom, with all its problems, include: firstly, the stage reached in the family developmental cycle by most farmers; secondly, the levels of education attained by these farmers' children, who are the second generation of farm owners; thirdly, the manner in which the development process has been presented to this society and controlled by the most successful accumulators using the modern idiom, which has made the idea of competition in the prestige spheres of white Rhodesians appear to be feasible. This latter point will be considered in more detail in part III of this thesis, while the first two points merit further attention in the remainder of this chapter, since they relate directly to reliance on different sources of labour at different times in a farmer's career.

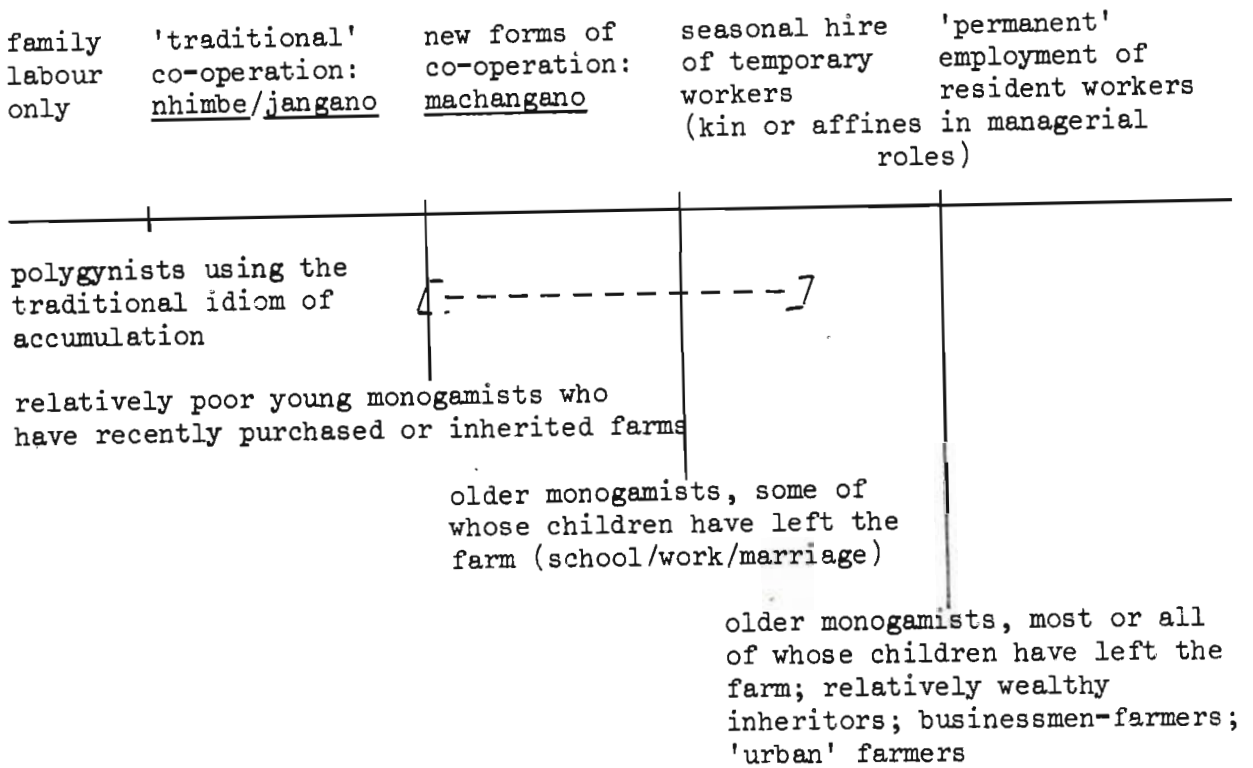
#### The Changing Sequence of Labour Management in Msengezi

The data obtained from Msengezi farmers suggest that the different labour sources may be located on a continuum, along which most farmers move



during their farming careers, to different points and at different speeds depending, firstly, on the idiom of accumulation chosen and, secondly, on the changing structure of their families. Diagram iv summarises movement along this continuum.

Diagram iv. The labour-supply continuum in Msengezi



Not all farmers move through every stage on this continuum, of course: in many cases, monogamous farmers have never been involved in traditional forms of labour co-operation, especially nhimbe; in a few cases, businessmen-farmers have always relied on resident hired workers without any supplementary source of labour. Nevertheless, this continuum represents fairly adequately the different stages through which farmers pass in their quest for labour. Family labour, supplemented by various forms of co-operation, is adequate only as long as acreages are relatively small (not more than fifteen acres under cultivation), or as long as such labour sources are 'topped up' at regular intervals by additional marriages. As crop acreages are expanded and labour demands increase, family labour becomes increasingly inadequate and co-operative work groups tend to disintegrate under pressure: farmers then start to hire casual workers to assist them over periods of peak labour demand. Later still in the family developmental cycle, as children leave the farm permanently, they tend to be replaced by resident workers. When the original owner dies and the farm is inherited, there may be a reversion to the beginning of the labour-supply continuum (that is, to reliance on family labour and

co-operation), if the inheritor is relatively uneducated and his family is poor. However, if the inheritor is relatively well-educated and holds a well-paid job, he is likely to continue to rely heavily, if not exclusively, on hired labour to work the farm, while he himself continues in wage employment. If his income is insufficient to allow him to rely wholly on hired labour, he is likely to recruit non-patrilineal kin, or affines, as workers and remunerate them by means of usufructuary rights to portions of the farm, while he accumulates capital to mechanise aspects of his production (such as ploughing, planting and cultivating), thereby reducing his manpower requirements.

While this continuum explains changing patterns of reliance on different labour sources among the majority of Msengezi farmers, it does not explain the minority of cases where farmers rely on a number of different labour sources simultaneously. Typically, in these cases, the farmer has few or no children at home and may also be effectively single (i.e. widowed or divorced). He cannot, therefore, rely on family labour to provide the bulk of his labour needs at any time. In order to alleviate his chronic shortage of labour, he may thus employ one resident worker (he will generally be unable to employ more) and be a member of a machangano group, which together will cover his recurrent labour requirements. But he will still need additional workers during busy periods, especially for weeding and picking cotton: for such tasks he will employ casual labour on piecework. For unusual tasks requiring additional labour during the slack months, however - such as carting manure from the cattle kraal to the fields, digging garden wells, or building new granaries - such a farmer is most likely to hold nhimbe, if he does not consider himself to be bound by church dictates against beer. Holding nhimbe for tasks done in leisurely fashion in August and September reinforces social ties among machangano group members and may thus be important to the farmer in ensuring future labour supplies. However, very few farmers will hold nhimbe during the busy periods of the agricultural cycle, because weeding and picking cotton must be finished quickly in order to avoid incurring financial loss and, in this situation, Msengezi farmers do not consider that beer and work mix well. Clearly, then, the simultaneous use of different labour sources is highly rational from an economic viewpoint, even though western observers might assume some degree of contradiction between, say, the holding of nhimbe and the use of hired labour. Indeed, Msengezi farmers themselves recognise such contradictions, regarding nhimbe as 'old-fashioned' and resident workers as 'modern' sources of labour. Hence

the majority of farmers do not combine elements of the traditional and modern idioms of accumulation in this way. A minority, however, has no option but to do so if large-scale farming is to continue.

Clearly, then, very few farmers in Msengezi can afford to use 'modern' sources of labour throughout their careers and even fewer can afford to rely wholly on hired labour for all their production activities. Particularly in the early years after settlement, when farms are in the process of being established, most farmers rely (or relied) on 'traditional' sources: family labour and co-operative work groups. As crop acreages are increased and family members begin to leave the farm, however, alternative sources are required: more efficient forms of (neo-traditional) co-operation and hired workers. As the scale of farming increases - which coincides with the increase and subsequent decrease in family size, as families reach the various stages of their developmental cycles - and as relatively well-educated men inherit an increasing number of farms, more farmers become wealthier. Increasingly, then, they can afford to adopt the modern idiom of accumulation, provided that they have used their earlier reliance on 'traditional' practices to accumulate some capital reserve: at least in respect of ensuring adequate labour supplies, then, the use of the modern idiom very often presupposes the earlier use of (aspects of) the traditional idiom in the accumulation process. Such capital accumulation may be in the form of labour reserves (wives and children as workers), or educated children (who may pay the wages of hired workers), or machinery (as a substitute for labour). This process of farm capitalisation, its sociological context, and its relationship to the accumulatory idiom selected, form the substance of the following chapter.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Footnotes

1. Chisi day, among Shona-speakers, is the traditional rest day determined, in tribal areas, by the chiefs in conjunction with the spirit mediums (masvikiro) for the tribal spirits (mhondoro). Chisi is observed on different days in different areas: in the Mzengezi-Zwimba area, it falls on Thursday. In the past, no individual was allowed to work on his own account on chisi day, although communal work parties (nhimbe) were permitted in some areas, such as Zwimba. In Msengezi today, Sunday is universally recognised as the official rest day on which no agricultural work should be undertaken and chisi is variously regarded as 'a heathen custom', a minor nuisance requiring re-organisation of work schedules, or irrelevant: perhaps 10 per cent of Msengezi farmers take the observance of chisi with some degree of seriousness, which low figure reflects the absence of effective sanctions that would compel such observance. Chief Zwimba is



said to have sent his 'policemen' around to fine those not observing chisi in past years in Msengezi, but this was many years ago, according to informants, and no sanctions operate in the present. People who voluntarily observe chisi in Msengezi today are generally non-Zezuru, strangers to the area who claim to continue such observance of custom out of respect for the 'owners of the land'.

Even their observance of chisi varies, however, and few accept it as a total ban on agricultural work. Chisi is variously said: to apply only to traditional grain crops, especially rapoko, which is used to make beer for ancestral propitiation and which, as table 6.2 shows, is grown in minimal quantities in Msengezi; not to apply to cash crops such as cotton or tobacco; to apply only to certain techniques in the production of traditional crops, such as hand-hoeing maize; to apply to agricultural activities only during the month of January; and not to apply to hired workers at all, since they are not working in their own fields. In general, chisi is thought not to apply to non-traditional crops or production techniques. And at periods of very heavy labour demand, people who would normally observe chisi in some respect, will ignore it altogether - including those using the traditional idiom of accumulation.

Among those farmers who normally observe chisi with some degree of strictness, most organise their work schedules such that checking fences, undertaking repairs to machinery, visits to town and other essential but non-production activities are done on Thursday, while their wives do the weekly wash. In this way, they are left free to concentrate on field work during the remainder of the week. One sees here considerations of efficiency in the use of time in Msengezi, even when customary obligations are at stake.

2. In December 1973 and January 1974, for example, piecework charges for weeding 1 acre of maize increased from Rh\$1,00 - 1,25 to Rh\$1,50 - 1,75 as the demand for casual assistance increased.
3. My male research assistant, who came from Chikwaka tribal trust land in central Mashonaland, was unfamiliar with this form of co-operation; and Karanga farmers did not distinguish janganano from nhimbe.
4. In the European agricultural sector in 1969, 130 235 farm workers in a total of 255 886 were foreigners: Central Statistical Office to Mr. D.G. Clarke, Department of Economics, University of Rhodesia, 25.5.1973. I am grateful to Mr. (now Dr.) Clarke for this information.
5. I have already mentioned the movement away from the traditional patrilineal principle in Msengezi (see chapter five), towards an ambilateral system of effective kinship ties in which links through females are growing in importance. Whether this change in kinship emphasis will, in the future, lead to further labour problems as the norms and expectations presently governing non-patrilineal relationships alter in response to present behaviour patterns, remains to be seen. If such changes do occur in the direction of defining economic rights and obligations, then it is likely that farmers will rely more heavily still on unrelated strangers for their labour requirements in years to come. This increasing reliance on strangers perhaps reflects the general trend away from relationships based on individual status towards those based on contract (cf. chapter twelve) in this particular area.



CHAPTER EIGHTCAPITALISATION AND CAPITALISTS

Having discussed in chapters six and seven how farmers use their land and the sources from which they draw their labour, in this chapter I consider how the most successful farmers in Msengezi have accumulated various forms of capital, including money, machinery, land improvements and investments in education. In particular, I examine in some detail factors which may have influenced the success of these producers, including production factors and their own personal characteristics. I take as my starting point the capital with which farming careers were begun.

Settlement Capital

Since 1931, when settlement first began in the purchase lands, the various land boards responsible for such settlement have required some evidence of capital accumulation from prospective applicants for these farms. Such capital was acceptable to the land boards in different forms, including cash, farming equipment, livestock, or well-paid employment together with (white) employers' recommendations regarding character, sense of responsibility, inclination to hard work and so on. Over the years, applicants have held such capital in varying amounts, some inadequate to open up a farm, some in excess of initial needs. Most settlers in Msengezi had at least an oxplough, harrow and cultivator; approximately six to ten head of cattle; and up to £50 (Rh\$100) in cash. A few had less capital, while some had much more - planters, lorries, large herds of livestock, more ox-drawn equipment. Later settlers had considerably more cash, for in the mid-1960s the Rural Land Board decided that £300 (Rh\$600) was the minimum cash sum a potential purchase land farmer would need in order to establish himself and cover his production costs for the first season. Even this sum, however, may be too low to meet the farmers' requirements, particularly if they encounter abnormal weather conditions during the first season.

The speed with which initial capital may be dissipated by a bad first season is seen graphically in the case of Mr. Zondiwa (pseudonym), who, in 1967, bought a new farm in Msengezi from the State. Previously he had worked for several years as an extension assistant on an irrigation scheme. He was twenty-eight years old when he bought the farm, a practising Catholic whose wife had born him four children, none of whom was then in school. He had nearly Rh\$800 in cash when his application

for a farm was approved, plus three head of cattle. A single-furrow  
 explough and a cultivator, together with three oxen, cost him Rh\$100.  
 Transporting his family and equipment to Msengezi cost him Rh\$50.  
 Being unable to rely on family labour, he hired three resident workers  
 and contracted out the stumping of ten acres, which was then tractor-  
 ploughed at a cost of Rh\$4 per acre and planted to maize and tobacco.  
 By the time these crops were ready for reaping, Mr. Zondiwa had paid out  
 over Rh\$300 of his remaining Rh\$650 on land preparation and planting. He  
 had approximately Rh\$200 left after buying food and various other  
 necessities. Had he recovered some of his initial outlay from marketing  
 his crops, he would have been well-placed to begin extending his cropping  
 area and developing the farm itself. Unfortunately for Mr. Zondiwa and  
 all other Rhodesian farmers, however, drought conditions during the 1967-  
 68 season were so bad that few crops were harvested, let alone sold, and  
 the government granted the farmers drought relief. In the purchase lands,  
 however, drought relief payments were made in fertiliser rather than in  
 cash, and at that time short-term seasonal loans for crop production were  
 available only to those farmers who had a proven record of credit-  
 worthiness. So farmers like Mr. Zondiwa, whose cash reserves had been  
 depleted and who had no such established reputation, were in trouble,  
 particularly those who had no access to family labour. One bad season  
 was thus sufficient to turn a young, trained, enthusiastic farmer into  
 an impoverished, cautious and rather bitter man whose primary concern  
 had to be to feed his family. At this point, Mr. Zondiwa decided to  
 minimise his risks in farming, an approach which, like all extension  
 assistants, he had himself previously condemned. In the 1968-69 season,  
 he and his wife did all the work themselves, planting only maize and  
 vegetables in order to provide a food reserve for the family. They began  
 to exploit local markets within Msengezi wherever possible and slowly  
 regained their initial capital. When, in 1971, Mr. Zondiwa decided to  
 experiment with tobacco once again, he brought his teenage brother to  
 live on the farm and assist him, rather than hiring labour as he had done  
 four years earlier. In 1973, after seven years of farming, the Zondiwa  
 family were still living in the pole and dagga huts they had built for  
 initial shelter, although they had managed to increase their capital,  
 having bought a harrow, a maize sheller, a spray-pump for cotton and a  
 scotch-cart; fenced three paddocks for the cattle; and constructed a  
 polyurethane-covered barn for air-curing Burley tobacco. Mr. Zondiwa  
 attributes his low living standards as well as his farm's underdevelopment  
 to his disastrous first season, from which he found it extremely difficult

to recover. A similar capital loss affected some of the 1949 settlers when a large bush fire swept across the Biri River from a European-owned farm to the south of Msengezi, destroying some twenty herds of cattle which had arrived in the purchase land only a few weeks earlier, as well as grazing, crops and housing. These men had even smaller cash reserves than Mr. Zondiwa, and some lost everything they owned.

Clearly, the minimum capital resources officially required of applicants for farms are insufficient to cover the contingency of capital loss during the first season as a result of natural disasters. Nor indeed is this settlement capital adequate to allow anything more than a very slow accumulation of resources from farming profits. Nevertheless, mainly by means of loans, most farmers in Msengezi have managed to develop their farms to some extent over the past twenty-five years, thus accumulating capital especially in non-monetary forms. By 1974, significant numbers of these farms were relatively well-developed.

#### Degrees of Capitalisation and Farm Development

I have chosen to use three specific measures of capital development on Msengezi farms, in order to indicate indirectly degrees of success in farming. However, since external sources of income, as well as agricultural productivity, may be responsible for capital development, these measures do not necessarily indicate actual productivity, although they do reflect economic success.

The first of these three indices is farm enclosure by means of ring-fencing. Enclosure is generally associated, as a further development, with internal paddocking and the adoption of short-duration grazing schemes for cattle. Ringfencing, without internal paddocking, costs up to Rh\$750, depending on the perimeter length of the farm. Internal paddocking usually costs slightly more than the initial ringfencing. Two of every three farms in Msengezi were, in 1974, fully ringfenced, while the remainder were partially fenced. Most farms also have fences protecting arable lands from livestock, irrespective of ringfencing.

Secondly, there is the provision of artificial water supplies, in the form of a lined well, dam, or borehole, to meet stock-watering and small-scale irrigation requirements as well as domestic needs. Wells and boreholes cost approximately Rh\$3 per foot to sink and are generally between fifty and one hundred feet deep. Pumps and irrigation equipment constitute additional costs. An earth-walled dam costs roughly Rh\$600: most such dams were constructed in the early 1960s, when loans for water development became available from the Land and Agricultural Bank. Today,



with loans available from the Agricultural Finance Corporation, boreholes are regarded as more fashionable because they eliminate water loss through evaporation. At the time of interview in 1973, 165 of 325 farms had lined wells at least ten feet deep; eighty-two farms had one or more small dams; and nine had boreholes. A further two dams and eleven boreholes were planned in the near future.

Mechanisation is the third indicator of capital development, involving the use of mechanical power in production. My minimum requirement for classifying a farm as 'mechanised' is ownership of a functioning tractor and disc-plough, which was found in fifty-four cases. Thus a mere 16 per cent of Msengezi farmers had mechanised their production in terms of my definition, although, as table 8.1 shows, most producers have large numbers of ox-drawn implements, which depend on animal rather than mechanical power for their operation. A few farmers, however, have mechanised beyond my minimum requirement: three farmers own two tractors each, some have bought lorries, pick-ups and Landrovers, and a couple have experimented with more exotic equipment such as tractor-driven maize-shellors, cotton-sprayers and reapers.

Table 8.1 Farming equipment in Msengezi: total

oxplough	683
ox-drawn cultivator	500
ox-drawn harrow	402
cotton spray-pump	264
scotch cart	258
planter	218
maize-sheller	133
disc plough	76
dam scoop	76
ridger	71
groundnut-sheller	62
tractor	57
grass mower	35
watercart	35
trailer	35
disc harrow (tractor)	24
platform scale	10
cultivator (tractor)	9
row mark (for planting)	9
hayrake	8
mist-blow sprayer (tractor)	2
reaper	1
shelling machine	1



Other forms of capital, such as tobacco barns, poultry houses, equipment sheds and other outbuildings, have not been used for present purposes, because construction techniques and values vary tremendously and because few farmers have them. The proportion of the farm which had been stumped was also rejected as an indicator of capitalisation, because clearing and stumping is an ongoing process and most farms have already had over half of their total area deforested.

Most capital development has occurred in the following sequence: enclosure, the provision of water supplies, and mechanisation. Some farmers have mechanised before enclosing their farms, however, and others have concentrated on water supplies as a first priority. I have classified farms showing all three of these indicators as capitalised; those displaying only two of the three indices as semi-capitalised; and those with one or none of these factors as undercapitalised. Table 8.2 shows the distribution of capitalised, semi-capitalised and under-capitalised farms in Msengezi. Although few farms fall into the capitalised category at present, there are a large number of semi-capitalised farms only one step away from full capitalisation in terms of my definition. However, since mechanisation may not be justified for all farms, given that an average of only thirty-six acres is under cultivation on each farm, full capitalisation in my terms could mean overdevelopment of uneconomic proportions. One tractor between every two farms may well be the most economic distribution, which would mean that some of the farms I have classified as semi-capitalised may in fact be regarded as having attained a high level of development

Table 8.2 Degrees of capitalisation on Msengezi farms

category	East ICA	Central ICA	Waze ICA	West ICA	total	%
undercapitalised: not enclosed	30	40	16	21	107	33,0
undercapitalised: enclosed	21	19	31	28	99	30,6
semi-capitalised	24	17	21	29	91	28,1
capitalised	5	5	6	11	27*	8,3

\* includes one farm which has since reverted to semi-capitalised status following sale transfer

As table 8.2 shows, the extent of capitalisation is greatest in West ICA, where 45 per cent of all farms are at least semi-capitalised, compared to the lowest proportion of 27 per cent in Central ICA. This distribution arises partly from the better soils and more evenly distributed

rainfall in the western section of Msengezi, but mostly from the different idioms of accumulation used by farmers in different areas. The earliest settlers, in East and Central ICAs, tended to be men of some education, retired teachers, policemen and church workers, who used their farms to finance the highest possible standard of education for their children. This investment in education had a dual purpose: to relieve the farmer of having to assist his children financially in later years; and to ensure that they would be in a position to help him if necessary. These men therefore sank their capital and farming profits into the intangible investment of education, rather than capitalising and developing their farms. In contrast, the later settlers in the western half of Msengezi were mostly men of little or no education, tribal cultivators and migrant labourers many of whom were married polygynously. These settlers were, in general, relatively unconcerned about their children's education and employment future, for their aspirations did not extend beyond their own experience. As their farming profits accumulated fairly rapidly because of their adequate supplies of family labour, this money was invested in land improvements, a stable labour force and machinery. In Msengezi at least, if not purchase lands in general, the traditional idiom of accumulation has thus proved more conducive to farm development to date than has the modern idiom, for, as table 8.3 indicates, polygynists have generally been more successful in capitalising their farms than have monogamists or those who are effectively single

Table 8.3 Marital status and farm capitalisation

farm classification	polygynists %	non-polygynists %
undercapitalised	43,1	66,8
semi-capitalised	43,1	25,7
(fully) capitalised	13,8	7,5

Having considered the extent to which Msengezi farms have been capitalised, I now wish to examine the further characteristics, besides marital status, of those land-owners whose farms have been classified as capitalised. For lack of a better term, I refer to these farmers as 'capitalists', although their status as capitalists differs only in degree from those who own semi- or under-capitalised farms, since most farmers bought (or retained inherited) land, livestock and equipment, intending to accumulate wealth through large-scale farming. Those I have labelled 'capitalists' have simply been the most successful in this accumulation process. In the remainder of this chapter, therefore, I consider some of

the factors which may have influenced their success, paying particular attention to the differences between those successful farmers using the traditional and the modern idioms of accumulation.<sup>1</sup>

### Capitalists: Production Characteristics

#### a. Farm Population Structure

According to Goody (1972:122), evidence from a number of African societies shows that 'richer (or more progressive) farmers live and work in larger groups than the average for that community'. In general, purchase lands do support larger permanent populations, per farm, than do tribal homesteads (Hughes, 1974), which may support Goody's assertion. However, within individual purchase lands, such as Msengezi, this generalisation may need qualification, depending on the idiom of accumulation that farmers use. I have assumed that the capitalists are among the richest farmers in Msengezi, on the grounds of their farming assets. If Goody's hypothesis is correct, therefore, the average farm population on capitalised farms should be noticeably larger than that for Msengezi as a whole. However, table 8.4 shows that this hypothesis in fact only holds in West ICA. In other ICAs, the difference in population size between capitalised farms and all farms is insignificant: in Central ICA, there are fewer residents on capitalised farms than in the ICA as a whole.

Table 8.4 Permanent farm populations: distribution of average size

average population	East ICA	Central ICA	Waze ICA	West ICA	total
on all farms	11,7	11,3	12,1	15,5	12,7
on capitalised farms	12,0	9,6	12,3	19,0	14,8

The reason for this difference in the size of farm populations between West and other ICAs lies in the much higher incidence of polygynous marriages in West ICA, where more farmers have adopted the traditional idiom of accumulation. Table 8.5 confirms the correlation between polygynous marriage and size of farm population among capitalists, the phi co-efficient being 0,39.

Table 8.5 Farm population and marital status among capitalists

farm population	monogamists	polygynists
below Msengezi average	13	2
above Msengezi average	6	6



This phi co-efficient is further supported by the average figure of 11,2 persons on farms belonging to monogamous capitalists, compared to 21,8 on those of their polygynous counterparts. Polygynous capitalists, who have an average of 3,4 wives each compared to 2,8 among polygynists in general, thus tend to gather large numbers of dependants around them; whereas monogamous capitalists shed their dependants in favour of generally smaller numbers of hired workers, although a few employ large numbers of resident workers. Goody's hypothesis regarding wealth and the size of farm population, therefore, requires modification if it is to be applicable to Msengezi, since over half of the capitalists in this area live and work in smaller units than average. The hypothesis in fact applies only to polygynous capitalists, who have used the traditional idiom in order to accumulate their wealth and finance their farm development. Only during extremely busy periods in the agricultural cycle, while temporary workers are employed, would this hypothesis hold good for the work units of all capitalists and even then it would not apply to their residential groupings.

#### b. Land Utilisation

During the 1972-3 drought season, fifty acres on average were under cultivation on capitalised farms, compared to thirty-six acres on all farms. The respective ranges were 13 to 130 acres and 2 to 169 acres. In general, then, capitalists as a category cropped acreages some 40 per cent larger than average. All grew cotton and two produced tobacco as well: in general they attached more importance to purely cash crops than to grain production, despite the fact that increased prestige accrues to the man who is seen to be 'feeding the country' by producing grain on a larger scale than normal. Indeed, during the 1973-4 season, when abnormally heavy rains fell, one capitalist completely abandoned his waterlogged maize crop within a few weeks of planting, although Msengezi farmers consider it a disgrace for a farmer to have to buy grain for family consumption.

The allocation of usufructuary rights to land on capitalised farms also varied significantly from the general pattern (cf. chapter six). Only one-third of the capitalists had allocated such rights to others during the 1972-3 season, compared to one-half of all farmers. Furthermore, where such allocation had occurred on capitalised farms, only 22 per cent of the total arable land under cultivation was worked by additional cultivators, compared to 33 per cent in Msengezi as a whole. The capitalists thus appeared to be comparatively unwilling to allow their farmland to be worked by persons other than themselves.



### c. Labour Supplies

Because they cropped much larger acreages than average, none of the capitalists relied exclusively on family labour. Instead, they employed more workers: two-thirds of these capitalists - more than twice the proportion of all Msengezi farmers - employed resident workers to meet most of their labour requirements. These eighteen capitalists between them employed fifty-six resident workers: 5,5 per cent of farmers thus employed 28 per cent of all resident workers in Msengezi. All of the capitalists used casual workers when necessary.

As would be expected, the polygynous capitalists used hired labour more sparingly than did the monogamists, relying mainly on family labour supplemented by casual hired workers for weeding and picking cotton. Labour bills for the 1972-3 season thus varied, among capitalists, from Rh\$6 per month for one resident worker and a total of Rh\$10 for casual assistance, to nearly Rh\$90 per month for a dozen resident labourers and Rh\$100 for temporary workers.

Some capitalists also belonged to co-operative work groups, although as a category they relied less on co-operation than did the overall Msengezi population: 37 per cent, compared to 49 per cent. Polygynous capitalists were more frequently involved in co-operation than their monogamous counterparts.

Clearly, then, capitalised farms differ in degree from the overall Msengezi patterns in respect of farm population structures, patterns of land use and the provision of labour for farming. The geographical concentration of capitalised farms in the later-settled, western half of Msengezi, is related to the higher incidence of polygyny in this area and the greater use of the traditional idiom of accumulation. The following discussion of the sociological characteristics of the capitalists confirms these general differences between the most successful producers and farmers in general, while also drawing attention to the differences in personal characteristics between monogamous and polygynous capitalists.

### Capitalists: Sociographic Characteristics

#### a. Age

The age range among capitalists was from thirty-eight to ninety years. As table 8.6 indicates, however, most capitalists were clustered in the 40 - 69 age categories and were thus spread over a narrower range than were Msengezi farmers in general. This clustering therefore seems to support Bembridge's (1972) finding in Gwatemba purchase land, that the

most efficient farmers generally fell into the 50 - 69 age categories: younger men tended to be less efficient farmers and, of course, had less opportunity to accumulate capital.

However, there is an important age differential between monogamous and polygynous capitalists in Msengezi. All of the capitalists under the age of fifty years were monogamists, while all of the polygynous capitalists were over the age of fifty. The phi co-efficient of 0,42 for this distribution indicates a significant correlation between polygyny and the older age categories among these capitalists. Men who have used the traditional idiom to achieve capitalist status thus constitute an older grouping, whereas younger men prefer the modern idiom of accumulation, which is consistent with their general background and higher levels of education.

Table 8.6 Ages of capitalists in comparison to all farmers

age category	capitalists number	capitalists %	Msengezi %
minor	-	-	2,0
under 30 years	-	-	2,3
30 - 39 years	1	3,7	8,0
40 - 49 years	7	25,9	15,6
50 - 59 years	10	37,0	29,9
60 - 69 years	6	22,2	19,3
70 - 79 years	2	7,4	15,6
80 + years	1	3,7	6,6
unknown	-	-	0,7

#### b. Education

In many rural communities, formal education seems to be associated to some extent with the adoption of improved agricultural practices. Msengezi is no exception to this pattern, for few farmers have had no formal education at all. While the general level of schooling is not very high, particularly among the generation of original settlers, functional literacy and numeracy are more widespread than might be expected from formal educational levels. The term 'illiterate', as used by Msengezi farmers, does not usually refer to someone who cannot read, write or count: it refers to the person who is not fluent in English. One reason why Msengezi farmers are relatively educated, lies in the initial selection procedure, since the applicant with some education stood more chance of obtaining a farm than the man with none.

Table 8.7 Highest educational levels of capitalists in comparison to all farmers

educational standard	capitalists			all farmers	
	no.	%	cumulative %	%	cumulative %
nil/unknown	0	-	0	11,3	11,3
primary: one year	0	-		1,3	
" two years	0	-		3,7	
" three "	4	14,8		10,6	
" four "	3	11,1		9,6	
" five "	3	11,1	37,0	11,3	36,5
" six "	2	7,4		11,6	
" seven "	4	14,8		8,3	
" eight " *	4	14,8		25,9	
" nine " **	3	11,1	85,1	6,3	88,6*** (79,0)
secondary: one year	0	-		1,0	
" two years	1	3,7	3,7	4,7	5,7
" three "	0	-		0,3	
" four "	1	3,7		2,0	
" five "	0	-	7,4	1,6	9,6
tertiary: some university	2	7,4	7,4	1,3	1,3
teaching qualification	6	22,2		9,6	
technical (incl. agric.)	1	3,7		7,6	
medical qualification	1	3,7		1,0	
bookkeeping qualification	2	7,4		0,7	
theological training	0	-	37,0	0,7	19,6

\* discontinued

\*\* includes teacher training; also discontinued

\*\*\* This figure includes those who have had higher education, whereas the comparable figure for capitalists excludes those who have stayed on at school



Of the capitalists, all have completed standard 1 (three years of primary education). Two have some credits towards a Bachelor's degree, although neither completed the degree. The educational range among capitalists is thus narrower than among farm-owners in general, where it stretches to the maximum, with no formal education at one extreme and one Doctor of Philosophy degree at the other. In general, however, the educational achievements of the capitalists are higher than those of most farmers; 37 per cent have some form of technical qualification over and above their formal schooling and 40 per cent have completed at least a full primary education. Without considering technical qualifications, the capitalists average seven years of formal schooling. All of the polygynists, however, have educational qualifications on or below average, whereas most monogamists have above-average schooling. The phi co-efficient of 0,54 for education and marital status reflects a significant correlation among capitalists between polygyny and an educational standard that is below average, while a second phi co-efficient of 0,64 indicates an even stronger correlation between lower educational levels and the 50 + age category. Age, education and marital status are thus interrelated factors among Msengezi capitalists and probably among all farmers in Rhodesia's purchase lands.

#### c. Employment Background

Most capitalists have participated in the white-dominated, modern Rhodesian economy at a relatively responsible level, as table 8.8 shows. Again, however, the polygynists constitute a partial exception to this statement, since no polygynist has been employed above the semi-skilled level.

Although it is difficult, in Rhodesia, to distinguish between urban and rural employment experience, since many towns were, and still are, very small, nevertheless most facilities are better in towns than on farms and isolated mines. In terms of this distinction, then, 37 per cent of the capitalists have had rural employment experience only, compared to 20 per cent of all farmers. Most of these men with exclusively rural experience are polygynists, but some are among the best-educated monogamists who, as teachers, were always posted to rural schools. Over 60 per cent of capitalists have had some town experience, however, and seven of these men have travelled beyond Rhodesia's borders on holiday, for educational purposes, or in search of work. At 27 per cent, this figure for external travel is more than double the figure of 13 per cent among Msengezi farmers in general: all such travellers have opted for the modern idiom of accumulation.



Table 8.8 Capitalists' employment experience \*

never employed	1
unskilled only	9
semi-skilled	3
skilled	3
clerical	5
lower professional **	8
administrative	4
owned business before buying farm	6

\* includes all jobs

\*\* teaching, police work, medical (orderlies and enrolled medical assistants)

None of the capitalists, then, came to Msengezi directly from a lifetime of subsistence cultivation. All have been exposed to education and, with one exception, employment in the European sector of Rhodesia's economy. All have travelled to some extent within Rhodesia if not further afield. Their general background and indeed that of over 90 per cent of all Msengezi farmers, is one of exposure to new people, new situations, new means of livelihood, new wants. Madzokere (1971) shows that a similar situation is found among farmers in Wiltshire purchase land. Unfortunately, no information on education, employment or travel, except in individual examples, is given by Weinrich (1975) for Tokwe or Zvinyaningwe. Paraiwa (1972:9) notes that one-third of farmers in Chitomborgwizi and over two-fifths of those in Zowa, in his samples, had no formal education, but does not attempt to relate these figures to farming success. However, Bembridge (1972) states that 21 per cent of Gwatemba farmers had 'non-farm experience', which figure seems very low in comparison to Msengezi and perhaps correlates with the lower productivity and relative lack of farm development in Gwatemba. Going further afield, it seems that most of the progressive farmers in the Zambian parish studied by Long (1968) also had town experience, together with many of the successful farmers in Buganda (Richards *et al.*, 1973) and some Giriama accumulators (Parkin, 1972). Polly Hill (1962) states explicitly that many of the most successful migrant cocoa-farmers in Ghana had travelled widely and worked in various capacities in towns. Hence one may postulate that this wider experience can and does encourage agricultural development and capital accumulation

#### d. Religious Affiliation

Over 90 per cent of Msengezi farmers claim at least nominal allegiance to some Christian church, which is perhaps notable in a country where it is estimated that some 70 per cent of the population may claim no Christian identity (Parrinder, 1969). In Gwatemba purchase land, where fewer farmers are Christians, adherence to a Christian denomination is significantly related to farming efficiency (Bembridge, 1972). Possibly a Christian identity is a further facet of the sociological profile reflected in education, employment, travel and entrepreneurship among Msengezi farmers. However, in general, the capitalists do not differ significantly in their church membership from Msengezi farmers as a whole, although fewer Methodists and more Anglicans and Seventh Day Adventists are found in the capitalist category, as table 8.9 shows.

Table 8.9    Religious affiliation of capitalists in comparison to all farmers

church	capitalists		all farmers %
	no.	%	
nil	2	7,4	6,3
Methodist	7	25,9	37,1
African Meth. Episcopal	2	7,4	3,7
Anglican	7	25,9	15,6
Salvation Army	-	-	4,3
Roman Catholic	3	11,1	12,0
Apostolic Faith	1	3,7	6,0
<u>Vapostori we Maranke</u>	2	7,4	5,0
Seventh Day Adventist	3	11,1	6,6
other	-	-	3,3

Possibly the most interesting point about the capitalists' religious affiliation is a negative one, for there seems to be no pattern of adherence to one particular denomination which is associated with successful production and capital accumulation. This situation contrasts markedly with the findings of some recent studies of rural societies in Africa. Long (1968), for example, details the association between progressive farming, business interests and membership of the Jehovah's Witness sect in Kapapa parish, Zambia. Parkin (1972) shows how relative success and conversion to Islam are connected in a Kenyan society. In at least one tribal area in Rhodesia, many of the most successful producers belong to the Seventh Day Adventist organisation.<sup>2</sup> Yet there is no such

association between membership of a specific church and capitalist status in Msengezi: in chapter four, I have already discussed the reasons why a religious justification for accumulation is not needed in this new society, together with the protection offered to accumulators using the traditional idiom by membership of the Vapostori we Maranke sect. Four-fifths of the vapostori have developed their farms at least to the semi-capitalised stage.

#### e. Ethnic Identity

The polyethnic nature of Msengezi society is reflected among capitalists as well as in the population at large. Among capitalists, however, in comparison to the general population, the Karanga/Rozwi, Ndebele and Manyika tribal categories appear to be over-represented and the Zezuru category under-represented, as table 8.10 shows. In fact, since the numbers involved are so small, these slight shifts in the relative importance of various ethnic categories may be insignificant. However, Karanga/Rozwi farmers are also over-represented in the category of those who own semi-capitalised farms and are under-represented in the under-capitalised category, thus confirming the importance of this particular tribal identity in the accumulation process. I would therefore suggest that those who have come to Msengezi from distant homes have been able to avoid demands from kin for financial assistance more successfully than have those whose original homes are relatively close to the purchase land. If so, they may have been better placed to accumulate more rapidly, which might explain, at least in part, why some of these 'strangers' appear in the capitalist and semi-capitalist categories more frequently than their overall numbers would seem to warrant, while the 'owners of the land' appear less frequently.

The increased proportion of Karanga/Rozwi farmers among the capitalist (and semi-capitalist) categories, however, probably correlates with the increased incidence of polygyny among this tribal category in Msengezi, where 45 per cent of Karanga and Rozwi farmers are extant polygynists and a further 5 per cent are ex-polygynists. The correlation between Karanga/Rozwi identity and polygyny is even closer among the eight capitalists who are married to more than one wife. Of these eight men, six are Karanga or Rozwi; and of the nine Karanga/Rozwi capitalists, six are polygynists. In Msengezi, then, Karanga and Rozwi farmers epitomise the traditional idiom of accumulation, to the point that men of Karanga descent who use the modern idiom sometimes claim a different ethnic identity in order to avoid being identified with the 'old-fashioned' stereotype that the use of the traditional idiom entails and



Table 8.10 Ethnic identity of capitalists in comparison to all farmers

ethnic category	capitalists		all farmers
	no.	%	%
Zezuru	9	33,3	42,1
Manyika/Maungwe	2	7,4	3,7
KoreKore	-	-	1,0
Karanga/Rozwi	9	33,3	20,6
Kalanga	1	3,7	1,3
-----			
Ndebele	3	11,1	7,6
Mfengu/Xhosa	1	3,7	6,0
Shangane	-	-	2,7
-----			
other:		7,4	10,3
Hlengwe	1		
Tswana	1		
claim different identity from that admitted	-	-	4,7

which has been applied somewhat indiscriminately to members of these two ethnic categories. I should add here that I do not know for certain why Karanga identity is so closely linked to polygyny: Msengezi farmers themselves suggested that the Karanga were in general 'old-fashioned' and, for this reason, some Zezuru monogamists were not even prepared to classify Karanga people as 'MaShona'. Certainly most Karanga settlers in Msengezi came from tribal backgrounds and had relatively little education, which goes some way towards explaining their increased use of the traditional idiom of accumulation. Nevertheless, the correlation between Karanga identity and polygyny does not seem to be restricted to Msengezi, being found in other purchase lands as well: a full explanation of this apparent correlation must, therefore, await further investigation.

#### f. Business Entrepreneurship

Large-scale, capitalised farming is only one aspect of the entrepreneurial abilities of Msengezi capitalists, of whom less than half are purely farmers. Twelve capitalists between them own thirty separate businesses, located in both rural and urban areas, and including a bus company, a printing works, a bookshop, a hairdressing salon, a cocktail bar and two supermarkets, in addition to general dealerships, butcheries,



grinding mills and a 'hot-dog' stall (which is actually an 'eating house', or type of café). The capitalists also derive additional revenue from contract tractor-ploughing, transporting and hiring out other types of machinery to fellow-farmers; while salaries, pensions and councillors' allowances provide further income for four capitalists. The farming success of most capitalists is undoubtedly related to their external sources of income: only some of the polygynists have capitalised their farms without such external revenue. It seems, therefore, that unless men do have access to external funds, the modern idiom of accumulation is unlikely to lead to full capitalisation of purchase land farms.

### Summary

In considering possible correlations between farm capitalisation and certain characteristics of farm-owners (age, education, employment experience, religious affiliation, ethnic identity and entrepreneurship), I do not claim that any simple causal relationships exist in Msengezi. With the possible exception of entrepreneurship, none of these factors is, by itself, a necessary condition for achieving capitalist status. Some combinations of these factors, however, such as a minimum level of formal education, employment experience in a modern economy, and travel, do appear to be correlated with undifferentiated capitalist status and may, therefore, be necessary, though not sufficient, for such achievement.

However, if one differentiates capitalists by the idiom of accumulation used, one notes important sociological differences between capitalists using the traditional idiom and those accumulating in the modern idiom. The former are generally older; are less educated; were employed in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs; have had less entrepreneurial experience, most of which has been in retail selling on a small scale; and the majority claim to be Karanga or Rozwi. In contrast, capitalists using the modern idiom of accumulation are generally younger; are better-educated; have higher-level employment experience; own larger and more varied businesses, some of which are in the skilled trades or manufacturing sector; and belong to various tribal categories. They also have smaller families and fewer dependants than their polygynous counterparts and employ more resident farm workers.

Thus one cannot demonstrate overall correlations between sociological factors and undifferentiated capitalist status, precisely because of these bimodal distributions, based on the different idioms of accumulation, which are found within the capitalist category. Within

each of these two categories of capitalist, however, certain factors are correlated with one another: for example, increased age, low educational levels and unskilled employment all correlate with polygyny; while monogamy is correlated with relative youth, educational levels above average and higher-level employment.

It is difficult to say if these different idioms of accumulation entail varying degrees of ease in farm capitalisation. The monogamous capitalist, by virtue of his education and employment experience, generally has or had access to larger cash sums to purchase hybrid seed and fertiliser and pay for labour than did most polygynists. His access to credit facilities was also easier, at least in the past, so yield increases were achieved with relative ease among this category. Equally well, however, investment in wives provides labour and generates capital without significant depreciation costs: in the early stages of accumulation, therefore, investment in wives is the most rational step for the man of few resources who wishes to farm on a large scale. The traditional idiom is thus viable among men who would experience difficulty in using the modern idiom: as I have shown in this chapter, both of these idioms may lead to farming success. In the past, however, it seems that the traditional idiom has been more effective among Msengezi farmers, than the modern idiom, which probably holds greater potential in the future.

Certainly, as I mentioned in chapter four, the use of the modern idiom of accumulation realises more prestige in Msengezi than does the traditional idiom. Polygynous capitalists, therefore, find that their status as successful capitalists is restricted to the field of production, where their leadership potential also lies. In contrast, monogamous capitalists provide leadership in many different spheres, as a result of their education and employment experience. Because they are familiar with bureaucratic procedures, then, they tend to control the development process in Msengezi as a whole, as I shall show in Part III. These differences between polygynous and monogamous capitalists, the most important of which have been examined in general terms in this chapter, will be shown in detail in the following chapter by examining individual farmers as representatives of different types of accumulator.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Footnotes

1. Although the absolute numbers involved in the capitalist category are so small, certain correlations do indicate distinct trends which are relevant to the development process. Therefore, while

I am aware of the limitations of the correlative exercise,  
I think it is important to present these results.

2. Personal communication from Professor D.H. Reader, 1973.



## CHAPTER NINE

### MODELS OF FARMER

In earlier chapters I have described the most important aspects of agricultural production in Msengezi, showing generally how the factors of land, labour and capital are used in this area and demonstrating the differences in strategies of production which arise from the use of the modern and the traditional idioms of accumulation. In the last chapter, I examined the differences in sociological profiles between only the most successful farmers using each of these idioms. In this chapter, therefore, I intend to enlarge and particularise this picture by examining cases of individual farmers, as representatives of more specific types of farmer.

My overall classification of farmers in Msengezi is given in table 9.1, using three axes: farm capitalisation; idiom of accumulation; and place of permanent residence. I have selected one example from each of the three types of capitalist: that is, one resident capitalist using the traditional idiom, together with one resident and one non-resident capitalist using the modern idiom of accumulation. Since there are no non-resident, polygynous capitalists in Msengezi, this (potential) category has been ignored. Then, for contrastive purposes, I have set these three cases against that of a resident farmer attempting to accumulate in the modern idiom, whose farm has remained undercapitalised: this man may be regarded as representative of nearly one-third of Msengezi farmers who, in the eyes of the farmers themselves, would be regarded as 'poor' to 'average'. By examining these four cases in detail, I hope to illustrate, at the individual level, the general points made previously.

#### Resident Capitalists Accumulating in the Modern Idiom

As one example of this category, I have chosen Mr. Sifelani (pseudonym), who was born in Zwimba reserve approximately sixty-seven years ago. (Cf. diagram i, page 56: Mr. Sifelani is B4). Although he speaks English and siNdebele as fluently as the Zezuru dialect and despite the fact that his paternal grandfather belonged to the Rozwi tribe, Mr. Sifelani regards himself as Zezuru because both his father and he were born in Zwimba, some fifteen miles from his farm in Msengezi, which he bought in 1939. His reasons for buying the farm were complex, the most important being his elder sister's advice, her husband's example, his dislike of the lack of privacy in tribal life



Table 9.1 Classification of Farmers in Msengezi

analytical categories	%	traditional-idiom accumulators		modern-idiom accumulators		ethno- categories
		resident %	non-resident %	resident %	non-resident %	
capitalists	8,6	13,8	0	4,9	2,5	rich farmers/ very good farmers
semi-capitalised farmers	28,9	41,4	1,7	20,6	4,9	good farmers
undercapitalised farmers	62,5	36,2	6,9	52,7	14,4	average farmers poor farmers
sub-totals		91,4	8,6	78,2	21,8	
totals	100,0*	100,0**		100,0***		

\* n = 301

\*\* n = 58

\*\*\* n = 243

and his future retirement security. A desire to make a success of farming was not prominent in Mr. Sifelani's calculations when he bought the farm, nor was he concerned about family security, for at that time he was unmarried and held a teaching post at a mission station. Buying the farm was, essentially, a speculative move by a man who had a career in front of him.

Mr. Sifelani's early life history indicates the importance of education for socio-economic mobility during the colonial period of African history. He was the eldest son of a polygynist and worked for a few months as a 'kitchen boy' in a European household before starting school at the age of twelve years. He completed five years of primary education (standard three) and then taught for two years, during which time he saved enough money to return to school, as an adult, to complete his primary education and gain a teaching qualification. He then taught and saved for another two years to finance his studies at Adams College, in Natal, South Africa. In 1934 he returned to a teaching post in Rhodesia and studied by correspondence to pass the South African Junior Certificate and Matriculation examinations. He later began, but did not complete, a BA degree through the University of South Africa. In 1942 he was promoted to the post of headmaster and taught at and administered a number of schools before becoming schools manager for one of the Methodist circuits in 1963. He retired in 1970 when, for the first time since he bought his farm 31 years earlier, he became a full-time farmer.

Mr. Sifelani has not been seriously short of money since his student days, because of his investment in his own education. When he returned from South Africa, he educated his younger siblings and half-siblings from his salary. Once these family obligations were fulfilled, he began to save his money. His farm constituted his first investment outside the educational field. A few years after buying his farm, he bought a grinding mill for maize, which his younger half-brother supervised for a couple of years before joining the police force. The mill was situated in Mr. Sifelani's home village in Zwimba, and was later augmented by a general dealership. Some ten years later, he started up a second store, this time in Msengezi. Mr. Sifelani has always employed carefully-selected relatives to work in his stores, and keeps a rigorous check on stocks and revenue by means of a bookkeeping system he devised himself: hence his businesses have been successful, unlike many in rural areas. This entrepreneurial experience has proved very useful to Mr. Sifelani in his present capacity as one of Msengezi's leading local politicians.

In 1942, Mr. Sifelani married a former student of his, a Maungwe woman who was teaching at that time at a mission school near Umtali. They had nine children, two of whom died. Of the remaining seven, two are state registered nurses, one is a primary school teacher, three are still studying at the secondary school level, while the eldest son is being groomed by his father to take over the management of the farm and the stores. The educational levels of his children support Mr. Sifelani's contention that he has never had to struggle in order to educate his children: their own academic limitations rather than his financial resources have ended their formal education. Mr. Sifelani's investment in his farm was in fact activated to provide additional income at the time his second child started school in 1955, reflecting his tendency to plan ahead.

When he obtained his farm in 1939, Mr. Sifelani installed his younger sister and her husband on the farm to occupy and 'manage' it, allowing them to work the land on their own account. In 1950, however, his brother-in-law obtained his own farm in Msengezi and transferred his family there, although he still checked on Mr. Sifelani's farm occasionally. After his brother-in-law left, Mr. Sifelani began to hire workers to look after his cattle and clear the land, checking on the farm himself over weekends. In 1955, when the farm had been virtually unused for a couple of seasons, Mr. Sifelani received title to the land, which contributed to his decision to begin using this investment which had lain dormant for so long. His brother-in-law's 'resignation' as manager also influenced this decision, as did the prospect of increasing educational costs for his children. But the precipitating cause was the disagreement between Mr. Sifelani, then headmaster of a Methodist mission school, and the church's education supervisor, a former pupil of his. As this disagreement grew, Mr. Sifelani considered it prudent to ensure that he had an alternative home and source of income. As it happened, the disagreement eventually culminated in Mr. Sifelani's resignation from the Methodist educational organisation, although he later returned to it, by invitation, as schools' manager.

The order in which Mr. Sifelani undertook land improvements on his farm reflects both his priorities and his status. Between 1951 and 1954, when the farm was supporting livestock only, he had 100 acres of land cleared and stumped. In 1955, he built a large, gabled, four-bedroomed house to a plan drawn by a Salisbury architect, at a cost of £1 000 (Rh\$2 000). The house was paid for by savings and the proceeds of a grain harvest of 700 bags in 1957. In 1956, when the house had been finished, the farm was ringfenced and in 1957, Mr. Sifelani sank



a fifty-foot well to provide domestic water supplies. In 1958, four internal paddocks for grazing were fenced. The following year (1959), Mr. Sifelani bought his first tractor, second-hand: he traded this one in for a newer model in 1963. During 1961 he planted a half-acre orchard of mango, guava and citrus trees and the following year a small earth dam was excavated. In 1964, the first borehole in Msengezi was drilled on Mr. Sifelani's farm and then, for a few years, development activities ceased. In honour of the first marriage among his children, Mr. Sifelani installed an electric generator in 1968, before his daughter's wedding, and bought a television set - a long-standing ambition that impressed the urban visitors, as it was intended to! In 1971 he bought a second tractor, new, in order to cope with the demand for contract tractor-ploughing as well as his own work. Last year (1974) he negotiated the laying of an Electricity Supply Commission cable to his farm, because the generator did not provide sufficient power for cooking, heating and running electrical appliances as well as lighting and the television set. In among the major farm developments, Mr. Sifelani has also built substantial labourers' quarters, a garage, equipment sheds and storerooms, all of plastered brick under corrugated iron, and has bought two relatively new and well-kept cars. He now regards his farm as fully developed: 'No, I don't think there is anything more I want. An upstairs wouldn't be much use!'

The order of development and capitalisation on this farm was, therefore, as follows: land clearance; substantial house; enclosure; domestic water supply; paddocks; mechanisation; orchard; farm water supply; electricity. Capitalisation was rapid, though slower than the pace of development over the past five years among the very wealthy businessmen who also own farms in Msengezi. Most of the development on Mr. Sifelani's farm coincided with his older children's primary schooling: by the time they had reached secondary school, these capital investments were yielding an income of approximately R\$1 000 annually, in addition to Mr. Sifelani's salary as schools manager. The farm thus supported rather than competed with the children's education, largely as a result of Mr. Sifelani's original savings and external sources of income, including his business investments in Zwimba reserve. Other farmers, not having such external resources, have found that children's education and farm development have competed for their available cash.

One can distinguish three rather different sources of farm income on Mr. Sifelani's farm: crops and cattle sold to statutory marketing boards; crops and cattle which are disposed of through specific internal



markets in Msengezi; and revenue from contract ploughing, planting and cultivating, together with that from hiring out other equipment, such as his trailer. Each of these revenue sources is important, contributing approximately one-third of the total farm income. The internal market which Mr. Sifelani managed to corner shortly after it came into existence in 1966, is the government junior secondary school, a boarding establishment which Mr. Sifelani supplies with unhusked rice and fresh fruit. The speed with which he exploited this market reflects Mr. Sifelani's entrepreneurial instincts.

Mr. Sifelani might further be described as a 'gentleman farmer'. Neither he nor his wife have ever worked in the fields themselves, nor have their daughters been required to, although the sons are expected to put in an eight-hour day when they are at home and not studying. Hired workers produce the crops and tend the cattle, and have done so ever since Mr. Sifelani assumed the reins of farm management. In the home, many of Mr. Sifelani's development projects have been designed to ease the work of his wife and daughters, such as piping water to the house and installing electricity. Despite recurrent labour problems and marital troubles arising from his wife's mental instability, Mr. Sifelani is firmly committed to the modern idiom of accumulation and the European model of 'progress' which have made him so successful financially, socially and as a leader in local politics. His leadership roles, past and present, have made him an 'outstanding African' in the eyes of his fellow farmers. He has been a past director of the African Development Fund; a member of the defunct federal Agricultural Research Council; a member of the standing committee of the British Methodist church in Southern Rhodesia, prior to Federation; and a past chairman of the Msengezi Farmers' Association. At present he is chairman of the Msengezi and Kutama Council; chairman of the Council Finance Committee; vice-chairman of the Msengezi Producers' Co-operative Society; vice-chairman of the Central Mashonaland Co-operative Union; treasurer of the Makwiro Circuit of the British Methodist church; and a member of the Salisbury Area Council of the church. More than anyone else in Msengezi, Mr. Sifelani is influential in development planning for the area as a whole, and has been for the past ten years. His leadership is seen, by other farmers, to rest on three separate bases: his education and previous occupational roles; his standard of living; and his prestige in the field of agricultural production.

Mr. Sifelani is an excellent example of a successful entrepreneur accumulating in the modern idiom. He farms using the maxim that, in order to make money, one must first spend it. He therefore fertilises his crops

to recommended rates and does not attempt to 'save' money by reducing production inputs. Nevertheless, because he is now a full-time, resident farmer and local politician, Mr. Sifelani is sensitive to public opinion and what he calls 'envy' among his fellow farmers. While apparently not subscribing to any belief in actual witchcraft, in concept or action, Mr. Sifelani believed that he would be prudent to reduce his level of visible success in farming in order to retain his present influential position. Moreover, in recent years, his own ill-health (back trouble and malaria) and his wife's mental instability have diminished somewhat the aggressive thrust of his farming entrepreneurship. The manner in which he chose to reduce his apparent success was, perhaps inevitably, financially advantageous. Instead of insisting on preparing his own lands well in advance of the rains, he now uses both tractors for contract ploughing until a few weeks after the rains have started. By planting late, he knows he runs the risk of diminished harvests, but he is seen to be putting his fellow farmers' ploughing requirements before his own and not to be asserting his own interests. At the same time, of course, he is making extra money from late ploughing when other contract-ploughing tractors have been withdrawn to meet their owners' needs. This additional revenue from ploughing more or less balances out crop losses, while the strategy placates public opinion, which is important to Mr. Sifelani. Where public opinion is not important to modern entrepreneurs, production strategies differ, as my next case shows.

#### Non-Resident Capitalists Accumulating in the Modern Idiom

The number of monogamous capitalists who do not live permanently on their farms is increasing as more and more successful, urban businessmen invest in purchase land farms. In Msengezi, businessmen form the majority of non-resident capitalists, although a couple of professional men do own capitalised farms. These non-resident capitalists differ from the type represented by Mr. Sifelani in two main respects: they have access to capital on a much larger scale; and they are a generation younger. They have also invested most of their money in town. As a result of these differences, their production strategies are less conventional, being both risky and suited to their own particular, individual needs and interests. They are the ideal-type entrepreneurs.

Now forty-five years old, Patrick Mandhla (pseudonym) acquired his farm five years ago: as the eldest son, he inherited his father's farm by customary law in 1969. Initially he claimed to be nonplussed: 'We are town folk. All our interests are here in town, so the farm came as a bit

of an embarrassment'. After consulting with their company accountant, however, Mr. and Mrs. Mandhla decided to keep the farm. They had two main reasons for this decision: the farm could supply their urban stores and supermarkets with produce; and certain land improvements on farms are tax rebatable in Rhodesia at present. Since the ~~Mandhla~~ then drew a joint salary of Rh\$1 500 each month from their holding company, potential tax rebates were important to them. They own eight separate businesses, consolidated in a single holding company of which they are joint and sole directors. They began to acquire these businesses in 1960 and, in 1973, the annual turnover of these various enterprises was well over Rh\$1 million and increasing at the rate of 20 per cent per annum. Approximately 130 employees staff these eight businesses: the Mandhla are among the largest African employers in Rhodesia.

Mr. Mandhla was born on a mission station in the Gwelo district, the son of an Anglican catechist and 'missionary' belonging to the Kalanga tribe, who bought a farm in Msengezi for his retirement security. Starting school at the age of seven years, Patrick Mandhla did not leave educational institutions until he had passed the Cambridge School Certificate and completed a two-year teaching diploma. Later, through correspondence courses, he qualified as a bookkeeper, before registering for a Commerce degree with the University of South Africa, of which he completed only half of the necessary credits because of his other work. When he left teacher training college, he taught for two terms before deciding that his avant-garde personality and the teaching profession were totally incompatible. He then went into commerce, working as filing clerk, credit controller, bookkeeper and junior accountant in three different companies, one of which was Indian-owned. In 1965, he resigned his job in order to devote his whole attention to his own businesses, of which there were then three. For the next five years, business profits were ploughed into acquiring new shops and expanding the old ones, although sufficient money was drawn out for the Mandhla to buy land and negotiate a building society loan to build a very comfortable, four-bedroomed house in one of the better-class urban townships, and to send their children to private, multiracial boarding schools.

Mr. and Mrs. Mandhla were married in 1957. She is the daughter of a Zezuru farmer in Muda purchase land, and passed the Cambridge School Certificate before training as a state registered nurse at the McCord Zulu Hospital, Durban, South Africa. They have six children, all attending private schools. Their home language is English, although Mr. and Mrs. Mandhla also speak Shona and siNdebele. They are both practising,



third-generation Anglicans, totally removed from their African backgrounds in all respects save their racial identity. One or the other visits the farm every weekend to supervise and check on the week's activities, and Mrs. Mandhla usually brings the children to the farm during school holidays. Their life-style on the farm does not differ substantially from that in town, except that Mr. Mandhla wears canvas sneakers, denim jeans and a striped teeshirt, instead of his more usual suit and tie, to emphasise his farming role! They have virtually nothing to do with other farmers in the normal course of events, since Mr. Mandhla's mother and farm manager control the hiring out of machinery, but they do sometimes mix socially with farmers such as Mr. Sifelani.

When Mr. Mandhla inherited his farm, it had been ringfenced and had four paddocks and a ninety-foot well. Some forty acres had been cleared and stumped. The process of stumping has been continued during the slack seasons since Mr. Mandhla took over. Before planting his first crops in 1970, Mr. Mandhla bought a brand-new tractor, disc plough, disc harrow, planter, ridger and cultivator. His father's ox-drawn equipment was stored and has not been used since: Mr. Mandhla regards this equipment as belonging to his widowed mother. In 1971, he bought a sixty-gallon, mist-blow cotton sprayer and a hammer-mill for grinding maize. In 1972 the tractor-driven maize-sheller arrived and, no more equipment being readily available or necessary, building development began: Mr. Mandhla hired another farmer, a qualified bricklayer, to build a hundred-foot equipment shed, a hundred-foot poultry house, and a smaller structure with internal divisions for hatching, age-grades and egg-grading. The plan to produce eggs on a large scale was stimulated by the enterprise in chicken meat production started by an old school friend and business associate from Salisbury, who had bought a farm in Msengezi at the time that Mr. Mandhla inherited his. But before putting this idea into practice, Mr. Mandhla consulted one of the largest European egg producers in Rhodesia, to ensure that his own lack of knowledge would not hinder his plans. He then double-checked by consulting this man's biggest rival producer! By January 1973, 600 layers were installed in individual laying cages in the poultry house and within six months these birds were producing an average of twenty-one eggs each per month. The eggs were transported to the Mandhlas' retail outlets each week by car, and yielded a gross weekly income of Rh\$72-Rh\$75. Since there was a real risk that the audited farm account might show a profit, for the first time since Mr. Mandhla had taken over, he built a second poultry house and installed another 600 layers there, using a Rh\$5 000 mortgage on his farm to do so. He also sank a borehole.



Despite his best efforts, however, it seems unlikely that Mr. Mandhla will be able to stay ahead of the receiver of revenue for much longer, although a second tractor and a combine harvester will probably appear on his farm shortly. His capital investments have been so large and well-managed that they will yield good profit returns within the next couple of seasons.

Although the extent of mechanisation on Mr. Mandhla's 300-acre farm might appear unwarranted, three points contradict such an assumption. First, Mr. Mandhla is totally committed to accumulation in the modern idiom and not even his family is resident on the farm. Even if his wife and children did stay on the farm permanently, he would not allow, much less expect, them to work on the farm. He therefore relies totally on hired labour for his farming activities and wants to minimise his labour costs. His production strategy, then, rests on capital intensity rather than labour intensity, in order to cut production costs. The second point is that capital intensity is more efficient when relatively large acreages are under cultivation, because of the time factor: a tractor and cultivator can finish in one afternoon what three men would take three days to do. In the third place, equipment may be hired out to other farmers and thus produce cash income to justify its cost. Mr. Mandhla, for example, hires out his tractor for ploughing, planting and cultivating, at the rate of Rh\$5 per acre; shells and bags maize for other farmers at ten cents per bag, or the grain equivalent; and grinds maize in his hammer-mill at a charge of ten cents per bucket. The availability of such machinery to poorer farmers makes their lives easier, as well as meeting the Mandhla's own needs. Even at this level of mechanisation, Mr. Mandhla still finds it necessary to employ a dozen farm workers, at wages varying between Rh\$8 and Rh\$25 per month.

While investment on the Mandhla farm has been undertaken to gain tax rebates, production is geared to profit. Cotton, maize and groundnuts are grown to produce the highest possible yield: at two to three bales of cotton per acre, all of which is sold to the Cotton Marketing Board, Mr. Mandhla's yield is higher than that of any other farmer in Msengezi. Maize and groundnuts are retained on the farm to feed the chickens, the cattle and the labourers. Vegetables are also grown for the workers and the internal market, all year round under irrigation from the borehole. Cattle are fattened and sold as fast as possible. Mr. Mandhla may well decide in future to follow the example of another businessman-farmer and establish a livestock feedlot system: he ~~does~~ not require oxen for ploughing and his herd is, therefore, composed primarily of cows. His

various production lines, with the exception of cotton, are closely integrated in a mixed farming system. Mr. Mandhla's success in farming, together with his capital resources which made this success so spectacular, are resented by many Msengezi producers who have had to struggle to develop their own farms to a much lesser level. This resentment is shown in a refusal to acknowledge Mr. Mandhla as a 'good farmer' (with his money, people allege, anyone could do the same) and in boycotts of field days held on his farm. Were they resident in Msengezi, this resentment might perhaps lead the Mandhla's to be less conspicuously successful in the way outlined for Mr. Sifelani. However, because they are largely outside the system of social relationships in Msengezi, the Mandhla's shrug off this resentment with, perhaps, a little regret that it should have arisen in the first place. Mr. Mandhla has made it clear that, although he is a 'son of Msengezi' because he inherited his farm, he will not allow this status to interfere with his production plans and farm profitability: his refusal to allow people to hire his equipment on credit made his intentions plain. His farm is his ninth business. He intends it to succeed in the same way as the others have.

#### Resident Capitalists Using the Traditional Idiom of Accumulation

In many respects, farmers who have accumulated wealth and status in a traditional idiom differ from men such as Mr. Sifelani and Mr. Mandhla. The following case study of Mr. Svondo (pseudonym) shows these differences quite clearly, although the common drive to accumulate capital is also apparent.

Mr. Svondo, who is in his early seventies, was born in the Fort Rixon district, not far from Bulawayo. He was one of many younger sons of a Karanga polygynist. When he was in his teens, his family moved to Runde reserve, Shabani district. After working as a herdboy on a European-owned farm for two years, he attended 'kraal school' as a young adult, while helping his father to produce crops in the traditional manner. After three years of schooling, he became a migrant worker: for a year he was employed as a surface ore sorter at the Shabani asbestos mine; for a few months he worked as a transporter, driving oxen between Shabani and Selukwe; then for three years he was a tracklayer on the rail line between Kasambi and Mukwakwe; in between these jobs he returned home for brief visits. In 1929, he gave up his job and returned home to marry for the first time: he has not been employed since. At the approximate age of thirty years, Mr. Svondo joined the Church of Christ and went back to school once more to complete his standard two (four years of formal schooling).



paying his school fees himself. When he left school in 1935, he was allotted his own land in the reserve for cultivation, his wife having born two children.

Having already given notice of his independent mind by becoming a Christian and attending school, Mr. Svondo proceeded to become a 'co-operator'<sup>1</sup> shortly after acquiring his own fields: he accepted extension advice, manured his lands and generally gave the impression of being an open-minded, progressive cultivator. At this point, his capitalist career began. By 1942, he had accumulated enough capital to marry a second wife in response to pressure from his family: ten years later, however, he divorced this woman. In 1945 he opened a small trading store in Runde reserve and became a buying agent for the Grain Marketing Board.<sup>2</sup> Although he kept no accounts, he considers that this business was a success: he sold it when he moved to Msengezi four years later. He certainly made enough money to marry a third wife in 1946 and to buy a second-hand, three-ton lorry in 1947, which he used to expand his GMB business, collecting grain from outlying producers.

By 1947, however, Mr. Svondo had begun to experience relative land deprivation as a result of his family's rapid expansion. Attempts to obtain more land in the reserve failed and so he applied for a purchase land farm in the area nearest his home: Gwatemba. There were no farms available in Gwatemba at that time, however, and he was offered, as an alternative, a farm in Msengezi, which he accepted without hesitation or prior inspection. In 1949, the Svondo family arrived in Msengezi and settled in what is today West ICA: husband, three wives, twelve children, seventeen head of cattle, two ~~ox~~ploughs, two cultivators, a planter, a harrow, a scotch cart and the three-ton lorry arrived in some style! Most settlers had considerably less capital when they arrived.

In Msengezi, Mr. Svondo continued to prosper. After clearing land in the first two years, he ringfenced his farm in 1952-3, to keep his cattle on the farm and out of his neighbours' fields. In 1958 an earth dam was excavated and in 1962 Mr. Svondo sunk a thirty-foot well to provide domestic water. In 1957 and 1959 he married additional wives; and again in 1965, 1966 and 1967. During 1965-6, Mr. Svondo's maternal cousin, a qualified builder, came to live on the farm and built him a nine-roomed house of plastered brick under corrugated iron: the house cost approximately Rh\$100 for building materials and Mr. Svondo's cousin made no charge for his labour. Several other polygynists in Msengezi have since followed Mr. Svondo's example of housing all wives under a single roof. In 1967, Mr. Svondo bought a new tractor on hire

purchase: he uses this tractor and plough for contract work as well as his own requirements. In 1970, he fenced seven paddocks in accordance with a veldt management plan drawn up for him by the extension staff. In between these major development projects, he has bought more equipment: shellers for maize and groundnuts, two knapsack spray-pumps for cotton and a trailer. He also bought a one-ton Bedford truck to replace his original lorry which eventually fell to pieces. Since 1970, however, Mr. Svondo has not invested any more capital in his farm. Instead, at the end of 1972, he bought a store in Mkwasha township (in the west of Msengezi: cf. map 2) from another farmer: the goodwill and stocks, together with the building, cost Rh\$800. Such stores confer prestige on their owners, who claim to be 'businessmen', but monthly profits rarely exceed Rh\$20, even in well-managed stores in Msengezi.

In chronological order, then, Mr. Svondo's capital investments in large-scale farming were as follows: land clearance; fencing; farm water supplies; wives; domestic water supplies; wife; house; wife; mechanisation; paddocking. Farming profits were thus re-invested in the farm, not consumed in the form of improved living standards. There was no question of hiring resident workers to produce the crops: Mr. Svondo's investments in labour through his marriages were possibly, in the long term, his most important outlays, which permitted him to adopt a labour-intensive strategy to production, in contrast to Mr. Mandhla's capital-intensive approach. Mr. Svondo's children were educated at local primary schools and their labour was important for crop production, in the afternoons and during the school holidays. Only the brightest and most interested children continued their schooling at the lower secondary level, or obtained a technical qualification; and many of the children are not yet in school, being too young. Altogether Mr. Svondo has twenty-eight living children and he has spent more on their education than most Msengezi polygynists have on their children. Nevertheless, the children's labour has been more important than their education; and Mr. Svondo has retained their labour for as long as possible after they have completed their studies, and demanded high bridewealth for the loss of his daughters' labour on his farm. Unlike those polygynists who belong to the Vapostori we Maranke sect, though, he has not used his children to create marriage alliances with other Msengezi farmers, nor has he drawn his junior wives from his fellow farmers. All of his wives come from two minimal lineages centred in his home village in Runde reserve.

Mr. Svondo is generally regarded as the best farmer in Msengezi by his fellow farmers. He has won many farming awards and certificates, which



have been framed and hung on his sitting-room walls. He was one of six farmers selected by the extension staff to experiment with cotton production, in 1958-9. His annual production, even in drought years, is worth well over Rh\$2 000, excluding sales of livestock. He is chairman of the West ICA Credit Union, chairman of the West 'Fertiliser Discount Group' (the so-called Varimi we Windmill) and has served, in past years, as vice-chairman of the co-operative society, vice-chairman of the West ICA Livestock Fattening Club, and as a member of the Agricultural Committee (the precursor of the ICAs) and the Cotton Growers' Club committee. Yet Mr. Svondo does not wholly share the belief that to make money in farming, one must first spend it. He uses fertiliser, but concentrates on top-dressing applications; he supplements these inadequate fertiliser applications with manure; and - as happened in 1967 - should he be refused a short-term, seasonal loan for crop production, he uses anthill soil as a substitute for fertiliser. Nearly 60 per cent of the farm is planted to crops, which is made possible by the low-cost labour inputs from his family. Most of Mr. Svondo's farm development has been loan financed, in similar fashion to his crop production each year, thus enforcing capital accumulation which otherwise might not have occurred. Mr. Svondo has experienced problems of financial management in the past, largely as a result of his low level of education, problems which neither Mr. Sifelani nor Mr. Mandhla have nor would expect to have. He is a shrewd entrepreneur, operating very successfully in the idiom with which he is familiar, but his experience and expertise are inadequate to handle the capital he has accumulated. He is still concerned to minimise costs rather than maximise profits, even though he has accumulated a capital reserve which would enable him to increase profits. The traditional idiom and labour-intensive strategy have thus enabled Mr. Svondo to accumulate capital quite successfully, but he does not have the necessary background to invest his accumulated capital in the most profitable way, as his purchase of a small store - with three, well-managed competitors in the near vicinity and Hartley a mere ten cent bus ride away - demonstrates. The farmer who sold Mr. Svondo this store told me he did so because it was unprofitable!

Given their very different backgrounds, one would not expect, perhaps, that Mr. Svondo and Mr. Sifelani would have much in common. Since they exercise leadership in different fields, they have little to do with one another. Yet these men get on well when they meet in public and consider themselves to be equals. Each respects the other, despite Mr. Sifelani's disapproval of polygyny. Mr. Svondo - and most other polygynists

in Msengezi - support Mr. Sifelani's stance in local politics, his determination to develop the purchase land in respect of educational and other facilities, and his leadership in the non-farming sphere, appreciating especially his knowledge of finance and bureaucratic procedures. This alliance of successful polygynists with men who are avowedly anti-traditional reflects the economic class interests of all capitalists irrespective of the ways in which they accumulated their resources.

#### Under-capitalised Resident Farmers Using the Modern Idiom of Accumulation

In contrast to the external resources of resident and non-resident capitalists using the modern idiom and the labour-intensive strategy leading to accumulation in a traditional idiom of farmers like Mr. Svondo, who are regarded as 'old-fashioned', ordinary men who attempt to accumulate using the modern idiom, without external financial resources, face almost certain failure, as the following case shows. Almost one-third of Msengezi farmers are in a similar position to Mr. Takawira (pseudonym) regarding their level of farm development.

Mr. Takawira, born in 1910, was the eldest child born to a Zezuru father and Ndebele mother, previously divorced, who were married by Christian rites in 1909. Following the death of three of Mr. Takawira's younger siblings in the 1918 influenza epidemic, Mr. Takawira's father accused his wife and her sister - with whom the children had been staying - of witchcraft and abandoned the family. Mr. Takawira was brought up by his mother, together with her children from her first marriage, on a different mission station from the one on which he had been born. At Marshall Hartley mission, adjoining Msengezi, he passed standard 3 (five years of primary education) as a teenager. Then, like Mr. Svondo, he became a migrant worker: for three years he herded cattle on a European-owned farm; he was an 'office-boy' with a Salisbury firm for two years; and worked as a 'delivery boy' in Que Que for a year. In 1931, he married and, until he took up a portion of the mission farm to cultivate on his own behalf in 1935, his wife stayed with his mother. In 1945, he and his family moved to Zwimba reserve, but because his mother refused to leave the mission station, he applied for a farm in Msengezi, in order to provide her with an acceptable home where he could look after her in her old age.

Mr. Takawira, his wife and their five children, two of whom were attending school elsewhere, moved to Msengezi in 1949, bringing with them fifteen cattle, an oxplough, a cultivator, a harrow and a scotch cart.

He had virtually no cash, and his children were either too young to help on the farm or were in school. Two years after they settled on the farm, Mr. Takawira's wife died, shortly after giving birth to twins. His mother looked after the children for over a year, during which time he remarried, paying bridewealth in 1951 and meeting the costs of the church wedding in 1953. His second wife has born him three children.

The loss of his wife in his second farming season and his subsequent remarriage affected Mr. Takawira's labour supplies for farming and depleted his slender capital resources. His children's education, which he valued highly, also siphoned off his cash revenue from crops, because they had to be sent away to school: the first school in the western section of Msengezi was opened in 1953 by a farmer who was an ex-teacher, as a private educational establishment on his own farm, in response to demands for a school from parents such as Mr. Takawira. The Council took over this school and opened two others in 1956, too late for half of Mr. Takawira's children to attend these local schools. His daughters' marriages and bridewealth payments did nothing to strengthen his initially poor financial position either, since his sons married earlier. Finally, and somewhat unusually, two of his sons are mentally disturbed: consultations with diviners and the sacrifices they have recommended have also cost him money he could ill afford. These unusual circumstances, which have constrained development on Mr. Takawira's farm, may be unique to him, but they are paralleled by similar 'unusual' circumstances among other farmers in his position.

The net result of these expenses has been lack of capital accumulation and retarded farm development. Over twenty-four years, Mr. Takawira has only managed to paddock one section of his farm for cattle, buy more items of ox-drawn equipment (two ploughs, a cultivator, and a knapsack sprayspump for cotton) and clear and stump nearly 100 acres: by Msengezi standards, these improvements are not impressive. Because his farm has a perennial river boundary, he has not needed to develop alternative water supplies, although his wife and daughters walk half a mile to collect water for domestic use. However, in accordance with his consumer aspirations, Mr. Takawira has improved his living conditions, replacing the original pole and dagga huts with four rondavels and a three-roomed house built of sun-dried brick under thatch, at a total cost of some £50. This relative lack of development on Mr. Takawira's farm has resulted from lack of initial resources; lack of access to loan finance; lack of labour; and, perhaps, lack of entrepreneurial drive and experience. The main problem has been that labour from family members has been



insufficient to crop extensively and he could not afford to hire labour. Today, Mr. Takawira relies mainly on the machangano group of which he is a member for labour in busy periods. He does not hold or attend nhimbe because he is a practising Christian, as is his wife.

Mr. Takawira's adherence to Christianity and rejection of polygyny have thus meant that he has been caught in the cycle of poverty and inadequate labour supplies for farming activities. Only external resources hold out the possibility of escape from this cycle, but Mr. Takawira's access to such resources is limited to his one successful investment in education: his son who is now a teacher. However, although this son assists his father, for example by paying for the schooling of his youngest half-brother, he is most unlikely to invest cash in the farm itself until such time as Mr. Takawira draws up a will disinheriting his eldest son, who is mentally disturbed: the teacher knows that many younger sons of farmers, similar to himself, have invested in their father's farms as requested, only to find that another son inherits and they have to take legal action to recover their share of farm development costs. This situation will be considered in the following chapter in some detail. In any case, the teacher's assistance to his father will probably diminish when he marries, which is likely to be soon, since he is already thirty years old.

Clearly, then, the man who begins large-scale farming with few resources, no external source of income, and a commitment to monogamy, is unlikely to accumulate much capital. Such a man will experience great difficulty in obtaining loan capital, because of his financial position: in the absence of loan capital, significant farm development is virtually impossible, especially if he lacks entrepreneurial drive and experience. Mr. Takawira works hard on his farm, but he lacks the knowledge, experience and resources which are necessary for a purchase land farmer to accumulate capital using the modern idiom and himself rejects the 'old-fashioned' model of success represented by polygynists such as Mr. Svondo, even though this traditional idiom would, perhaps, be more appropriate to his general background. His rejection of the traditional idiom of accumulation arises mainly from his identity as a practising Christian, but also from the greater prestige of the modern idiom in Msengezi.

It is men in Mr. Takawira's position who challenge resident capitalists such as Mr. Sifelani in the sphere of local politics and development, while the supposedly 'old-fashioned' capitalists such as Mr. Svondo support these moves towards the model of progress which is based on 'European' behaviour patterns. These somewhat paradoxical



political alignments arise from differing economic interests which, in the final analysis, appear to be more important than the differences in strategies of accumulation adopted by those using the traditional and modern idioms respectively. The conflict of interests, social as well as economic, between accumulators and others has certain implications for the development process, which will be discussed in Part III. Before that, however, in chapter ten I consider the relationship to development and capitalisation on Msengezi farms of inheritance of the land itself, which may affect the overall development process in the longer term and which, therefore, deserves more consideration than the passing references I have so far made to it.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Footnotes

1. The now-defunct Department of Native Agriculture distinguished between different types of cultivator in the reserves: most cultivators were peasant producers who adopted no new methods of production; 'co-operators' formed the lowest rung of those who adopted new techniques, in their acceptance of advice and willingness to manure their lands; 'plot-holders' allowed extension workers to plant demonstration plots on their lands; and 'master farmers' underwent a three-year training in new cultivation techniques and crop rotations.
2. Because the amount of grain marketed by tribal producers was too small to justify setting up marketing depots in the reserves, the Grain Marketing Board licensed certain traders as buying agents for the Board. These traders bought grain from the cultivators, usually in small quantities, then bagged the grain and resold it to the GMB.

CHAPTER TENINHERITANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

The process of development cannot, in the final analysis, be declared successful or unsuccessful until many years and a number of generations have elapsed, because it is impossible to assess, in the short term, whether this process has become self-sustaining or not. Over time, of course, control of productive resources passes from one generation to the next. In freehold areas, the land itself is transmitted through inheritance: the inheritance process, therefore, may have important effects on development in these areas, as the consideration of the Ciskei and Buganda has already indicated (cf. chapter two).

While insufficient time has as yet elapsed to judge finally the development process in Msengezi, nevertheless the transmission of productive resources through inheritance is already well-established. Over one-third of Msengezi farms have already passed to the second generation of land-owners and, in a few cases, to the third generation. There is, therefore, an adequate body of information on inheritance in this area, much of which I have derived from confidential sources. In this chapter, I present some of the most important aspects of inheritance in Msengezi, showing how the transmission of land ownership may affect the development process.

The most obvious effect of the inheritance of land on development is, of course, the dangers of sub-division and fragmentation of holdings, which are detrimental to development, particularly when land holdings fall below an economic size. However, in Rhodesia, official awareness of this potential problem dates back to the establishment of the purchase lands. In 1925, the Land Commission recommended measures to forestall sub-division in the proposed African freehold areas: all transfers, including those resulting from inheritance, were to be subject to the approval of the Native Land Board;<sup>1</sup> and sub-division of farms into holdings of less than fifty acres was strictly disallowed by this Board. Sub-division, then, has not been permitted to occur in the purchase lands on any significant scale. In Msengezi, the legal sub-division of land and title has occurred only on three farms. All of these transfers were effected by sale of portions of land at least 100 acres in extent. In none of the 131 transfers by inheritance in this purchase land, has sub-division been permitted, even when stipulated in a valid will. In this way, the Rhodesian authorities have ensured that no legal precedent has been allowed to arise which would associate inheritance with sub-division.

Nevertheless, factors other than sub-division, which also result from the inheritance process, may affect production and development on these farms. Such factors include expenses incurred in prolonged litigation over inheritance; delays in transferring title to new owners; interruption of production during the period of pending inheritance; absenteeism among inheritors who live in town; lack of interest among inheritors in farming as a lucrative occupation. These and other problems arising from the inheritance process will be examined in this chapter, but first I explain the framework within which inheritance occurs.

### Rules and Procedures Governing Farm Inheritance

Two sets of inheritance rules apply to African-owned property in Rhodesia at present. If a person dies intestate, tribal customary law automatically prevails, whereas if a valid will exists, property is transferred under the provisions of the African Wills Act, chapter 108.<sup>2</sup> Among farmers in Msengezi, if not among all Africans in Rhodesia, neither of these two systems is entirely satisfactory, for the following reasons. Firstly, despite the farmers' varying ethnic identities (cf. table 8.10, p.127), they are treated either as 'Shona' or as Ndebele for purposes of customary law, irrespective of their own traditional cultural variants on these two broad systems. As Bourdillon (1975) explains, 'customary law' among Africans in this country thus tends to be what the administration chooses to recognise as such, rather than what the people themselves recognise as a body of precedents. Following on from this point is the fact that many farmers do not in fact accept the principles of their own customary laws in respect of the transmission of property, especially immovable property, which was not heritable at all in the past:

Native law provides different forms of ownership of personal property, according to the manner in which the property is acquired and it provides different forms of succession to personal property, dependent also on the manner of acquisition but it provides no form of ownership of, or succession to, land.<sup>3</sup>

The third reason for the unsatisfactory nature of the inheritance system among blacks in Rhodesia is the fact that district commissioners and their junior staff frequently display ignorance of the legal principles, both customary and statutory, under which they administer the affairs of individual Africans.<sup>4</sup> Finally, there exists a fundamental ambiguity in official policy concerning inheritance among Africans: perhaps for this reason the relevant legislation is currently under review by a parliamentary select committee. This ambiguity arises because the inheritance process is one point at which long-established and newly-introduced modes of



behaviour meet. Paradoxically, though not, I think, accidentally, the new regulations introduced by whites may actually strengthen old-established, 'customary' principles: these supposedly 'modern' rules are applied differentially to blacks and whites, with different results on the inheritance process among each racial category. I shall examine some of these results in a later section, but before doing so it is necessary to document the inheritance rules themselves in detail. To this end, I have reproduced below the most important legal provisions concerning inheritance of property among Africans.

The African Wills Act comprises only thirteen sections, of which three pertain to the guardianship of minor children. The most significant provisions of this Act affecting property are as follows:

para. 5 : Subject only to the limitations imposed by this Act, an African may by will freely dispose of the ownership of immovable property or of any rights attaching thereto.

6 : The heir at African law of any deceased African shall succeed in his individual capacity to any immovable property or any rights attaching thereto forming part of the estate of such deceased African and not devised by will.

7 : The provisions of [the Land Tenure Act] shall, mutatis mutandis, apply to testamentary or intestate succession in the same way as they apply to alienations or disposals inter vivos.

8 : If the Land Board, in the exercise of its discretion in terms of the said section, refuses to approve the transfer of any property or rights aforesaid to a testamentary or intestate successor, it shall dispose of such property or rights to the best advantage, and the nett proceeds of such disposal shall be paid to such successor.

9 : (1) Except as hereinafter provided no provision for the guardianship of children or disposing of the ownership of any immovable property or of any rights attaching thereto made by an African in a will executed after the 1st September, 1933, shall be valid unless such will has been executed according to law in the presence of and registered with the district commissioner of the district in which the testator resides.

9 : (2) A district commissioner, on being satisfied that a will containing any such provision as in subsection (1) mentioned has been otherwise duly executed according to law, but that it was not reasonably possible for such will to be executed in his presence, may register such will, and thereafter it shall be valid in all respects : Provided that any such registration shall be subject to appeal in terms of section 11.



9 : (3) The original of every such will shall be retained by the district commissioner for safe keeping : Provided that the testator shall, if he so requests, be furnished with a certified copy thereof

10 : Notwithstanding the provisions of the Administration of Estates Act ... or any other law to the contrary, any immovable property or rights thereto forming part of the estate of a deceased African shall, subject to the provisions of sections 6, 7 and 8, be administered by the district commissioner of the district in which such property is situate : Provided that where an executor or executors have been nominated or appointed by the deceased or by the Master, such property shall be administered jointly by the district commissioner and such executor or executors ...

11 : Any question or dispute concerning any will aforesaid or the subject matter thereof shall be decided by the district commissioner. Provided that any such decision or any registration of a will under sub-section (2) of section 9 shall be subject to appeal in the same manner and subject to the same rules as an appeal from the judgement of a district commissioner in a civil case.<sup>5</sup>

12 : Nothing in this Act contained shall be construed as instituting a testamentary successor as the general heir of the testator.

In terms of the African Wills Act, then, immovable property may be willed to an inheritor, but in the absence of such a will registered with the district commissioner, it will devolve upon the heir at customary law. Inheritance may thus be regarded as intestate even when a will exists, for if the will is not registered with the district commissioner, reversion to customary procedure must occur. Such a situation has happened more than once in Msengezi. In general, such reversion to customary procedure means that the eldest son inherits or, should the deceased have no male issue, a younger brother or brother's son.

The actual procedure of inheritance follows a standard pattern. The farm-holder's death is reported to the district commissioner's office and a detailed inventory of assets in the estate is compiled. If there is a registered will, it is then despatched to the office of the Master of the High Court, together with the list of assets and the district commissioner's recommendation as to the suitability of the testamentary heir as a farmer. The Master's office consults with the Department of Purchase Land Administration (previously with the various land boards) before approving transfer of title to the heir. Transfer is then effected through a legal conveyancing firm. In straightforward cases of testamentary disposition, the whole process takes less than a year.

Where intestate inheritance prevails, however, the district commissioner will not recommend the heir to the Master's office until he is satisfied that the family unanimously approves the heir's status. In some cases, this approval is formalised at the kurova guva ritual,<sup>6</sup> which should be held within one year of the farmer's death: the delay is often longer, however, since claimants to the estate may not wish title to be transferred to the heir. Among practising Christians, the family council usually gives its approval following the Memorial Service for the deceased man, at which his tombstone is unveiled. In a few cases, family consultation is sufficient to provide the necessary approval. Once the family, including the vatete (the deceased man's sister) approves the heir, the procedure is the same as that for cases of testamentary disposition.

By the time that the District Commissioner is prepared to approve the heir and recommend to the Master that title be transferred, problems may already have arisen. The legal requirements for testamentary disposition may not have been fully observed, so that wills may be regarded as invalid. Disputes, which frequently arise between testamentary and customary heirs, may have delayed the required family approval. Any such strained social relationships may later be exacerbated by the decision of the land board concerned not to permit the distribution of land in accordance with the wishes expressed in a valid will. People find it difficult to understand how a will may be accepted by the district commissioner, proceed without difficulty through the Master's office, and then be disallowed by a land board, which may, in terms of section eight of the African Wills Act, refuse to permit sub-division of a farm between two or three nominated heirs. Such events apparently mock any attempt to dispose of one's property by will. The fact that only four of a total of sixteen cases of attempted testamentary disposition have been completed without any problems, seems to confirm that the legalities of such disposition are ill-understood and unsatisfactory. It appears that customary procedures are more satisfactory, since in sixty-eight of a total of 115 cases of intestate inheritance, transmission has been unproblematical in Msengezi.

However, the fact that some 59 per cent of cases of intestate inheritance have apparently been trouble-free, compared to only 25 per cent of cases of testamentary disposition, must be seen in context. The man who leaves a will is generally concerned to disinherit his customary heir: in such circumstances, disputes may be expected. Indeed, even if disagreements do not come to the surface immediately in cases of customary inheritance, indications of latent problems may arise at a later stage. For example, twenty-three cases of otherwise smooth customary inheritance gave rise to cession of the farm to someone else immediately the inheritance

had been settled, suggesting that the rules governing disposition may not have been wholly acceptable in these cases; and the sale of inherited farms usually indicates family disagreements connected with the inheritance process. Customary rules, then, may not be as satisfactory as a cursory examination suggests, even though there are major problems with testamentary rules.

Dissatisfaction with customary rules is shown quite clearly in the pattern of testamentary bequest to someone other than the customary heir, in table 10.1. The growing importance of links through women in the testamentary disposition of land in Msengezi is also apparent from these figures. Men are increasingly unwilling to allow valuable property to devolve beyond their own lineal descendants, even if this means that women or the children of daughters must inherit. In these cases, the farmers' rejection of customary law is absolute, at least as far as inheritance is concerned.

Table 10.1 Heirs and inheritors in Msengezi

relationship to deceased	nominated heir: testamentary	actual inheritor: testamentary	actual inheritor: intestate
eldest surviving son	2	6	81
other son	4	5	1
several sons	3	0	0
brother (full- or half-)	0	1	3
brother's son	0	0	1
son's son	0	0	2
wife	2	1	2*
wife + daughters	1	0	0
daughter	1	1	0
daughter's son	1	1	0
unknown/unverified/pending	2	1	25
total	16	16	115

\* land board cessions to widows whose sons were regarded as totally unsuitable to inherit

#### Farm Inheritance and the Position of Women

The rules of inheritance outlined in the previous section discriminate against the rights of wives to their husbands' property and a number of purchase land farmers are worried about this situation. They are particularly concerned about the rules governing intestate inheritance:



... We realise that our rules [i.e. customary law] and what the Ministry of Internal Affairs does on these farms is not giving that much harmony or happiness. I just want to mention widows who are evicted from their husbands' farms. The terrible thing that the Internal Affairs does is very bad indeed. They claim to know the African traditions which we have left. They should realise that after this lady has been living there, if I die, her own place is my farm or my place where I left her. She must stay there with all her children and all the animals which I possess. We farmers would not have managed without our wives ...?

The problem of eviction of widows from their late husbands' properties is, of course, most acute in cases of polygyny. When a polygynist has died and title has finally been transferred to the customary inheritor, in all cases but one in Msengezi to date, the new owner has ordered all members of 'houses' other than his own to leave the farm permanently. In the one exceptional case, the inheritor has left the farm under the control of a younger half-brother and has removed himself from the arena of bitter, on-going disputes between members of the six different 'houses', allegedly fearing not only witchcraft but also attempts on his life. Disputes over inheritance within polygynous families thus tend to be more acrimonious than generally occurs in monogamous units, because more people are threatened by the transfer of ownership. Although polygynists are aware of these problems, as yet none in Msengezi has resorted to writing a will, perhaps because they accept that family fission is inevitable when they die. The position of widows married polygynously is not helped by the official administrative view that the new owner has every right to order people to leave his farm, since only his own family of procreation should occupy the land.

In monogamous families, however, the moral right of widows to their deceased husbands' property is recognised by those inheritor sons who have turned over responsibility for farm management to their mothers, or who have given their mothers portions of land to cultivate for their own use (cf. table 6.7, page 84). But unless the farmer draws up a will in favour of his wife, her legal rights to the farm are non-existent. The legal situation of the African widow thus contrasts unfavourably with that of her white counterpart, for in terms of the statutory law of Rhodesia, the surviving European spouse automatically inherits the estate in cases of intestacy.<sup>8</sup> The legal definition of 'spouse', of course, rests on the form of marriage contracted: the rights of wives married under customary law differ from those of wives married under statutory law. Among Africans, however, section thirteen of the African Marriages Act, chapter 105,<sup>9</sup> specifically states that:

The solemnisation of a marriage between Africans in terms of



the Marriage Act (chapter 177) shall not affect the property of the spouses, which shall be held, may be disposed of and, unless disposed of by will, shall devolve according to African law and custom.

One thus sees the traditional African principle of the jural subordination of women to men entrenched in modern legislation.<sup>10</sup> To Africans who have rejected their traditional cultures, this situation is unacceptable. Many farmers and businessmen acknowledge that their success is due at least in part to their wives; and many distrust the intentions of their sons towards slowly-accumulated capital. Tales are told of profligate dissipation of capital by inheritors and the actions of such young men are compared to those of their parents who, by self-denial and hard work, accumulated these resources. Furthermore, partly because of the relative isolation of purchase land families from their neighbours and the individualistic attitudes of the farmers themselves, the marital relationship is generally much closer and more egalitarian than it is supposed to be in traditional terms. Among such people, especially those who are professing Christians, the traditional solution to widows' socio-economic problems, widow inheritance, is rejected: only four farmers in Msengezi have inherited their deceased brothers' wives, two unwillingly. Certain widows have chosen to be 'inherited' by their own sons in order to maintain their effective independence, while others, having no sons, have had to fight for their rights in the courts, as the following case shows.

Mr. China (pseudonym) was a plain-clothes detective in the Criminal Investigation Department. His first marriage, from which two daughters were born, ended in divorce in 1938 and he remarried, in church, in 1940. His third daughter, the only child of his second marriage, was born in 1941. In 1943, Mr. China and his wife bought a farm in Msengezi, which his wife managed virtually single-handed, while he continued in his job in town. In 1955, he died suddenly in hospital following an emergency appendicectomy, without leaving a will. Excluding a lump-sum gratuity paid to his widow, his estate was valued at nearly £520, which sum included the farm in Msengezi.

According to Zezuru customary law, the estate went to Mr. China's younger brother who, because he already owned a farm, ceded Mr. China's farm to his own son. Mrs. China, supported by her father and other landholding relatives in Msengezi, appealed to the district commissioner against this distribution of the estate: her father, Mr. Hlubi (pseudonym) signed the written memorandum reproduced below.<sup>11</sup>

... It was reported at this meeting that the estate was lodged

with the Master of the High Court for distribution and explained that any estate over the value of £200 is not administered by Native Law only but comes in European Law also. At this meeting the Native Commissioner Hartley was appointed Executor Dative of the estate. I understand Daramombe (pseudonym) Mr. China's younger brother<sup>7</sup> or his son was declared heir over the estate where it was believed the Native Law took place. My representatives and I have now come to the conclusion that there is no Native Law or Custom could be administered in the estate of the late China as the following facts will prove. China had deserted the following of Native Law and Custom. It will be interesting to discuss seriatim:

1. China married Hlubi's daughter and promised a number of head of cattle as demanded by the father of the girl as lobola. China did not pay these head of cattle until his death.<sup>12</sup> This does not constitute the validity of Native Law and Custom (I take strong exception).

2. In 1943 China buys farm in conjunction with his wife, both contribute money to buying of the farm. This is not in conformity with Native Law and Custom.
3. China appointed his wife to manage the farm while he himself was working. His wife attended many Agricultural courses in Government Experimental Farm as good many farm managers. This is against Native Law and Custom.
4. On the farm, China supplies only implements. His wife supplies all cattle on the farm, they do ploughing, milking, practically whole farm maintenance. This is against Native Law and Custom.
5. The parties were married by Christian rites.
6. Buying of land does not come under Native Law.

Therefore in the light of these facts it becomes marriage by communal [sic] of property, partnership, etc. We deny that there is any existence of the Native Law or Custom in this case. All these facts are repugnant to Native Law. There is no reason why China's wife should not succeed to husband's property while she has been managing the farm for the 14 years.

This appeal failed. The district commissioner considered that points 2 and 4 were 'correct but immaterial'; that regardless of lobola, immovable property would still devolve upon Mr. China's younger brother in the absence of any male children; that 'it is good native custom for a wife to work in the fields doing light agricultural work and to be appointed manager is a natural evolution'; and that whether or not the couple followed



customary laws and practices was immaterial because of the provisions of section thirteen of the African Marriages Act. Despite the widow's recourse to legal advice and the presentation of legal arguments against the district commissioner's stance, the High Court upheld the decision that customary laws of intestate inheritance should apply in this case. All the widow received from her husband's estate, despite her own inputs, was the furniture and the right to live on the farm, in the house built by her husband, for the remainder of her lifetime. Not surprisingly, in view of the past litigation as well as her own pride, Mrs. China refused to avail herself of this concession and today lives in one of the Salisbury townships. The tragedy of this case - like so many others - is that Mr. China himself would not have wanted his farm to be given to anyone but his wife and daughter, but the law overrode his rejection of his own culture. Further problems over this farm will undoubtedly arise in the future, for Mr. China's brother's son, to whom the farm was ceded, died in late September, 1975, without ever having transferred title into his own name. Both his father, Mr. China's brother, and Mrs. China's relatives are now apparently poised for further litigation over ownership of this farm.

#### Problems Associated with Farm Inheritance

Litigation and intra-family disputes constitute one problem associated with the inheritance of farms in Msengezi - an expensive problem, which may consume slender resources to the detriment of farm development. Other problems include the temporary allocation of usufructuary rights to additional cultivators, which may detract from increased cash cropping; land cession; failure to transfer title, which means that the new owner will not have access to loan finance and which may also complicate future transfers; and owner absenteeism. Possibly the most important problems, however, which underly these other difficulties, are the disruption of production resulting from inheritance disputes and the security of non-inheriting children.

In view of the free market value of these farms (approximately Rhs\$4 000 in Msengezi at present), inheritance disputes are perhaps inevitable. The lack of traditional guidelines to the disposition of land exacerbates this problem, as does the desire for security in the form of land - the single most important reason why men bought these farms in the first place. In the fight to ensure security for one's family on valuable land, few holds are barred. Tactics in inheritance disputes include: appeals to the district commissioner; recourse to solicitors; finding reasons to delay kurova guva or the Memorial Service so that the heir is not formally



approved; delaying transfer of title by further litigation on appeal when the inheritance issue has been settled; alleging illegitimacy among the various claimants to the estate; bringing pressure to bear on the heir or inheritor to renounce his rights, if necessary by threatened or even attempted poisoning or accusations of witchcraft; and alleging unfitness to inherit on the grounds of previous imprisonment or mental instability. Some claimants have gone so far as to exploit the district commissioner's or district officer's ignorance of customary law by arguing that collateral inheritance (to younger brothers) should prevail over lineal inheritance (to sons), especially in cases where the farm is being inherited for the second time: in other words, that the farm should devolve upon each of an original settler's sons before dropping the generation to his eldest son's eldest son. This argument is invalid in terms of customary law, being based on a mixture of the principles of succession to chiefship in certain Shona societies and of the rules applicable to the guardianship of minor children. Property - movable property only - devolved upon a man's brother only when he had no sons, and even then it did not devolve upon all of his brothers in turn. However, this invalid argument was accepted by various district commissioners in approximately half a dozen cases in Msengezi, thus setting a precedent for its further use in inheritance disputes, by persons of Nguni as well as Shona descent.

Litigation over farm inheritance usually occurs when people are threatened by dispossession of property or invested money. Widows and non-inheriting offspring frequently fall into this category, as the case of Mrs. China shows. In such cases, when attempts to disprove the heir's right to inherit fail, the dispossessed person usually sues for the value of land improvements made with his or her money. Sometimes this strategy is successful after legal threats and many years have elapsed, but more frequently the inheritor will simply refuse to pay such claims, for whatever reason, and the dispossessed person will eventually give up attempts to reclaim the money. The case of the Kamba (pseudonym) dispute over inheritance indicates the length of time over which the wrangle may go on, as well as many of the attendant problems concerning production.

Mr. Kamba was employed as a messenger-interpreter with the Department of Native Affairs before obtaining his farm in 1950. In 1964, he died intestate, being survived by two sons and two daughters from his first marriage, which ended in divorce before he bought his farm; two sons and one daughter from his subsequent remarriage; and his (second) wife. All four sons were working in town when he died. Albert, his eldest son (by his first wife) and customary heir, claimed the farm, but when asked by the

district commissioner to take over the estate liabilities and responsibility for the widow and her youngest child, to produce evidence of his competence in farming, and to pay £20 towards the costs of administering the estate, did nothing more towards claiming his inheritance. By 1967, the Kamba farm was deserted, the widow having returned to her family. The cattle were taken to a neighbouring farmer, who was paid a herding fee. The sons stayed in town. The district commissioner's office received conflicting reports that the deceased Kamba's spirit was believed to be haunting the farm; that witchcraft was being practised among the brothers; and that the heir, Albert, had ordered everyone off the farm, which was confirmed by other farmers. Albert was then called to see the district commissioner, and when he had paid some money towards administration costs, the Master's office approved transfer to him. Technical delays in effecting transfer then ensued, with the advent of metrification in Rhodesia, during which time Andrew, the deceased man's youngest son, who was a teacher, claimed the estate on three grounds: the financial assistance he had given his father; Albert's lack of farming qualifications; and Albert's actions in causing the farm to be left deserted.

By 1972, Andrew's solicitor had succeeded in halting the process of transfer of the farm into Albert's name, partly because the district commissioner had not seen Albert for nearly three years. The district commissioner then wrote to the Master, recommending a substitution of heirs, 'a transfer to the next in line of inheritance as the initial heir has proven unsuitable and very un-co-operative'.<sup>13</sup> However, because the genealogy showed that there were two brothers between Albert and Andrew, each of whom held prior rights of inheritance over Andrew, the Master refused to agree to this substitution. Albert was, therefore, re-instated as heir in 1974, but only after he had signed two sworn affidavits. The first of these affidavits bound him to effect personal occupation of the farm by a given date and to forfeit all rights to the farm should he leave it for more than thirty days without the prior consent of his three younger brothers. The second declaration confirmed his debt to Andrew of nearly Rh\$200 to cover costs of fencing, farm licence fees and estate administration costs. As at the beginning of 1975, partly as a result of administrative delays, title to the farm had still not been transferred to Albert, although his father had died more than eleven years earlier.

During the intervening eleven years, the Kamba farm has either not been worked at all, or has been supervised by a 'manager'. There have been a number of such managers, engaged by Albert or Andrew to supervise the farm. At the time of interview, in 1973, the manager was Andrew's



wife's younger sister's husband's father. None of these men were paid or supervised, but were engaged on the understanding that they would work the farm for their own benefit while satisfying the official demand that the farm be occupied. None of the sons was really interested in farming. Certainly none was prepared to give up urban employment in order to become a full-time farmer, not even to lay stronger claim to the estate. Andrew was the most concerned, mainly because he had helped his father to pay for certain land improvements and did not wish to lose his money to Albert without compensation. It seems quite possible that this farm may be sold within the next few years and the proceeds divided among the sons.

This example highlights many of the problems associated with farm inheritance in Msengezi: temporary desertion of the farm; absenteeism among heirs and inheritors; the allocation of usufructuary rights to others, which occurred on 75 per cent of inherited farms during the 1972-3 season; expensive litigation; failure to effect transfer; and extensive disruption of production. The problems in most cases of inheritance are not as intense, however, although some disruption of production has occurred in every case. It is probable that, on average, up to six farms each year may withdraw from market production as a result of the death of the original owner: in some cases, market production will be decreased rather than stopped during this unsettling period.

The unsettled conditions which affect production adversely during the period of pending inheritance, result from the fact that the death of the original land-holder marks a point of fission in the family developmental cycle. Non-inheriting children may or may not be required to leave their father's farm immediately the inheritance has been settled, but they know that their security is essentially temporary. The inheritor may allow his siblings to stay for a few years, but eventually they will have to leave: everyone concerned knows this, because the allocation of usufructuary rights is officially disapproved; and intra-family disagreements are inevitable. The months or years during which inheritance is pending are, therefore, used by non-inheritors to examine alternatives for their future lives and, if possible, to obtain secure employment. Fewer cash crops are planted, because the farm is worked as a series of independent plots producing mainly food crops during this period. There is no centralised control of production. The heir frequently lives elsewhere, because he is working elsewhere. This effective fragmentation may continue after title has been transferred, until such time as the new owner chooses to assert his legitimate rights of sole cultivation or, if the dispute over inheritance has been really bitter, until he sells the farm.



### Inheritance and the Process of Farm Development

Because many of the original settlers in areas such as Msengezi were selected without reference to their farming interests or abilities, civil servants tend to assume that farm development will be stimulated when these old men are succeeded by their younger, more vigorous and - it is assumed - more enthusiastic sons, who are generally better educated and, therefore, more receptive to new ideas. Farm inheritance, so it is thought, will promote development. Yet, if one considers Msengezi, where more than one-third of all farms have already been inherited, this assumption seems questionable.

For each instance of rapid development, such as has occurred on Mr. Mandhla's farm (cf. chapter 9), one can find an example of regression which is associated with inheritance. Mr. Mombe (pseudonym) for example, had developed and capitalised his farm before he died in 1969. Since then, his eldest son and intestate inheritor, aged twenty-four, has sold the tractor and disc plough, together with other equipment, to pay for the younger children's education. Mrs. Mombe has sold her late husband's car, piece by piece, to the local mechanic as she has needed money. The farm is badly managed and its profitability has fallen sharply and the widow and inheritor are known to be at loggerheads. Such contrasting examples as those of Mr. Mandhla and the Mombe family define the extremes of the effect inheritance may have on farm development and capitalisation, while most cases are much less spectacular instances of very slow development or stagnation. The reasons for such lack of progress or even decline may include the fragmentation of production during the period of pending inheritance which, as I have shown, may extend over ten or more years; the cession of inherited farms to non-inheritors, which may detract from development while safeguarding land security; and inheritors' lack of interest in farming.

Partly because of their higher educational levels, inheritors are generally unwilling to exchange well-paid, urban employment in clerical or professional posts for the uncertain returns and much worse working conditions of the full-time farmers. Nearly two-fifths (37 per cent) of all inheritors have become absentee farm owners or 'urban farmers', who regard their farms as a relaxing hobby. Some visit their farms every weekend, but most go only once a month or so, entrusting the day-to-day running of the farm to some relative in conjunction with a hired manager. These absentee inheritors comprise nearly 70 per cent of all absent owners. Those three inheritors who live outside Rhodesia see their farms once every few years. Such abdication from farm management is hardly conducive to development, although not all absentee owners have abdicated: the

urban businessmen who own farms, for example, have not. However, even if an absentee owner does pay close attention to his farm at frequent intervals, he still faces problems associated with labour management which have been discussed in chapter seven. In Msengezi, abdication from management may be enforced, as occurs among minor owners still under guardianship, or it may be a voluntary recognition of a widowed mother's moral right to the farm, but in most cases it arises from a lack of interest in farming compared to urban employment. However, since urban jobs do generally provide higher cash incomes than farming, these external resources may be used productively on the farm, permitting development which otherwise might not have occurred. Absentee ownership is, therefore, not altogether detrimental to development. Certainly absenteeism is not associated, in Msengezi, with lease-renting and effective sub-division for monetary gain, as has occurred in Buganda and in the Ciskei.

#### The Need for Change

Many of the problems arising from the transfer of Msengezi farms to the second generation of land-owners may be traced to the rules governing inheritance and the difficulties experienced by officials administering these rules. I think it is important, therefore, either that 'customary' rules governing the inheritance of land should be defined more strictly and applied more speedily; or that the pretence of 'custom' should be abandoned altogether and new rules instituted.

Such new rules would not necessarily depend on the existence of testamentary disposition of land, which is the only way in which 'custom' can be circumvented at present. Instead, the existing restriction in the African Marriages Act on the rights of spouses to inherit property could be lifted, thus making Africans subject to the same inheritance rules and processes as apply to whites in Rhodesia, if they were married under the same law. In this way, the rights of widows would be safeguarded, providing that they were married by civil or religious rites. One might, of course, object that, under such rules, there would be a danger of purchase lands becoming large-scale 'old ladies' homes', with elderly women proving to be less competent farmers than the present absentee inheritors. However, since wives are already closely involved in making decisions on crop production and in supervising labour, and since widows are, in any case, effectively managing a number of inherited farms under the present rules, I do not think that this objection is altogether valid. To institute widows as automatic inheritors in most cases of intestacy would certainly reduce the problems of fragmented production while inheritance



is pending: any reduction in this period of uncertainty can only be advantageous to development.

The application to Africans of the rules presently applied to Europeans in cases of intestate inheritance might, therefore, be a considerable improvement over present 'customary' rules, which specify the individual who must inherit. At present, despite the provision that the heir must be 'suitable' from an agricultural viewpoint, in most cases of intestacy (as table 10.1 shows) the eldest son inherits, irrespective of his farming qualifications or interest. However, if property devolved upon a surviving spouse and then upon all children equally, but only one individual was allowed to inherit land, a more realistic choice could be made on agricultural grounds than is made under the present system, of the individual best qualified to inherit the farm. The problem with suggestions of this nature, of course, is that administrative control of the transmission of land ownership and choice of inheritor is a fundamental contradiction of the individual freedom of choice which freehold is supposed to confer. In order to safeguard development, however, such infringements of individual liberty may be necessary, particularly under present circumstances in Rhodesia, where insecurity is such a problem among blacks that land is seen primarily in terms of security rather than development.

In conclusion, one must note that there is a fundamental problem, as far as development is concerned, in allowing unfettered disposition of freehold land: where such disposition has been permitted, sub-division and fragmentation have occurred. Unless the transmission of land is controlled, then, inheritance may, in the long term, undermine the process of development. While the Rhodesian authorities have managed to avoid sub-division in the purchase lands, the rules governing inheritance of land are not satisfactory at present. The reliance on 'customary law' (which is not customary at all as far as land inheritance is concerned) does not represent the most effective means of controlling transmission and stimulating development. Instead, it lends itself to extended disputes and litigation over inheritance: the longer these drag on, the more adverse the effects on farm development. Were the so-called 'customary' aspects of land inheritance abandoned in favour of rules more suitable to freehold tenure, which itself has no place in old-established societies in Rhodesia, the present ambiguities in policy and administration, which are partly responsible for inheritance difficulties, could be resolved. Given the farmers' dissatisfaction with the present system, the problems associated with testamentary disposition under existing rules, and the fact that the



farmers have accepted quite readily a supposedly alien system of local government (as I show in Part III), there seems to be good reason for introducing a totally new or 'modern' set of rules governing the transmission of land ownership among Africans, in order to reduce the detrimental effects of the inheritance process on development in the purchase lands. Indeed, since the second generation of land-owners in Msengezi seems to prefer the modern idiom of accumulation (only 7 per cent of inheritors are polygynists, compared to some 19 per cent of all farmers), there is further reason for government to abandon its own apparent commitment to maintaining African 'custom'. When the people reject their past and look to the future, as Msengezi people clearly do, it is time that the administration did likewise: 'Even if we mourn the past, we can't go back'.<sup>14</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Footnotes

1. Report of the Land Commission, pp.23-24, paras. 265 and 271.
2. No. 21 of 1963. Originally passed as the Native Wills Act, no.13 of 1933, it was amended in 1948, 1962 and 1963.
3. Legal opinion, Messrs. Honey and Blanckenberg, Salisbury, to the Master of the High Court, Salisbury, 21.2.1957: the case involved a farm in Msengezi.
4. The following quotation is in a closed file and therefore may not be referenced fully, but is one of a number of similar instances. A district officer states: '... there has been an error regarding the heir to this estate ... I said that collateral succession had been overlooked ... what I did not know was that collateral succession does not apply to property, only to things like chieftainship' (my emphasis).
5. Until 1954, such appeals went before the Native Appeal Court. One of the earliest inheritance disputes about a Msengezi farm was the very first case to go before the High Court of Southern Rhodesia, setting an important precedent for further cases of African inheritance disputes.
6. The kurova guva (commonly - and mistakenly - translated as 'beating the grave') ritual is the traditional Shona form of reintegrating a deceased spirit into the family household. The grave is cleaned, beer is brewed, a goat or other beast may be slaughtered and, in a three-day series of stages, the spirit is invited back to the family homestead and reinstated in his bedroom. The culmination of the ritual occurs on the third night, when the spirit is 'captured' from the grave to the accompaniment of mock battle songs and dances, which change, on the way back to the homestead, to bawdy and sometimes obscene songs. After the reintegration ritual is finished, the deceased man's clothes and personal property are distributed to his heirs and survivors, and the ceremony of widow inheritance takes place. It is at this ceremony that the heir to the farm will formally be approved by the family.

7. Speech by a delegate to the 1973 African Farmers' Union Congress held in Fort Victoria.
8. Deceased Estates Succession Amendment Act, no. 26 of 1954, section 2.
9. No. 24 of 1962. Originally passed as the Native Marriages Act, chap. 79 of 1939, it was amended in 1950.
10. My colleague, Mr. B.D. Mothobi, refers to this process as the 'mummification' of African tradition to support the beliefs held by white Rhodesians about African cultures.
11. This memorandum is also in a closed file and cannot, therefore, be referenced.
12. In fact, China never paid these cattle at all. They were paid, in a very complicated transaction involving relatives of four separate families in Msengeri, by another farmholder, whose favourite joke is: 'I lobola'd China's wife! Therefore I always call her my wife!'
13. This quotation again comes from a letter in a closed file and cannot be referenced.
14. This remark was made by an inheritor land-owner who teaches in Salisbury, in the course of discussion on the demise of 'African custom'.

PART III

DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIETY : THE COLLECTIVE LEVEL



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### SOCIAL ORGANISATION IN A DEVELOPING SOCIETY

In Part II of this thesis, I have examined in some detail how the economic factors of production - land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship - are used by farmers in Msengezi, paying particular attention to those differences in use which arise from the adoption of the traditional idiom of accumulation as opposed to the modern idiom. I now leave the subject of accumulation in order to examine the framework of the society within which these farmers operate, in an attempt to relate development on individually-owned farms to the development process in Msengezi as a whole. In Part III, therefore, I consider the principles on which Msengezi society is organised (chapter eleven); some of the ways in which important voluntary associations are used by those seeking to continue the process of modernisation in this society (chapter twelve); and the role of the local Council in controlling development at the collective level (chapter thirteen). Throughout these chapters, the importance of the links between Msengezi and the wider Rhodesian society is emphasised. The influence of Msengezi on Rhodesia is, of course, impossible for me to assess, although the reputation of this area, among whites as well as blacks, is evidence that such influence does exist. However, the influence of government and associations of national importance on Msengezi is more readily apparent, both in the development process and on the structure of the society itself.

In this chapter, therefore, I present an overall, structural view of Msengezi, before considering in chapters twelve and thirteen some of the ways in which specific organisations within this structure may be used in the politics of change and development at the local level. I realise that this initial description of the social composition of Msengezi is oversimplified and ignores possible contradictions in behaviour at the personal level, but it is important that the reader should have a clear conception of the structural principles on which this new society is based.

#### Principles of Social Organisation

Msengezi differs from African societies studied by social anthropologists in the past in that the standard principles of social organisation do not apply in this case. Msengezi society is non-tribal, for chiefs have no official control over purchase lands; it is not based on kinship; it

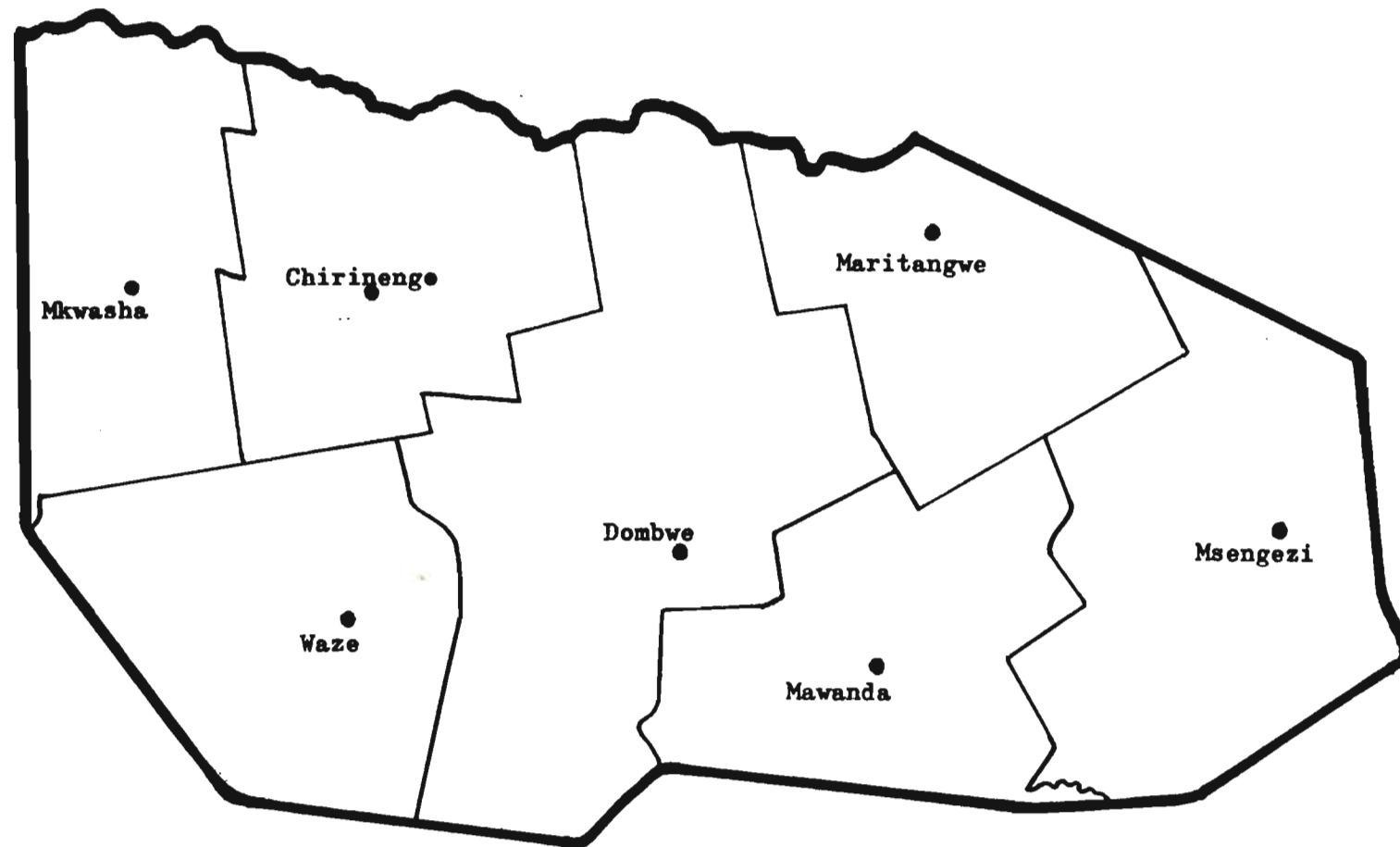
has no identifiable age groupings; and its internal territorial divisions are relatively unimportant, especially to men, who travel extensively both within and beyond Msengezi. The boundaries of the Intensive Conservation Areas (see map 2) and Council electoral wards (see map 3) thus have little general significance beyond their respective functions of regulating competition at agricultural shows and regulating competition in Council elections. In place of these well-known principles, then, privacy and optation form the foundations of social organisation in Msengezi.

Privacy is valued highly in Msengezi, requiring little effective defence since homesteads are, in most cases, at least half a mile from one another and are further protected by freehold boundaries. Such privacy means that each farmer is free to organise his household and his farming as he wishes, without interference from neighbours who may disapprove. One consequence of this privacy is that there has been far-reaching change in women's roles and relationships within individual families. Monogamous farmers in particular rely on their wives not only for their domestic comforts and their children, but also for friendship and company. Women, in turn, participate closely in decision-making concerning both family and farm. Division of labour based on sex, both in the home and in agriculture, is limited, with a sizeable number of monogamous men helping their wives in the domestic sphere of cooking, cleaning and entertaining, and women participating in virtually all aspects of production, including ploughing and tending livestock.

Despite these changes within the privacy of individual farms, however, customary forms of behaviour are generally maintained in public places and at public gatherings, because to flaunt custom openly may expose a person to gossip and criticism. One reason for this public behaviour arises within the arena of national politics in the plural society of Rhodesia: Africans may be unwilling publicly to condemn and abandon customary forms of behaviour, because they consider that this type of rejection reinforces the dominance of the whites, whose culture is in any case displacing its indigenous competitors. In public, therefore, a facade of tradition is maintained and acts as a superficial cover for the changes that people know are occurring privately. It is not politic to emphasise these changes in public.

The discrepancy in Msengezi between public and private domains and behaviour was drawn forcibly to my attention by one farmer who, in the morning, refused to allow our interview to proceed until his wife could be present, because 'it is her farm as well as mine'. He consulted her before answering questions and she showed no hesitation whatever in

Map 3. Msengezi: Council Wards and School Zoning





contradicting him on occasion. They sat together on the sitting-room sofa and the information they gave us indicated that theirs had always been an egalitarian marital relationship. Yet that same afternoon, in a semi-public committee meeting of men only, this same farmer assumed a very hard 'traditional' line on the proper place of women! This latter incident was quite out of keeping with this particular farmer's own views and practices, but was equally consonant with general expectations of public behaviour. Following this incident, I became aware of many other, similar discrepancies between public and private behaviour in Msengezi. Women who would not dream of doing so at home, for example, will sit on the ground, removed from the men and not volunteer their opinions unless specifically asked to do so when they are in public places. Customary gestures of respect practised in the public eye will lapse within the boundaries of the farm. Men will maintain formal, distant relationships of respect with their children and, even more, their children's spouses in public, yet in the privacy of the home this respect is replaced by joking and teasing. The differences in public and private behaviour are both noticeable and important.

However, despite the political and psychological reasons for maintaining this public facade of tradition, or customary behaviour, by 1974 it was not maintained evenly throughout Msengezi. In East ICA, where the better-educated settlers bought farms, where nearly one-third of these farms have already been inherited, and where many of the second generation of Msengezi people are highly educated, the new forms of behaviour accepted privately were beginning to creep into public gatherings. At Field Days in East ICA, for example, women did not sit separately on the ground but among the men on chairs and benches. They also participated in the proceedings to a much greater extent than occurred in other ICAs. Similarly, the separation of men and women at weddings and funerals was less marked in East ICA than in other areas. The public facade is thus not uniform throughout Msengezi, being first breached in certain respects by those who have fewest connections with customary modes of behaviour in their private lives and who have chosen to ignore public expectations.

The principle of choice, or optation, in social relationships thus interacts with privacy in the structuring of behaviour in Msengezi. Men and women choose their associates, the organisations to which they belong, and their behaviour patterns, from among a wide variety. The element of choice even pervades local politics, since any land-holder who has paid his rates is eligible to vote in Council elections or to stand for election himself. Within the field of social relationships, the right to choose

one's most important associates from kin, business and professional colleagues and many other categories of acquaintance, means that farmers are enmeshed in a complex series of overlapping, ego-centred networks which extend well beyond the boundaries of Msengezi itself, to all parts of Rhodesia and even overseas. Nevertheless, the majority of effective network links are concentrated within Msengezi, among people of similar social and economic standing in this society. The achieved factors of wealth, education and occupation are particularly important in the establishment of intimate relationships of a multiplex nature, in contrast to relationships within the public domain, which depend more on the ascribed factors of age and sex. The element of choice is thus played down in public, but emphasised in private. Nevertheless, the choice of associates on the grounds of achieved status influences the entire society, for such choice entails distinguishing between people on social and economic grounds.

#### Socio-Economic Differentiation

There is a basic status differential in Msengezi between land-owners and the landless. Certain people who fall into the landless category, such as teachers, may enjoy comparable social status to the land-owners, but most are social inferiors. Hired employees form the lowest stratum of all: indeed, in many respects they do not really form part of Msengezi society, unless one envisages a system which is composed of two, quite separate parts. Certainly servants do not interact with the land-owners and their families except in the employee-employer relationship. The social distance between farmer and labourer is strictly maintained in most cases: only those farmers who are themselves among the least successful sometimes mix socially - usually in the local pub - with hired workers.

Within the land-owner category, however, there are considerable distinctions in socio-economic status, despite the existence of an egalitarian ethic which is expressed in such remarks as the following:

There's no 'important people'. Every one is just like the other one.  
Farmers are all the same.  
Every farmer is important - it is wrong to single out just a few.  
All farmers are good.  
Everyone thinks he is a good farmer.  
We are all just equal.

In spite of such assertions of equality, Msengezi farmers in fact perceive quite clearly status differentials based on wealth, education and occupation. As one farmer stated, very succinctly:

There are three classes of people in Msengezi: rich farmers, average farmers and poor farmers. The rich farmers came here



being rich: they are very selfish and I don't like them. But average and poor farmers like talking to anyone and they are free with their ideas.

The designation 'good farmer' overlaps with that of 'rich farmer'. Likewise, 'poor farmer' refers simultaneously to poor agricultural methods, low yields, and economic standing.

A second, less direct recognition of socio-economic differentials lies in the distinction drawn between educated and uneducated. The educated men - mainly teachers, policemen and some businessmen - also tend to be relatively wealthy, as a result of their educational levels, which permit them to obtain employment that is well-paid in an African context. When a person is described as 'educated' by a Msengezi farmer, one knows that he has completed primary school at least, speaks English well, has a standard of living higher than most, and orders his behaviour in terms of a 'European' model. The mauneducated, in contrast, are relatively conservative, lack detailed knowledge of 'European' behaviour in most fields, and generally have smaller incomes and lower living standards than the educated.

Differences in wealth perhaps override all other components of social status in Msengezi, at least in the eyes of some people, such as the farmer who noted explicitly that 'I am talking of the people whom I envy certain aspects of life'. Distinctions of wealth are reflected most noticeably in ownership of machinery, including motor vehicles; standards of housing; employment of 'servants'; number of wives (among a minority); and thrift. Very few of the 'rich farmers', for example, frequent the local pub. However, despite its overriding importance, wealth is not the only component of social status in Msengezi.

There are different reasons why people are important. They may be rich - but I have criticisms of rich farmers, so I cannot give them the full recommendation. But good behaviour - ah, yes. And in farming, but in this farming business there is no guarantee of the future.

They may be important differently.

Some are important in many different spheres.

These different 'spheres' include institutions, such as the Council or the churches, as well as the areas of agricultural production and children's education. Status and prestige are thus calculated in a number of different situations, which farmers nevertheless perceive as being interrelated, in explicitly 'functionalist' terms.

Each man is important in his own sphere. All jobs are important. This area is now specialised, whereas in my father's time you could identify the 'big men' - but not now, not any longer. I don't think there is any important individual, but these are the most important people in Msengezi: all farmers - they are the primary producers; the Council chairman and secretary and



treasurer; the councillors; the ICA committee members; the Farmers' Association committee; Conex; the health workers; the co-op; and the teachers.  
They are all important, of course - they make up a chain.

From these statements, it is clear that any individual's significance in Msengezi is seen to rest on his or her occupational or associational role. The more important the role, the more important the incumbent, irrespective of personal identity. This emphasis on role reflects the impersonal, bureaucratic nature of Msengezi society. However, despite such impersonal assessments of importance, 'some are important in many different spheres', because they fulfil multiple leadership roles in a number of different organisations. Personal prestige thus accrues to men such as Mr. Sifelani (cf. chapter nine), as a result of their overall, personal importance to the whole society: their knowledge and experience is valued over and above the contributions they make in specific occupational roles.

Wealth, occupation and leadership are thus the most important criteria in terms of which any individual's standing within Msengezi society is assessed by his fellow farmers. Other, less important components of social status and prestige include: capacity for hard work; acceptance of responsibility; organisational ability; competence; 'understanding' - empathy and knowledge; 'good behaviour' - honesty, reliability, respectability and humility; experience, including travel to foreign countries; specific skills - craft work, mechanical repairs; innovation, particularly in agricultural production; production specialisations; willingness to offer sage advice and discuss problems, especially in farming matters; founder-ship status in important organisations, such as the Council or the co-operative society; and, finally, possession of a telephone - a specific index of status in an area where communications are tiresome, by foot or by bicycle, or expensive, by public or private transport. Perhaps the most adequate summary of the sources from which people draw prestige came from one farmer who is also the headmaster of an urban primary school:

Everyone thinks he is important! But those who are important - anyone who sets a good example, or contributes to improving the community.

Obviously, the actual contexts within which such examples or improvements are located vary considerably, and in different contexts, different criteria of evaluation may assume varying significance. Nevertheless, I do not intend to examine the specifics of status evaluation in this way here, because for the purposes of relating individual and collective levels of development in Msengezi, such an exercise has little if any direct

value. I am concerned in this chapter with the structural rather than the personal order of relationships.

### Incipient Stratification Patterns

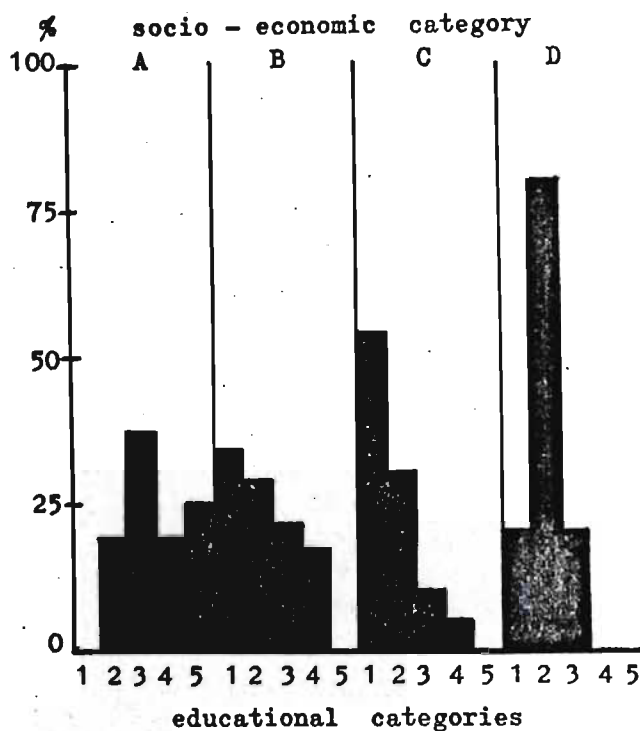
In the last section, I have demonstrated that socio-economic differentiation is well-established in Msengezi. I now wish to go further and see whether this differentiation is accompanied by ranking criteria that would permit the identification of a system of social stratification in Msengezi. It is clear that farmers classify one another in a number of different ways: these subjective categories or ethno-classifications include educated and uneducated; rich, average and poor; good farmers and farmers, and are based on education, wealth and farming success respectively. It is, however, possible to incorporate these various ethno-classifications into a single, socio-economic categorisation, in which distinctive strata or classes are in the process of emerging, although none is, as yet, consolidated.

In constructing such an objective, socio-economic classification, I have started with a composite economic index. In terms of this index, based on type of housing, vehicle ownership, business interests, income sources and farm development, I have classified farmers into four economic categories: A, B, C and D, in decreasing rank order. Respectively, 6 per cent, 16 per cent, 76 per cent and 2 per cent of all farmers fall into these categories. Category D is so small as to be of negligible significance, but it does indicate that very few Msengezi farmers are really impoverished.

These economic categories were then plotted against the educational level and occupational level at retirement from employment, of the relevant farmers. The results are shown in diagrams v and vi. The differences in distribution patterns for education and occupation between farmers in category A and those in all other categories are quite clear, whereas the distribution patterns for B-category and C-category farmers differ in degree rather than kind. Farmers in economic category A show aggregate educational and occupational levels which are clearly higher than those of farmers in other economic categories, indicating an important social as well as economic distinction between them.

Economic categories were also plotted against the marital status of the farmers involved, showing the distinctive pattern of 100 per cent monogamy among farmers in categories A and D, while more than 20 per cent of farmers in categories B and C were married polygynously. Presumably the monogamous status of those in category D is primarily a result of their financial inability to marry additional wives, although religious

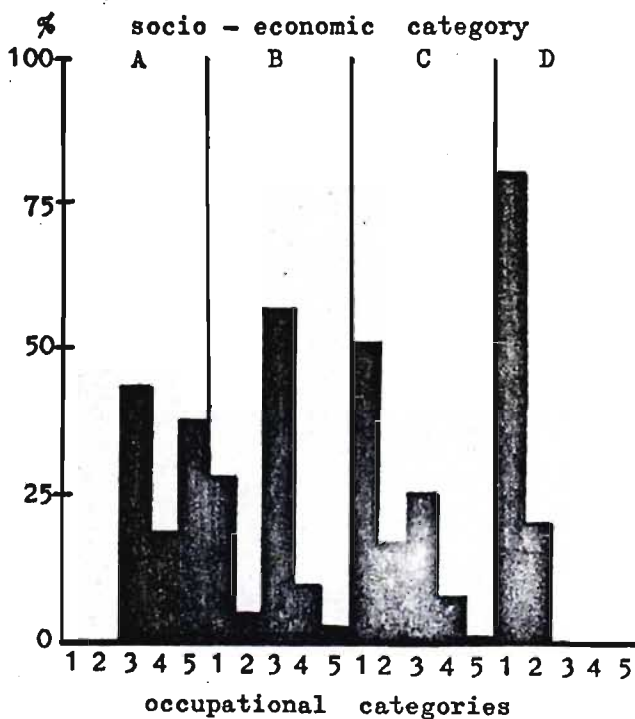
**Diagram v. Educational levels of farmers by socio-economic category.**



Key to educational categories

- 1 five years of primary schooling or less (up to standard three)
- 2 between six and eight years of primary schooling (stds. 4 - 6)
- 3 eight years of primary schooling plus further vocational training
- 4 some secondary schooling
- 5 some university education

**Diagram vi. Occupational categories at retirement of farmers by socio-economic category.**



Key to occupational categories

- 1 unskilled
- 2 skilled or supervisory
- 3 white collar, uniformed services and lower professional
- 4 self-employed in business
- 5 higher professional, managerial and executive



norms may also be important, since devout Christians will not contemplate the use of the traditional idiom of accumulation. Among farmers in category A, however, the monogamy rate indicates quite clearly the successful use of the modern idiom of accumulation.

The indices of education, occupation and marital status thus support the purely economic distinctions reflected in the initial classification. However, these socio-economic categories may simply be useful classificatory devices for the thesis writer, rather than a reflection of an established class structure, even though the ethno-classifications discussed earlier suggest that these socio-economic clusters are perceived by the farmers themselves. In order to relate these categories to a system of stratification, therefore, one must examine patterns of social interaction in relation to these categories.

Interaction is difficult to define in the context of a society in which fleeting, involuntary and impersonal contacts are frequent. The man who chats to his co-drinkers in the pub may never have met them in his life before, nor expect to do so again, yet he is interacting with them. In contrast, a man who invites another person to his daughter's wedding is expressing already-existing social ties which are fairly strong. Two men who serve on the same committee interact closely in this formal, defined situation, but may never meet, nor wish to, outside of this specific context. Given the wide range of behaviour which may be subsumed under the term 'interaction', therefore, I have tried to restrict its reference, for present purposes, to voluntary interaction of a personal nature. In other words, I have excluded from this definition fleeting contacts, the exchange of pleasantries in public places and impersonal role enactment, while including inter-farm visiting, kinship ties, friendship choices and common membership of voluntary associations and their committees. Interaction, thus defined, has been calculated from respondents' statements, supplemented by personal observation. Concerning those social relationships which respondents themselves regarded as most significant, these data are thus as complete and reliable as the fieldworker has any right to expect, although less important interaction links may, on occasion, have been omitted or overlooked. The existence of these interaction links, incidentally, does not specify whether the persons involved were interacting as allies or rivals: for the purposes of table 11.1, I focussed on the existence of interaction links, not on their content.

Table 11.1 Interaction links within socio-economic categories

category	intra-category random average %	actual links %	increase over random expectation %
A	6	26	433
B	16	23	144
C	76	77	-
D	2	0	-

If socio-economic status played no part in interaction choices among Msengezi farmers, one would expect a distribution of interaction links roughly similar to the distribution of farmers among these different categories. In reality, however, there are significant increases in intra-category interaction links among those in category A and, to a lesser extent, B. These patterns suggest strongly that there is a developing tendency for persons of higher socio-economic status to interact among themselves rather than with persons of lower status, thus confirming impressions gained during fieldwork by myself and my assistants. These objectively-defined categories thus do seem to represent what might be called 'proto-classes' in a developing class system. This interpretation is supported both by ethno-classifications and by the implicit accusations of 'snobbishness' directed towards 'rich farmers' by those in category C: '... they are very selfish and I don't like them ... average and poor farmers like talking to anyone and they are free with their ideas', implying by unstated contrast that 'rich farmers' do not mix freely with others. This attitude towards the more successful, of envy tinged with dislike, is perhaps the main reason for the continued existence of the egalitarian ethic discussed earlier, which allows the less successful to assert their equality with the more successful and more aloof farmers, on the grounds of common occupation.

It is perhaps partly because of their relative social exclusiveness that category A farmers are among the most imaginative innovators in Msengezi. They are generally impervious to public opinion and do not interact much with persons of lower standing, thus they do not regard the possible withdrawal of friendship or services by such people as threatening to themselves. However, should their visible success threaten their political status, such farmers may well modify their behaviour in relatively minor ways, as the case of Mr. Sifelani has already shown (cf. chapter nine).

In 1974, then, Msengezi had four identifiable proto-classes: the low-status, landless labourers who were mostly transient but, in aggregate, constituted a numerically important section of this society; the broad mass



of land-owners (in socio-economic categories C and D), who were collectively neither rich nor particularly poor, especially by comparison with other rural societies; a fairly small sub-elite (category B), composed of both monogamous and polygynous farmers; and the even smaller elite proper (category A), composed exclusively of monogamous land-owners who had used the modern idiom of accumulation successfully. Many of the elite were not, in fact, permanently resident in Msengezi: slightly more than half were urbanites who controlled their farming enterprises from town. In one sense, then, they were as little part of Msengezi society as were their itinerant employees: they belonged to it, but did not participate in it as a general rule. Nevertheless, their influence on the society is, at least potentially, very great, for they introduce new production specialisations and new equipment to Msengezi, as well as reflecting the goal of affluence to which most farmers would like to aspire.

I must emphasise here that the distinctions pertaining to success in farming, among those owning capitalised, semi-capitalised and under-capitalised farms, overlap only partly with the socio-economic categories identified in this chapter. Only 56 per cent of the socio-economic elite also fall into the capitalist category, defined in chapter eight. This situation arises because men spend their money in different ways, some of which are more prestigious than others. Land-owners whose farms have remained under-capitalised, for example, may have invested heavily in their children's education and their own standards of living: such men may be found in socio-economic category B, the sub-elite, along with men such as Mr. Svondo (cf. chapter nine), who have capitalised their farms but neglected, in relative terms, their children's education and their own life-styles. Certain patterns of consumption, then, enhance a person's social standing more than do certain patterns of investment among the majority of Msengezi farmers. As one man noted: 'I cannot recommend those who have many wives, nor those who do not educate their children'.

In Msengezi, status differentials based on education, occupation and forms of wealth thus appear to be crystallising into an identifiable class structure, even though most farmers still acknowledge the egalitarian ethic based on the common identity of farmer or land-owner. It seems, then, as though the Msengezi example supports the view that rapid economic development necessarily entails the emergence of marked inequalities among members of the society concerned. Of course, individual entrepreneurship based on the accumulation of privately-owned productive resources has produced or reinforced socio-economic differences in many other societies in the past, and in the capitalist-oriented economy of Rhodesia, one would not expect that the emergence of socio-economic differentials would be



discouraged: one cannot divorce people's goals and aspirations in the local society of Msengezi from the influence of the national society. Indeed, the national bureaucracy of government not only defined the purchase lands into existence, it has also been ultimately responsible for their development ever since.

### Bureaucratisation and Society

The contemporary form of Msengezi society owes much to various government ministries. Territorial divisions, for example, were defined by two government bodies: the then Department of Native Affairs (now the Ministry for Internal Affairs) defined the boundaries of Council electoral wards, while Intensive Conservation Area boundaries were decided by the staff of the Natural Resources Board in conjunction with the Department of Conservation and Extension in the Ministry for Agriculture. The absence of tribal authority resulted from the provisions of the Land Apportionment Act, administered as far as the purchase lands were concerned by the Native Land Board. Nevertheless, within the framework of modernity provided by government, Msengezi people themselves have constructed a modern society: certain other purchase land residents have not done so to the same extent, even though their legal and administrative framework is identical. In Gwatemba, for example, an identifiable lineage organisation exists;<sup>1</sup> while in certain purchase lands in the Victoria district, the farmers recognise the jurisdiction of certain chiefs over these freehold areas.<sup>2</sup> In such areas, it seems possible if not probable that social relationships are based more on ascribed than on achieved status.

In Msengezi, however, social relationships are based on choice and achievement, and the limits of acceptable behaviour are correspondingly defined in standardised and impersonal terms. Where necessary, legal sanctions may be invoked to enforce these limits. The Council and the co-operative society, for example, have instituted systems of automatic lawsuit against people failing to pay their rates and repay their loans. Many inheritance disputes have ended in court battles. Local transporters have been threatened with lawsuits on occasion. The Council has sued ex-employees in cases of misappropriation of public funds. There is at least one case in which a farmer is threatening to sue the Council for damage to his gate-posts caused by the Council truck, driven by a former secretary. Other forms of bureaucratic behaviour include advertising in the national press to fill staff vacancies; the interview of applicants for jobs by selection committees; standardised conditions of service and pay scales; official contract forms; and committee procedure in general. In all Msengezi

voluntary associations, the recording and approving of minutes are essential, for in cases of later dispute, these minutes are intended to provide an accurate record of decisions, in Council committees and women's church groups alike. However, because these minutes in fact provide ammunition for those competing for leadership positions, and because inaccuracies do creep in, deliberately or accidentally, the post of secretary is avoided by those people who wish to avoid becoming the focus of discord: in certain organisations in Msengezi, the post of secretary carries an honorarium as a form of inducement.

The extent to which relationships are ordered along bureaucratic lines has resulted from the decision, taken by men such as Mr. Sifelani on behalf of Msengezi, to adopt modern forms of administrative behaviour, which are held to be more conducive to development than are customary patterns. This decision has been influenced, at least in part, by government expectations, for government, mainly through the ministries of Internal Affairs, Lands and Natural Resources, and Agriculture, but assisted by para-government statutory bodies such as the Land and Agricultural Bank and the Natural Resources Board, has exerted considerable control over purchase land development.

However, government control of the development process has usually been indirect and local agents of government are at least nominally independent. The Council, for example, is not actually part of Internal Affairs, nor is the co-operative society: liaison between these local organisations and the controlling ministry is effected by civil servants in advisory capacities. In some cases, local representatives of Msengezi society have stated, in public, that attempts by such civil servants to translate their advisory roles into authoritarian ones will not be accepted: district officers, for example, have been told to keep out of Council decision-making. Such ultimatums, which are fully within legal and administrative limits, have been accepted with varying degrees of grace depending on individual personalities. In general, however, the independence of local organisations remains intact only so long as decisions stay within limits acceptable to the ministry concerned. In certain instances, though, local decisions may have the effect of extending the policy guidelines of the controlling ministry and causing some change in development possibilities. For example, in 1973 the Msengezi Group of ICAs proposed the establishment of inter-purchase land competitions in ploughing. As a result of their decision to invite Zowa and Chitomborgwizi farmers to compete against Msengezi, such competitions are now supported and partially financed by the Natural Resources Board. In addition, through the interest



roused by this first triangular competition among neighbouring European farmers, the principle of purchase land competitors in European-run regional and national ploughing competitions has been accepted. A much earlier example of a similar situation occurred in 1961, when Msengezi councillors' insistence that purchase land Councils should be chaired by local councillors and not by district commissioners ex officio, was accepted by the Department of Native Affairs before community development became official policy. Even though government controls the development process, local societies have retained room to manoeuvre within the bureaucratic process: unlike some rural societies, Msengezi has used this manoeuvring room effectively.

However, the problems which confront Msengezi leaders committed to development in a western, bureaucratic mould, are considerable. Possibly the most important of these problems concerns training and experience in bureaucratic procedures, because the ability to advance farmers' interests, sometimes against opposition from ministry representatives, requires knowledge as well as personal courage. Only those who are 'educated' have the necessary knowledge of procedure, lines of authority, law and finance to confront civil servants in bureaucratic dispute, and of the potential pool of such men, many are 'urban farmers' and are, therefore, unwilling to enter local politics. Local organisations such as the Show Society and the ICA committees provide some training in bureaucratic procedure, but this is generally insufficient to equip people to participate in the national bureaucracy. Nevertheless, some experience is better than none, as Msengezi people see the situation, and few farmers stand for Council without some prior experience in other local associations.<sup>3</sup> Those who do enter Council as bureaucratic novices soon find that their fellow-councillors do not suffer such inexperience gladly. After all, the Council is the leading development agency in Msengezi, having been responsible for all of the facilities which make this area a development model in the country at large. At the collective level, the Council has been responsible for 'this new civilisation'. It cannot afford, therefore, to include ineffectual representatives unable to function adequately within its modern, impersonal structure. The clash between modern bureaucrats, supported by polygynous accumulators, and those who have failed to accumulate successfully in the modern idiom of their choice, revolves around the process of increasing bureaucratisation, as I show in chapter thirteen. Before discussing local politics and the development process, however, I examine some of the changes occurring in less inclusive and less influential voluntary associations, for these changes, together with the network of political relationships linking



leaders in various organisations, may have important, though indirect, effects on political processes within the Council itself.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Footnotes

1. Personal communication from Dr. A.J.B. Hughes.
2. See Weinrich (1971): unfortunately, it is not clear to what extent and in what contexts this recognised jurisdiction is actually practised.
3. A similar pattern of pre-Council experience in voluntary associations, especially school committees, in two tribal trust lands in the north-eastern districts is noted by Murphree (1970).

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS AND THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

As I have indicated in chapter eleven, Msengezi is structurally a modern society. In this chapter, I attempt to show that this society is modern in process as well as structure, largely as a result of its close links with the bureaucracy of government and with private organisations of national significance. Voluntary associations are thus important in Msengezi for several reasons. They connect the local community to the world beyond its boundaries. They supply important links for the construction of ego-centred social networks. They act as a training ground in bureaucratic procedures, particularly for those intending to enter local politics in the realm of local government. They are powerful vehicles for the establishment of new norms governing behaviour, forming the arena within which people of differing views struggle to assert their leadership qualities and gain acceptance for their ideas. Finally, they are important bridging institutions between the public and the private domains, for, within these associations, the movement away from social relationships based on individual status towards those defined by 'contract' in the realm of impersonal role enactment, is gathering momentum. One important aspect of this movement concerns changing relationships between men and women in the public domain: such changes will, of course, have far-reaching effects on the role of women in future development. In this chapter, therefore, I give a brief account of the wide range of voluntary associations found in Msengezi, before examining more closely the process of change in three specific organisations: the Intensive Conservation Area committees, the Show Committee, and the Women's Clubs.

#### The Range of Voluntary Associations

There were more than twenty different types of voluntary association in Msengezi during 1973-74, not all of which included land-owning families exclusively. These associations may be classified into five main types, together with one residual category: occupational associations; organisations concerned with various aspects of agricultural production; marketing organisations; religious groups; and women's associations.

Occupational associations included the Farmers' Association (the local branch of the African Farmers' Union, which is a statutory body) and the local branch of the Rhodesian African Teachers' Association. In Msengezi, there was no local branch of the African Local Government Officers'

Association, to which Council administrators belong.

Among those organisations concerned with production were: the four Intensive Conservation Area committees, which were linked to the Natural Resources Board; the nine Young Farmers' Clubs (also linked to the NRB), which involved certain farmers as club leaders and advisors; the Waze Ploughing Club, which was formed in 1973 to promote interest in improved ploughing techniques; the Cotton Growers' Club, which ran the annual cotton competition; the Fertiliser Discount Groups in Waze and West ICAs, which ordered fertilisers in bulk for all members in order to take advantage of early buying discounts; the Borehole Group, formed in 1973 to facilitate liaison with drilling firms by those dozen farmers intending to sink boreholes during 1974 (which has probably disbanded by now, having achieved its limited aims); and the Show Society, which, through its executive committee, organised the annual Farmers' Show.

There were only two marketing organisations of significance in Msengezi: the Msengezi Producers' Co-operative Society, to which approximately half the farmers and one-third of the additional cultivators belonged; and the four Livestock Fattening Clubs, which arranged for the sale of fattened stock to the Cold Storage Commission depot in Gatooma.

Religious groups included all of the various churches, of which there were some twelve denominations in all, most of these having more than one congregation in Msengezi; the standing committees of these various congregations; and the men's and women's groups, particularly in the Methodist and Catholic organisations. There was also a Catholic Savings Club, formed late in 1973, but no other denomination had entered this field.

The most important women's associations were the thirteen Women's Clubs, under the overall jurisdiction of their Area Executive Committee; and the women's groups within the churches. Of the latter, the Methodist ruwadzano's were by far the most important, although the Catholic, Anglican and Salvation Army organisations also had mothers' unions. There were also private groupings of women, little cliques of friends involved in their own form of savings clubs, for improvements to their homes, the purchase of domestic utensils, or in order to hold birthday parties for their children.

Within the residual category fell those associations which could not be classified under any of the above headings. These included recreational societies, such as the Dancing Club and the Football Club, both of which were dormant at the time of fieldwork; savings clubs and credit unions, both of which were generally unsuccessful in Msengezi as in other purchase lands,<sup>1</sup> attracting more support from additional cultivators



and even labourers than from the farmers themselves or their families; and the Parents' Associations, found in each of the seven Council wards. The powers and relevance of these Parents' Associations were severely curtailed by the Council some ten years ago, and their functions, in 1973-74, were restricted to maintaining liaison between parents and their children's teachers. Nevertheless, these associations did provide a potential rallying-point within each Council ward and at one time members of the Waze Parents' Association did attempt to interfere in the political process within Council: I examine the context of this incident in the next chapter. Many of these voluntary associations thus had potential political functions which ranged far beyond ostensible aims formalised in their constitutions.

Altogether, there were more than eighty individual voluntary associations in Msengezi, each having its own structure and office-bearers: clearly these organisations constituted important outlets for leadership ambitions in this area. It was quite impossible, of course, to investigate all of these groups intensively. Those associations with clearly defined, and very limited objectives were, in any case, not worth spending much time on, for beyond these specific purposes they had very little significance in the wider society: buying fertilisers, ploughing, negotiating with bore-hole drilling companies and selling cattle were of great importance to individual farmers, but these activities generally did not permeate deeply into the society.

However, in certain cases I would have liked to investigate more closely than proved possible. The Farmers' Association, for example, seemed to be run on somewhat ad hoc lines by a small clique of committee members, some of whom were political detainees in the recent past. Very few farmers knew when general meetings of the Farmers' Association were to be held. Indeed, only two public meetings were held during the field-work period and even these were not advertised in advance. I suspect that the secrecy in this organisation was related more to the fact of considerable opposition among farmers at large to the national president of the African Farmers' Union, than to any local factors, for the Mashonaland provincial branch of the AFU, together with the Manicaland and Charter provincial branches, broke away from the national organisation after the 1974 congress.<sup>2</sup> Msengezi falls under the Mashonaland branch, and I was told by two committee members of the Msengezi Farmers' Association about this pending move before the congress was held. In Msengezi, unlike certain other purchase lands (cf. Weinrich, 1975; Bembridge, 1972), there are very few local issues which are relevant to the Farmers' Association, for the Council controls

local administration, diptanks, dams, etc. It seems likely, therefore, that the secrecy within the Farmers' Association was related to plotting at a national rather than at a local level. Nevertheless, in the early 1960s the Farmers' Association did attempt unsuccessfully to wrest control over Msengezi from the Council, so it is possible, if improbable, that the Farmers' Association committee did constitute an anti-establishment faction even in 1974. Had I been able to penetrate the cloak of secrecy surrounding its activities, such political opposition might have become apparent. As it was, however, we did not hear any rumours of such possibilities, and a number of the committee members were in fact members of other, 'establishment' organisations such as the ICA committees. Despite these other possibilities, then, I do not think that we missed vital information on Msengezi through our inability to penetrate to the core of the Farmers' Association, although I am certain that material on the internal politics of the African Farmers' Union was lost.

Although we could not cover every voluntary association in depth, for various reasons, it quickly became apparent from those organisations which were covered that many, if not most, associations were in the process of redefining the limits of acceptable behaviour in Msengezi. In the last chapter I noted the discrepancy between behaviour in public and in private, arising from the general expectation that customary behaviour should be maintained in public places. I also noted that the traditional facade in public was not maintained evenly throughout Msengezi. In the following sections, therefore, I examine the changes in public behaviour which were occurring during the fieldwork period, within the bridging institutions between public and private domains - the voluntary associations.

The reason why the voluntary associations could act as a bridge in this way is mainly because individuals assume new roles, distinct from their own individual identities, on becoming members of these associations. Association membership adds a formal, impersonal dimension to individual status: Mrs. X, member of Msengezi Women's Club, is potentially more significant than Mrs. X, for organisations have more power, particularly in introducing change, than do individuals. Similarly, despite interaction between the two, the expectations of people as individuals generally differ from the expectations attaching to formal, impersonal roles. I noted the importance of formal roles in evaluating status in the previous chapter: here I consider some of the ways in which social relationships, within the semi-public context of the voluntary associations, may become more openly contractual and impersonal.



### Personal and Impersonal Relationships

The trend towards impersonal role enactment is seen clearly in the Intensive Conservation Area committees, established in 1965 and 1966. These committees help to enforce the legal rules governing soil conservation, overstocking, the cultivation of prohibited areas such as stream banks, and other sensitive aspects of agricultural production. Committee members are expected to accompany the Lands Inspector on his visits to farms within their areas of responsibility, as well as to report on inadequate contouring, the formation of gullies and other forms of soil erosion, and the growth of noxious weeds on state land and on farms belonging to their friends and neighbours. Their interest in the preservation of the soil thus conflicts with the more immediate interests of their fellow farmers in some cases and it is hardly surprising that the functions of ICA committee members are still resented by some people. Indeed, for a short while after they were formed, these committees were both disliked and ineffective: their necessity was accepted first by farmers in the east of Msengezi and later by those in the west. By 1969, committee members in the East ICA had testified in court against one of their fellow farmers prosecuted for inadequate contouring, while as late as 1973, members of the West ICA committee refused to accompany the Lands Inspector on tour, fearing charges of collaboration with government, although they later reversed this decision. Clearly, attitudes to the ICA committees have changed radically in the past ten years.

A number of reasons have produced this change in attitude. Firstly, government personnel in the form of extension workers and Lands Inspectors have been aware of resistance to the committees. Prosecutions have been reserved for the worst offenders and avoided wherever possible: written warnings generally produced the required improvements. Secondly, and more importantly, the Natural Resources Board, to which the ICAs are linked, have used certain incentives to make the ICA movement as a whole more acceptable to the farmers. The most important of these incentives are two nation-wide competitions in farming, in which African farmers are seen to be competing, as large-scale producers, in a field generally dominated, if not monopolised, by Europeans.

The first of these two competitions affords the NRB the opportunity to carry out a nation-wide inspection of purchase land farms, without appearing to be doing so. In every purchase land ICA in the country, individual farms are judged on standards of soil conservation and farm management and marks and placings are awarded, the results being circulated from the NRB to the ICAs in special communications. This internal competi-



tion, however, is much less prestigious than the second competition sponsored by the NRB, the Inter-ICA Competition which forms part of the European-run Royal Salisbury Show. For this competition, NRB officials, in conjunction with extension workers, select ten ICAs to compete at the Show itself: this pre-judging is done on the quality of the exhibits put forward for display. To date, the Inter-ICA competition has been restricted to purchase land ICAs, but in 1975, a leading insurance firm sponsored a second, extended competition, which included both European ICAs and those in the purchase lands. This competition, even more than that run by the NRB, allows black farmers to compete in the prestige spheres of their white counterparts: a purchase land ICA in fact took third place in this competition.

Such competitions are extremely prestigious among purchase land farmers, for they offer the opportunity to establish a national reputation as modern, progressive producers. The Royal Salisbury Show has been particularly important in this respect, for the results of the Inter-ICA competition are published in the most important daily newspapers, broadcast in Show feature programmes on the radio and televised. Until 1975, Msengezi ICAs dominated the Inter-ICA competition and cornered the lion's share of this publicity: Waze ICA won the competition for four consecutive years, while in most years one or more of the other ICAs took minor placings. In the drought season ending in 1973, Msengezi provided three of the eight competing ICAs and took three of the four placings. Msengezi farmers are very proud of this record, and of their reputation: 'Such leaders as you are the model and example of African farmers in this country'.<sup>3</sup>

Their concern to preserve this reputation underlies the farmers' acceptance of the ICA committees and their functions as agents of government, for these functions are counterbalanced by the opportunities that the ICAs afford for collective leadership at the national level. This concern for Msengezi's national reputation arises frequently within the ICA committees. In 1973, for example, a West ICA committee member insisted that at least one Msengezi ICA must enter the Inter-ICA Competition at the Royal Salisbury Show, despite the poor crops resulting from the drought, because 'otherwise people will say A! Msengezi vakapera nenzera!' (Freely translated, this phrase implies that 'Msengezi is finished - they have all died of hunger!'. This is the supreme form of insult to a purchase land farmer, to imply that he cannot produce enough to keep himself alive.) Other such comments, recorded in the minutes of committee meetings, included the following: 'the aim is to inject a spirit of intensive activity in farmers for revolutionary success in farming activities'

(Waze ICA, 1969); 'the chairman stressed the need to expedite such a move [on gully reclamation] for it promoted the high standard of Msengezi in every sphere' (East ICA, 1970); 'Remember all the bulls in Salisbury! [A reference to the prizes for the three winning entries at the Royal Salisbury Show.] They must come back to Msengezi!' (Central ICA, 1974).

It is this desire to beat all competitors and maintain their national standing which makes organisations such as the ICA committees and the Council acceptable to Msengezi farmers, for these are the associations which, as I have shown, enable them to be seen to be operating successfully within the sphere of 'European' institutions. It is these institutions which show them to be competent in 'European' or modern idioms of behaviour at the collective level. But this successful operation within 'European' institutions is, in turn, dependent on the acceptance of impersonal relationships defined by legal rules and on compliance with government requirements. As farmers have realised that their position as a national example rests on co-operation with the national bureaucracy, so the acceptance of impersonal relationships has grown, especially within the ICA committees. Committee members no longer refuse to accompany the Lands Inspector on tour, to report the first signs of soil erosion on farms belonging to kin, friends or neighbours, to report the growth of noxious weeds or to threaten prosecution of anyone digging for fishing worms in the earth walls of public dams. Furthermore, there is no shortage of candidates for election to the ICA committees and turnover in their membership is quite normal: these changes in behaviour patterns thus do not appear to have resulted solely from domination of the committees by small cliques of people pursuing their own political ends, but rather from a generalised change in attitudes.

Indeed, the ICA committees are not the only organisations within which relationships determined by formal rules are becoming increasingly important. Two years ago, the Council decided to use its hitherto latent right of lawsuit against rates defaulters: 'we represent people, but we also have a claim on their money'.<sup>4</sup> The co-operative society has also taken to suing its debtors and has drawn up formal transport contracts following difficulties with one particular transporter. The Council has led the way in defining employer-employee relationships by means of signed contracts, an innovation which may well be adopted more widely as labour problems worsen among organisations and individuals. Such moves by important voluntary associations and branches of the national bureaucracy have set weighty precedents for the wider extension of impersonal relationships. Indeed, as part of this process, women have rebelled against



their 'traditional' status: no longer content to be 'the power behind the throne', to influence their husbands indirectly and in private, they have claimed a greater say in public decision-making, using their own roles as members of the Women's Clubs in order to bargain with their menfolk in public.

#### Men and Women: Opposition and Integration

Within the public domain, the female role has generally remained subservient to that of the male, whereas within the private domain, as I showed in the previous chapter, women do participate in decision-making concerning farm and family, in both monogamous and polygynous families. While male roles in the public domain have long been differentiated, women have, until recently, been regarded simply as women. These differences between men and women in public form part of the traditional facade which, as I noted earlier, is beginning to disintegrate in Msengezi. One of the factors contributing to this disintegration has been the existence of the Women's Clubs, which have afforded those women most committed to change a formal, associational base from which to negotiate a form of contractual relationship to men in the public domain.

There were, in 1974, thirteen separate Women's Clubs in Msengezi, the first of which was established in 1961. Slightly over 30 per cent of farmers' wives belonged to these clubs: the wives of 32 per cent of monogamous farmers were members, together with at least one wife per family in the case of 26 per cent of those farmers married polygynously. However, other categories of women also belonged to these clubs, including women who were managing farms themselves, the wives of kinsmen resident on these farms, farmers' daughters and daughters-in-law, and the wives of teachers and extension assistants. On more than 35 per cent of all farms, one or more women belonged to these clubs, which have been increasing their membership steadily over the past few years: a new club was constituted during the course of fieldwork. The influence of the Women's Clubs is thus spreading, even though the majority of women in Msengezi did not, at the time of fieldwork, belong to them.

Like most voluntary associations in Msengezi, the Women's Clubs are part of a wider national structure, in this case the National Federation of Women's Institutes of Rhodesia (NFWIR). This organisation was originally European, but some twenty years ago the European Women's Institutes decided to form Homecraft Clubs for African women, to teach them skills useful in a modern home, such as knitting, sewing, embroidery, baking,



hygiene and child-care. As the members of these Homecraft Clubs attained greater competence in these fields, they could apply to be upgraded to Women's Institutes. In Msengezi to date, only one club has attained institute status (in 1974), although two or three others may do so in the next few years. The institutes, whether African or European, have the right to send at least one delegate to the annual congress of the NFWIR: the clubs, on the other hand, have their own, separate congress, to which delegates are sent from different areas, not from individual clubs. The Homecraft Clubs congress then sends a limited number of delegates to the congress of the Women's Institutes, in a system of indirect representation. Women's Institute status, then, means that African women may participate directly in a European-dominated and European-controlled organisation: however, since most Africans belong to Homecraft Clubs and not to Women's Institutes, such participation is limited to a very small number and is extremely prestigious. The first congress delegate from the first Women's Institute in Msengezi confided to me her very real worries about such participation, stating that most of the proceedings would be beyond her complete understanding and that she would therefore seek a quiet corner at the back of the hall and try to remain inconspicuous! In the event, her fears proved largely unfounded and she thoroughly enjoyed mixing with the white delegates and contributing to discussions. Indeed, this opportunity for direct participation by African women in a prestigious, modern, European-run institution is perhaps greater than the opportunities for such participation among men, who are confined to the African Farmers' Union, the purchase lands ICA conference and co-operative unions which include only African primary societies. In other words, while African men may run such modern organisations, they do so not in conjunction with whites, but parallel to them in most cases (churches being the most obvious exception).

With their rather narrow focus on domestic activities, one might, perhaps, expect that the Women's Clubs in Msengezi would not venture into the public domain of male decision-making, much less challenge men within this domain. These clubs have, however, been used to issue precisely such a challenge, which was formally articulated by a woman who had been honoured for her contribution to Women's Clubs in Rhodesia in the Queen's Birthday Honours List of 1965. Her personal role in initiating change in the public relationship of women to men reflects the local significance of prestige gained at the national level by participation in modern institutions.

The female challenge to the men's right to make decisions occurred as follows. For many years, an annual Farmers' Show has been held in Msengezi. In earlier years the show was a very small affair, organised entirely by

the extension staff and focussing exclusively on agricultural produce. In 1966, however, because the farmers themselves wanted more say in the running of their own show, the Show Society was formed. All show exhibitors automatically belong to the Show Society, which is run by its executive Show Committee. In 1966, it was proposed by extension staff that the Show Committee should comprise representatives of various established organisations - the ICA committees, the Farmers' Association, the Council, the local branch of the teachers' professional organisation, and the Women's Clubs. Not all of these organisations agreed to affiliate themselves formally to the Show Committee - the Council in particular did not wish to be associated with any possible blame for failure - but the women did agree to participate.

However, over the next four years, the women became increasingly dissatisfied with their position within the Show Committee. The men dominated decision-making, refusing to listen to suggestions from the women, even when these suggestions concerned the women's section of the show. The men fixed entry fees and determined prizes for the various sections, ignoring the women's stated preferences. Nevertheless, the women were required to undertake all of the catering arrangements for the show, making sure that tea was served to the European judges and that all visitors had lunch. Eventually, in 1969, the women warned the men that they wished to resign from their affiliation to the Show Committee. Rumours were apparently circulating to the effect that the women wished to stage their own show, although the minutes of the Show Society do not record any discussion of these rumours. The men refused to take the women's warning seriously, dismissing as ludicrous the idea that the women could simply walk out and arrange their own show. But, in August 1969, the women went ahead and unilaterally declared their independence of the men in the organisation of shows:

The Women's Club Delegation headed by Mrs. X, MBE, made it abundantly clear that they are not pleased to hold their show combined with the Show Society. 'Therefore they will separate following resolutions passed at their meetings ... [The extension supervisor, an authoritarian man who was later transferred] regretted that the clubs ignored his advice and went into ambitious schemes as they fixed dates, made programmes and chose judges without taking up a steady and realistic advice. He warned, be careful lest some of you will be stopped by your farmer husbands for separating and taking all power into your hands ... [The chairman] too expressed great disappointment and asked the delegation to review their resolution before they go right out with their blundering plans ...'

That the women had issued a challenge to the men was quite clear from the reactions of the extension supervisor and the chairman, who apparently



hoped that the husbands of these women would use their authority to discipline individual wives for their collective behaviour in public. This hope was misplaced, for the very good reason that the individual women involved had the support of their husbands in the first place - at least as the story is told in retrospect. However, since the fait accompli of the women's independent show was accepted without further demur in the minutes of the Show Society, presumably because the men were waiting for the attempt to collapse in failure, it seems likely that the extension supervisor and other male members of the Show Committee who were threatened by the women's move in fact received no support from the women's husbands. The rather arrogant presumption of 'blundering plans' soon changed to a regular invitation to the women to return to the Show Committee, as the Women's Show proved increasingly successful and the Farmers' Show struggled to stay alive.

The two shows have been held separately since 1969, the Farmers' Show in August and the Women's Show in October. Individual women still compete in the home industries section of the Farmers' Show, while the Women's Show is organised on a club basis and participation is restricted to club members. The withdrawal of the women from the organisation of the Farmers' Show proved to be a blow more severe than the men had anticipated, for in 1970 the Farmers' Show was not held and it is doubtful whether the Show Committee has fully recovered from this blow even now.<sup>6</sup> Since 1969, this committee has experienced many problems, including waning support from the ICA committees as the Show became less and less successful, inadequate leadership, alleged embezzlement and apathy among farmers at large. The male members of the Show Committee have made determined efforts to regain the support of the women since 1969, although until 1973 they were not prepared to shift their own position to a more sympathetic consideration of the women's complaints. As one woman explained, 'we found that we could not just work very well with the men, but we do not stop our members from joining with the men if they want to'. For four years, then, mainly in order to resolve their catering problems, the men invited the women to return, without success. Eventually, as a last resort, they began to shift ground and sent their representatives to the Women's Club meetings: bearing in mind how embarrassed my male research assistant was at the suggestion he should attend such a meeting, this approach signalled a very significant change in the public relationship of men to women. From the women's point of view, however, such change was insufficient to induce them to return to the Show Committee, although they did agree to lend two club members to the men to assist in buying prizes for the women's sections in the Farmers' Show.



It is at this point that one becomes aware that the women were using their position to achieve more than a resolution of the problems over which they had broken away in 1969. They were no longer concerned simply with having the final say in choosing prizes and determining entry fees, for they could have achieved these aims in 1973, when the men showed willingness to compromise by attending the women's meetings. Instead of returning to the fold, then, however, the women held out: they helped the men, on that specific occasion, but they did not rejoin the Show Committee. They had discovered that, when it came to organising shows, they did not need the men. The men, on the other hand, acknowledged more and more frequently, in public, that they could not manage without the women.

Late in 1973, therefore, the Show Committee held a special meeting to discuss the future of the Farmers' Show and the possibilities of co-operation between men and women in the future. The women were invited specially and the chairman and secretary took great care to see that they were seated on benches within the decision-making circle of men in the centre of Dombwe township in full public view. On every point that arose, the chairman made a point of consulting the women for their opinions, which the women were careful not to give too freely. On the odd occasion that a male committee member attempted to shout down the women, he was severely disciplined by the chairman. Towards the end of the meeting, the women were asked to specify the conditions under which they would agree to rejoin the Show Committee as full, co-opted members rather than as unpaid catering assistants: the men admitted that it was the problem of feeding visitors which had forced them to seek the women's co-operation.

The women's conditions, agreed beforehand in club meetings, were fourfold: they wanted an effective voice in decision-making, as they had been given in that particular meeting; they did not wish to have their views ridiculed because they were women and, therefore, assumed to be incompetent; they wanted the final say on entry fees and prizes in the women's section of the Farmers' Show, which had been the issue of original contention; and they would continue to run the Women's Show, at least until they were satisfied that this arrangement would work as they wanted it to. Although some of the men grumbled, explicitly stating that they would lose face if they were seen to be bowing to all the women's demands, the committee accepted this four-point 'contract' with relatively little argument and surprisingly good grace. One possible reason for this acceptance was the fact that nearly half of the men present were ICA committee members themselves and saw parallels between the women's position and their own, in terms both of prestige and of changing relationships.

Perhaps more important than latent male sympathies with the women's position, though, was the fact that the women's negotiating team comprised the President of the Area Executive Committee, her secretary and treasurer, and the Chair(woman) of the Women's Show: the four most powerful offices within the Women's Clubs' overall organisation in Msengezi. These four women, in their formal roles, were accorded respect that was almost exaggerated by the men, who recognised these roles throughout the negotiations.

Men and women are thus reintegrated once more in the Show Committee, but in a markedly different relationship from the one obtaining originally. The new relationship is based on male recognition of the women's formal, impersonal roles as representatives of an important organisation; it is essentially contractual; it assumes a greater measure of equality between men and women in the right to participate in decision-making; and it has altered significantly the public relationship of women to men in Msengezi. One measure of this changing relationship may be seen in attendance at the Women's Show, the symbol of female independence in Msengezi. Admittedly, by 1974, not many men actually went to view this Show and those who did generally had a number of acceptable reasons to explain why they were in the vicinity of the Farmers' Hall on that particular day: they had to see the Council secretary, or came to post a letter, or collect books, and so on. Nevertheless, approximately half a dozen men attended the 1974 Women's Show and sat through the entire proceedings, apparently oblivious of other men's sensitivities and general expectations of their behaviour in public places: men court ridicule, in terms of the traditional facade, by displaying public interest in the domestic sphere, which is more properly the preserve of women. These men were all 'educated' monogamists, ex-policemen and teachers belonging to the socio-economic sub-elite. Less than half were the husbands of women holding important office in the Women's Clubs. A much larger number of men with, perhaps, less courage in defying public expectations of their behaviour, sneaked in to view the exhibits after all the speeches were over, when people were milling around and hiding them from public view.

#### Redefinition of Norms

Similar indications of changing norms and relationships between men and women may be seen in voluntary associations other than the exclusively female clubs and the Show Committee. Some of the church congregations now have women as lay preachers and congregation leaders: recently, a woman defeated a man for the leadership of one congregation, which is



possibly more remarkable than the fact that they both agreed to compete against each other in the first place. Among the younger generation of farmholders' children, eight of the Young Farmers' Clubs have both male and female members, while the ninth is composed exclusively of girls. In the mixed clubs, girls are frequently elected as office-bearers and participate freely in discussions and decisions within the Area Executive. The process of change in the public relationship between men and women is thus firmly established in Msengezi, having been started by those men and women whose relationships in the private domain differed most radically from the general expectation that 'customary' behaviour should be upheld in public.

The importance of the voluntary associations in promoting these changes lies in their status as semi-public institutions. Participation within these associations is restricted to members, although membership is theoretically open to all. Potentially, then, voluntary associations are public institutions, although in practice their meetings are closed. By bringing together varying numbers of people for specific purposes, these associations thus bridge the gap between public and private domains, confirming changes which have occurred in private and extending these changes to a wider universe.

Some voluntary associations are, of course, more public than others. Small executive committees, such as the ICA committees, are closer to the private domain than are, for example, church congregations. Thus change tends to occur first within these small committees, in which individuals seek to imprint their views on their co-members in the process of competing for prestige and leadership. Later, when the committee as a whole has adopted the proposed changes, it sponsors these changes within the wider universe of which it is representative. One sees this process quite clearly within the ICA committees: in East ICA, where changes were accepted readily by committee members, the process of acceptance of impersonal relationships is well-established within the ICA as a whole. In West ICA, on the other hand, where committee members have only recently accepted their role as agents of government, there is much greater suspicion about the ICA committees in general among the people themselves. A similar process may be identified in other organisations: ruwadzano members introduce changes among women in the Methodist congregations; the Area Executive Committee introduces new ideas to the Women's Clubs; councillors make decisions which are communicated to their electors; and so on. While there may be some degree of feedback in the process of change, the general direction is from elected representatives to their electors, from the least inclusive to the more inclusive groupings, because small working committees constitute an important testing-ground for change.



In this chapter, I have tried to show how the process of change occurs within specific associations. The reader will have noted that the changes I have discussed are concerned primarily with the definition of roles and relationships in increasingly impersonal and contractual terms, in different situations. This process is widespread in Msengezi, as the cases discussed in the following chapter, on Council politics, will confirm. One of the reasons why one finds similar changes occurring in different organisations is that there is both overlapping leadership and overlapping membership within these associations. Individual leaders therefore imprint their own personal views on a number of different associations. Individual members, in turn, are exposed to similar changes in a number of different contexts, thus reinforcing the general direction of change in the society as a whole. It is thus through the various voluntary associations in Msengezi that the individual and collective levels of development are informally related, while the Council formally controls their articulation. It is to the Council, therefore, that I now turn to complete my examination of this society.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Footnotes

1. Personal communication from George Smith, 1974. Smith, of the Institute of Adult Education in the University of Rhodesia, has been closely involved in organising the credit union movement in Rhodesia.
2. Rhodesia Herald, 31.8.1974. The representatives of Charter, Manicaland and Mashonaland have since formed the African National Farmers' Union and are trying to gain official recognition and support from various ministries.
3. From a speech to the Msengezi Group of ICAs by an African member of the Natural Resources Board, 1973. This member is himself a purchase land farmer.
4. From my field notes, 1973.
5. Show Society minutes, 23.8.1969.
6. A letter from a friend in Msengezi, dated 25.8.1975, notes that: 'The Farmers' Show is over, it was on the 14th this month ... There were very few entries from the farmers. I should say it was really very poor. Again we are preparing for the October Women's Show ...' Allowing for the possibility that this female view may be biased, it seems that the Show Committee's problems are not yet over.

CHAPTER THIRTEENLOCAL POLITICS AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Apart from development on individual farms, Msengezi has also achieved impressive development at the collective level. Within the purchase land's boundaries, there are: nine public dams; seven full primary schools, each enrolling some 200 pupils; a study group preparing lower secondary level pupils for public examinations; 150 kilometres of internal dirt roads, to which every farm has direct access; five public diptanks; the new pub, with cocktail bar as well as 'Chibuku' hall; the clinic, which has a delivery room and six maternity beds as well as outpatients' treatment rooms; the Council complex, comprising Farmers' Hall and Council offices; and a postal agency at Dombwe township. All of these services and facilities have been provided by the local Council, which has also had some say in approving private projects, including some two dozen general stores, six butcheries, five completed churches and a sixth planned, and the daily bus services to Hartley and Salisbury. Future development projects already discussed by Council include two more pubs; recreational facilities for young adults; and possibly an academic secondary school, which has been desired for many years. Sites for light industrial enterprises in Dombwe township are being surveyed at the time of writing, although they will not be available for allocation for some years yet. A supermarket, which would have brought electricity to Dombwe, has encountered considerable opposition from local traders who fear that large-scale competition will drive them out of business: the Council has, therefore, delayed its final approval for this project.

Clearly, then, the Council plays an extremely important role in regulating development at the collective level. In this chapter, therefore, I consider briefly the historical development of this Council, before examining its structure and composition, followed by two case studies of specific projects showing the influence of internal politics on Council decision-making. Finally, I discuss the Council's continuing problems of administration, relating these problems to future development in Msengezi.

In Bailey's (1965) terms, the Msengezi Council is an arena council in a functioning democracy, a replica of British local government in which duly elected representatives of the community confront one another. In some ways, however, it is also an elite council, since the political community of landholders is itself a relatively small proportion of the

total adult population. Because participation in Council is restricted to landholders, of whom only four are women, women have not yet penetrated the ultimate decision-making authority as they have done in other organisations: the Council remains a male sphere. Some of the Council committees, particularly the Finance Committee, are, of course, even closer to the elite council model than is the Council itself.

In other respects, this local Council is somewhat unusual in Africa, judging from the published material on this subject (cf. Kuper, 1970; Richards and Kuper, 1971). It is unusual primarily because of its totally modern structure and procedures, but also, in Rhodesia, because it is, in effect, largely independent of the control of the Ministry for Internal Affairs. Whereas other purchase land societies have opposed the establishment of councils under the Rhodesian Front government's policy of community development, Msengezi people boast that 'it is our council, not the government's'. This relative independence is maintained largely by the 'educated' councillors, who are not afraid to disagree openly with the white district officer in circumstances where 'uneducated' men are apprehensive of clashing with authority. The Msengezi Council is not simply a foreign cultural imposition by an alien colonial government: in the modern society which I have discussed in previous chapters, it is perhaps the most appropriate form of local government and one which has functioned effectively for a considerable number of years.

#### A Brief Historical Review of Msengezi and Kutama Council<sup>1</sup>

The Council came into existence in 1944 as a result of the early settlers' demands for services and facilities, particularly schools, roads and a clinic. These demands were made formally, in writing, to the district commissioner's office as early as 1938,<sup>2</sup> although the Council was proclaimed by the Governor and gazetted only in 1944, under the provisions of the Native Councils Act of 1937.<sup>3</sup> At first there were only ten councillors, but in 1954, when Msengezi was fully occupied, this number was increased to twelve and a ward system was introduced to ensure representation of all areas within the purchase land. Later still, in 1959, the ward boundaries were redrawn and the number of councillors was increased to fifteen. Under this new system, which is still in operation, Kutama has a single representative, while each of the seven Msengezi wards - Msengezi, Maritangwe, Mawanda, Dombwe, Waze, Chiriningo and Mkwasha - has two councillors, representing approximately forty-seven landholders in each ward (see map 3).



From 1944 to 1964, the district commissioner was chairman, ex officio, of the Council. In 1961, however, at the suggestion of the Msengezi councillors themselves, this situation was reviewed and in November of that year, the first African vice-chairman of Council was elected by his fellow-councillors. In 1964, the first African chairman was elected and the district commissioner became ex officio President of the Council, although it is his subordinate, the district officer, who, in the Hartley district at least, liaises with the Council and attends all meetings. The presidential post is purely an advisory one, forming the link between central and local government. Power lies with the Council chairman and, increasingly, with the chairmen of the various standing committees.

In the early years, the Council functioned as a single unit, although two committees, for Schools and Roads, were established at the very first Council meeting. However, neither committee appears to have been very successful, the Schools Committee being ineffective because the individual schools were controlled by their respective Parents' Associations, which enabled development projects to be undertaken through 'self-help' schemes, supplemented by government grants, since the Council itself had very little money for education.<sup>4</sup> These early committees appear to have faded into obscurity very quickly. Only in 1958 did the Council begin effectively to delegate some of its authority to standing committees, forming a new Schools Committee and an Agricultural Committee, the forerunner of today's Intensive Conservation Area committees. In 1963, the Schools Committee became the Education Committee and later that year the Public Works Committee was formed. In 1964 the Finance Committee was approved and the following year the Health Committee came into existence. In addition, temporary sub-committees are created as necessary for specific purposes, by Council and by the various standing committees.

This proliferation of the local bureaucracy and delegation of authority occurred in response to the Council's increasing financial responsibilities. In 1944-45, the Council controlled a budget of £275 (Rh\$550), which included nearly £140 in government grants. By 1973-74, this figure had increased to approximately Rh\$90 000: a 164-fold increase in thirty years. Even today, however, government grants are responsible for more than half of the budget.<sup>5</sup> But the Council is now also a business organisation, operating liquor outlets and diptanks at varying rates of profit and subsidy, as well as providing health facilities and schools which are used by people living on adjoining European-owned farms and in Zwimba TTL, in addition to Msengezi people themselves. The

per capita budget is approximately Rh\$16 per annum, most of which is absorbed in education. With the inevitable rises in rates and school fees in the coming years, this figure will undoubtedly increase still further, but is most unlikely to reach the Internal Affairs general target of Rh\$40 per annum by 1975.<sup>6</sup>

Clearly, the council handles heavy financial responsibilities, both in respect of policy and of administration. In the following sections, I examine, inter alia, manifestations of concern for finances among councillors, in their attempts to institute effective controls on public expenditure by means of policy decisions. Before considering internal politics and the policy-making process, however, I introduce the main characters within the Council itself.

#### Council Composition

The Council itself, as distinct from its administration, is composed of fifteen elected councillors, each of whom serves for three years before retiring in rotation. Each councillor serves on one or more standing committees, of which there are four: finance, education, health and public works. In addition, temporary sub-committees are constituted as necessary.

Within the Council, two broad divisions may be identified, which are referred to by the councillors themselves as 'educated' and 'uneducated'. In fact, these ethno-classifications have little to do with education per se, being more concerned with degrees of familiarity with modern, bureaucratic procedures and 'European' behaviour: in other words, with the ability to use modern idioms of behaviour in fields other than accumulation. The 'educated' councillors form an identifiable group which, on occasion, may split into competing factions over issues of leadership. Generally in Msengezi, the 'educated' group has wielded power in Council: only during the two-year period between 1972 and 1974 did effective control pass to the 'uneducated' as a result of competing leadership ambitions among the 'educated' councillors. In the following sections, I examine the manner in which this change occurred. As background information, however, I first provide a numerical synopsis of these changes, in table 13.1.

Table 13.1 The changing composition of Council, 1972-75

year	number of councillors changed	total number of councillors		
		educated	uneducated	unclassified
1972-3	0	6	7	2
1973-4	3	6	7	2
1974-5	1	6	6	3
1975-6	3	6	6	3

What table 13.1 does not reveal, in the apparently even division between educated and uneducated, is a growing degree of support for the educated group, led by Mr. Sifelani (cf. chapter nine), from an increasing number of successful accumulators using the traditional idiom: in the 1972-3 Council, only two councillors were overt polygynists, while a third did his best to conceal his marital status, whereas by 1975, five of the 'uneducated' or unclassified councillors were polygynists, all of whom personally agreed with the direction in which Mr. Sifelani was leading Council. In addition, in the 1975 elections, the two 'educated' councillors who had successfully unseated Mr. Sifelani in 1972, were not returned to Council by the wards they had represented. These broad categories, then, conceal important changes in Council personnel. Before examining these changes and the issues which arose in the course of the transfer of power back to 'educated' leadership, in 1974, I summarise certain salient characteristics of the most important actors: (see table 13.2).

#### Intra-Council Politics: The Struggle for Leadership

During the fieldwork period, there were three key figures each attempting to gain overall control of Council: Sifelani, Gondo and Nzou. All belonged to the elite stratum of 'very rich farmers'; all had external sources of funds; all were 'educated'. Sifelani and Gondo were Zezuru by tribe, while Nzou was Ndebele, a fact to which he attributed his lack of political support. Gondo and Sifelani were distantly related, through matrilineal and affinal links, but regarded one another somewhat askance, for personal and political reasons. Nzou and Gondo, in contrast, regarded one another as quite close friends. Nzou and Sifelani were both long-established residents of Msengezi, having bought their farms in 1949 and 1939 respectively, whereas Gondo was a newcomer, having arrived in Msengezi in 1965.

Leadership struggles in Council go back to 1961, when Nzou was elected the first African vice-chairman. However, a few months later he was involved in a serious motor accident and spent some nine months in hospital, recovering from extensive injuries and burns. Although he remained vice-chairman in name, in practice Nzou was unable to function in this capacity, partly because he was still convalescent and partly because the national political atmosphere was by then (late 1962) extremely tense. In Msengezi itself, the Farmers' Association was being used by the more militant nationalists as a vehicle to gain control over the area and had begun to challenge the Council for overall leadership and representation of the purchase land. At the time, Sifelani was chairman of the Farmers'



Table 13.2 Leading figures in the struggle to control Council, 1972-74

identity (pseudonym)	age	educational level	employment background	ethno- classification	socio-economic category	Council committees	comments
Sifelani	60s	unfinished university	headmaster, schools manager, businessman	educated, very rich farmer	A	finance (chairman), education	Council chairman since 1964; see also chapter nine
Takawira	60s	std. 3	unskilled migrant	uneducated, poor farmer	C	health, plus all <u>ex</u> officio 1972-74	Council chairman 1972-74; see also chapter nine
Gondo	40s	std.7 with building	builder, trade union organiser, businessman	educated, very rich farmer	A	finance (ex- chairman), public works	not returned to Council in 1975
Nzou	50s	std. 7 with teaching	headmaster, secretary/ administrator	educated, very rich farmer	A	education (chairman), finance	first African vice-chairman of Council, 1961-64; not returned to Council in 1975
Makunda	50s	std. 5	police sergeant	educated	B	finance, health	younger half- brother to Sifelani
Zhaka	60s	std. 5	police constable	uneducated	C	education, finance, public works (chairman)	polygynist; vice-chairman of Council from 1973 onwards

Association, but he himself disagreed with his fellow committee members on the relationship of this association to the Council: consequently, in his own words, 'they knocked me off - I didn't resign. Oh no!' This disagreement, his deposition from the chairmanship, and his moderate political stance in general combined to make Sifelani decide to stand for the Council. He was elected to Council in 1963 and became the first African chairman in 1964, defeating the then fully recovered Nzou for this position. For the next eight years, Sifelani proceeded to run the Council virtually single-handedly, guiding development along the channels he thought best for the society as a whole. By 1966, he had managed to relegate the threat to the Council from the Farmers' Association to insignificance, by associating the Council ostentatiously with development at the collective level: in 1963, the Farmers' Hall and Council complex was built; in 1964, the Council opened the first clinic in Msengezi. In 1965, however, the African Farmers' Union succeeded in its attempts to have government abolish the crop levies which had been largely responsible for these developments, thus slowing development at the collective level. This abolition, while welcomed by farmers, later rebounded on the Farmers' Association - which had claimed responsibility - when, two years later, new levies were introduced and paid directly to the African Farmers' Union. (It is the use to which this levy money has been put in the past which has caused the split in the AFU in the last year.) Sifelani and others opposed to the stance of the militants in the Farmers' Association, have used the issue of the levy money as a weapon to discredit their rivals and have been largely successful, possibly because the Farmers' Association has been so busy opposing moves within the AFU that it had very little opportunity to counter local threats from Council. During Sifelani's first eight years as Council chairman, then, he built the Council into the undisputed authority in Msengezi.

In 1964, however, Gondo bought his farm, retiring in 1965 to the rural obscurity of Msengezi while people forgot about his role in the trade union movement in the early 1960s. He is alleged to have misappropriated large sums of money from union funds during his period as treasurer and to have been jailed for this reason; but himself claims to have been detained for political reasons. For four years, Gondo concentrated on farming and on building up his network of friends and political allies in Msengezi. Then, in 1969, he judged that the time was ripe to reactivate his political ambitions and he was elected to Council by a very narrow margin. On realising that his reputation precluded him from the Council chairmanship, he considered the possibilities of exercising effective power through an

easily-manipulable 'front man'. His chance to do this came late in 1971 and 1972, when Sifelani's health was poor: for nearly a year he suffered from an undiagnosed back complaint and from the effects of recurrent malaria. As a first move, Gondo tried to enlist the help of the Council secretary, Sifelani's right-hand man, to smear Sifelani's reputation: when this man failed to respond to Gondo's overtures, Gondo threatened his family with unspecified reprisals and, after some weeks of living on his nerves, the secretary finally resigned and left Msengezi. Gondo then assumed a supervisory role around the Council offices while the new secretary was inducted into his job, letting the new man know that what had happened to his predecessor could well happen to him. As the annual elections to Council drew near, Gondo supported 'uneducated' champions of the common man. He consulted the majority of his fellow-councillors, suggesting that the Council should have a Zezuru chairman,<sup>7</sup> 'since we are the owners of the land', who should be an 'uneducated' man who would not brush aside the views of his Council colleagues as though they were backward children (a reference to Sifelani's previous role as headmaster). He talked to members of the political community, bought their cattle for his butchery (at inflated prices, it is alleged), gave them free lifts in his car, and generally built up his own political credit.

Through roundabout channels, Gondo eventually approached Takawira to stand for the Council chairmanship against Sifelani. Takawira was a newcomer to Council, having been elected in August 1971: he was the only inexperienced councillor, who was almost totally ignorant of the role of the chairman. None of the other, experienced representatives, according to Gondo's sources of information, were prepared to stand for the chairmanship and enmesh themselves in close relationships with the Ministry for Internal Affairs. Takawira was the man Gondo needed, since he would obviously require the guidance of someone who was familiar with bureaucratic procedure and modern idioms of behaviour. His vanity stimulated, Takawira agreed to stand for the chairmanship. Nevertheless, despite Gondo's prior machinations, Takawira's eventual election was finally a matter of chance, for Gondo's extensive politicking had mustered only six votes for his candidacy, while nine councillors stood opposed to him. Even splitting the opposition vote, which Gondo had shrewdly done by himself proposing the then vice-chairman, left an even count of six in favour of Takawira and six supporting Sifelani. The matter was decided by the district officer flipping a coin, in circumstances where strict bureaucratic procedure would have required a second vote between the two leading candidates. Takawira thus became Council chairman; and Gondo was later elected, by a



minimum quorum, to the position of Finance Committee chairman, a post also held previously by Sifelani. As a result, then, of internal competition for leadership within the 'educated' group, leadership of Council passed to the 'uneducated' section in 1972.

Having been elected, as he thought, on the platform of reversing the trend towards 'Europeanisation' of the Council, Takawira proceeded to insist on 'African custom' there, reprimanding councillors who used English instead of Shona and asserting that they should listen to him as mambo weCouncil ('the chief of Council'). He thus further alienated the 'educated' councillors, together with those who were not Zezuru themselves, and those who had bought their farms in order to escape tribal patterns of authority and behaviour. His authority waned noticeably when, some months after his election to the chairmanship, Gondo began to boast openly of having engineered the election of such an 'uneducated' man in order to wield power through him. Takawira and Gondo quarrelled when these boasts reached Takawira's ears, and they began to oppose one another publicly: Gondo found that Takawira refused to act as a 'front' for his own ambitions, and thus threatened to withdraw his support for Takawira, who began to politick on his own account, attending public functions as Council chairman and trying to gain the support of Nzou. Nevertheless, these two men patched up their differences in order that Takawira would be re-elected chairman in 1973, although Gondo stood to gain very little from this course of action. Possibly he simply wished to prevent Sifelani from regaining control of the Council for as long as possible, using any means, although in retrospect he claimed to have wanted to show people the dire consequences of uneducated leadership and to moderate Sifelani's authoritarian control.

Although Sifelani himself, who by 1973 had fully recovered from his illness, never moved against Gondo's attack on his position and interests, those councillors who were perturbed that the loss of his leadership would jeopardise the Council's standing in Msengezi and vis-à-vis Internal Affairs began to organise a counter-campaign on his behalf. They persuaded Makunda, Sifelani's younger half-brother and himself a newcomer to Msengezi, to stand for Council and then elected him to the Finance Committee. On behalf of his brother's interests, Makunda has proved to be possibly the most accomplished politician in Msengezi, despite his previous lack of experience. His first move was to ensure that, in 1973, Sifelani was once more elected to the chairmanship of the Finance Committee, in place of Gondo, thus providing Sifelani with a powerful base from which to rebuild his reputation as a responsible leader. Sifelani was elected unanimously, gaining the support of those who had voted for Takawira as

Council chairman, but who realised that he was incapable of managing Council finances and who were deeply mistrustful of Gondo's motives in 'putting his fingers in our money': Gondo had been chairman of the Finance Committee during 1972-3.

Following Sifelani's return to leadership of the Finance Committee, the balance of political power swung dramatically in his favour, assisted by Takawira's mistakes and the public split between Takawira and Gondo. Takawira spent Council money without Finance Committee authorisation, and the new district officer threatened to put the Council under financial management by Internal Affairs, because of its precarious financial position. Most of the blame for this situation was attributed to Takawira, who had assumed the role of autocratic chief and was most annoyed when his fellow-councillors called on him to explain exactly what he thought he had been doing in bypassing the Finance Committee, 'which is there to guard our money and make sure that it is spent as we agree'.

From the beginning of 1974, in order to rectify the situation and avoid the disgrace of financial management, the Finance Committee began to meet monthly, enabling Sifelani and the other 'educated' members of this committee to be seen to be working extremely hard in the public interest. Sifelani himself assumed the role of full-time accountant at the Council offices, and his financial acumen is reflected in the fact that the Council ended the 1973-74 financial year with a surplus of Rh\$6 000, having faced bankruptcy only six months earlier. As a shrewd politician, however, Sifelani refused to allow the councillors to make of Takawira the example that they wished: most councillors wanted to make Takawira repay the Council nearly Rh\$1 400 which he had spent without authorisation, as secretaries had previously been made to pay for their errors. But, 'if the chairman agreed [to the expenditure], we must cover him', asserted Sifelani, knowing perfectly well that, if he did not take this line, he would be accused of vindictiveness by his political rivals; and that Takawira's mistakes would be leaked to the public anyway. Sifelani's approach prevailed, and Takawira's flailing reaction to his very weak position was to start rumours that the Finance Committee members were misappropriating Council money, because all of them drove their own, expensive cars. This move, Takawira's final mistake, led directly to Sifelani becoming Council chairman once again in 1974.

Firstly, everyone knew that members of the Finance Committee had bought their cars years previously, and that this rumour was a wild attempt to smear their reputations. Secondly, in drawing attention to the problem of financial misappropriation, the rumours reactivated public opinion

against Gondo and Nzou, who had supported Takawira. Gondo, jailed for his part in the trade union debacle nearly ten years earlier, and Nzou, required to repay nearly Rh\$300 to the co-operative society only months previously, regarded these rumours as a malicious personal attack. Both, therefore, withdrew all support from Takawira. Gondo, in fact, decided that the only way in which he would be able to function effectively as a politician in Msengezi would be to support rather than oppose Sifelani and to side with the 'educated' group of which he was a member rather than attempt to split their effectiveness. Sifelani's position in Council was thus firmly re-established, although Nzou remained his main political rival for leadership. In the foreseeable future, then, it appears that Sifelani will continue to direct development in Msengezi, following the two-year period of stagnation of development projects during 1972-74. Indeed, in the 1975 elections to Council, neither Gondo nor Nzou were returned by the wards they had represented: the polygynist Svondo (cf. chapter nine) replaced Nzou, while an ex-teacher took Gondo's seat. Both of these men are Sifelani supporters.

This broad sweep of change in local politics was composed of a number of separate and distinct issues, of course, and these individual battles were responsible for altering the course of the 'war' between 'educated' and 'uneducated'. I cannot hope to examine all of them here, but two examples of the ways in which such specific issues were used by various parties to influence the overall course of events may be cited.

#### Case 1: The Old Beer Garden Site

Early in 1971, while Sifelani was still firmly in control of Council, he proposed that a new pub should be built to replace the existing beer garden. Council approved and loan finance was negotiated with the two major breweries in Rhodesia. After some delays in drawing plans acceptable both to Council and to the district commissioner's office - which felt that Msengezi should not be seeking drinking facilities comparable to those in town - the new pub was opened for business just before Christmas 1973, although the formal opening was delayed until June 1974.

In mid-1972, when Sifelani was ill, Gondo raised in Council the future of the old beer garden site, which comprised two adjoining business stands in Dombwe township. The district officer told Council that the lease would revert to the Agricultural Land Settlement Board (ALSB) when Council vacated the site and would then be available for re-allocation. Gondo then applied to Council for approval of his application for these stands before it went to the ALSB. In Sifelani's absence, Council approved Gondo's



application. Later, after the 1972 elections had altered the balance of power in Council, Sifelani protested to Council about this approval, stating that Gondo had acted immorally in using his special knowledge, acquired as a councillor, to lay claim to these stands before it became public knowledge that they would be available for re-lease. However, Sifelani's appeal to the district officer for support for his viewpoint elicited the reaction of 'first come, first served' - leading him to the private conclusion that the district officer's own morals were dubious and that Gondo must somehow have 'squared' this white official in advance. Council, reflecting Gondo's position of strength at that time, noted Sifelani's objection but did not reverse its approval of Gondo's application.

For one year, the issue of the old beer garden site officially lapsed, although Sifelani discussed it privately with both supporters and opponents before the matter was re-opened publicly. This re-opening came in the Public Works Committee, chaired by Zhaka, a polygynist who has always supported Sifelani. With the concurrence of two councillors, one his fellow-member of the Vapostori sect and the other a member of the same church as Sifelani's cousin, Zhaka argued that Council should retain the use of the old beer garden site as a works yard, instead of keeping equipment and stores some four miles away at the present works yard. This argument was quashed by the district officer, who noted that the terms of the lease required Council to vacate the site as soon as it ceased to be used for the purpose originally approved. The matter again lapsed for six months.

Then, in October 1973, Gondo enquired formally of Council when the site would be vacated, having received approval of his application from the ALSB. This query was seized by Takawira as an opportunity to publicise his break with the man who had been responsible for his election and re-election as Council chairman: he berated Gondo for acting immorally and told him publicly that he should 'stay on his farm' and leave business to others - much to the amusement of Sifelani and his supporters. This action probably marked the point at which Gondo realised finally that he had backed a loser when expending his political credit on Takawira, for Gondo was already in trouble with his constituents. Led by a Vapostori polygynist, who was linked by religious ties to Zhaka, Sifelani's supporter, some of the Waze farmers had attempted to remove Gondo from Council only a few months earlier, when his period of office was only halfway through. Their persistent attempts to unseat him prematurely were unsuccessful, but Gondo was aware that his political credit was almost

totally depleted: to have his protégé turn on him in public was the final humiliation.

After this incident in Council, Gondo's dissident constituents moved against him from another angle: another polygynist applied for the lease on the old beer garden site as if he was unaware that Gondo had already been granted the lease. At the beginning of 1974, therefore, the issue was raised once more in Council, when this new application came up for consideration. Instead of turning down this application, various councillors chewed over the known facts: the district officer's stance on the issue; the ALSB approval of Gondo's application; the need for a Council yard in Dombwe; the possible reaction of the Dombwe business community; health regulations; whether or not the approval already granted by Council could be withdrawn. Eventually a compromise was suggested, by Makunda: that the site be separated into its constituent stands and Gondo and the new applicant be approved for one each. A vote was taken and most councillors approved this suggestion. The secretary was told to re-word the new application so that it read 'for one of the two stands' and to minute the Council decision.

At the following Council meeting, one month later, Makunda, supported by another councillor, queried the minutes, because these showed that Council had rejected the new application: councillors privately agreed that Gondo had probably bribed the secretary, although the secretary's own incompetence could also have explained this mistake. The debate was re-opened, with all of the points previously made being reiterated. The new district officer reminded the councillors that the new pub was already in use, the Council lease on the old site had expired, and that Council must vacate. Makunda, who disliked Gondo intensely, then switched to delaying tactics, noting that Council had not yet considered the question of compensation for the buildings it had erected on the old site. The valuation of these buildings was referred to the Finance Committee, which was empowered to negotiate with Gondo about price. The issue of the second application was allowed to fade completely.

In March 1974, Sifelani and the Finance Committee valued the site buildings at Rh\$250: Gondo rejected this valuation and offered Rh\$150. There the matter was allowed to rest for a further two months. Sifelani alleged privately, though not in public, that Gondo wanted the site for his sister's husband, the owner of a large bus company, who wished to establish a supermarket but feared that Council would reject any direct application. By May, the Council had still not vacated the site, nor had the Finance Committee replied to Gondo's offer of Rh\$150 for the buildings.

There were renewed objections to his application, since, as Sifelani noted in committee, 'we're laying ourselves open to accusations of being bought by Gondo'. Makunda then tried another delaying tactic, suggesting that councillors should go back to the people in a referendum and ascertain public feeling on the issue, but Sifelani quashed this suggestion, stating that the councillors could not avoid the responsibility entrusted to them: 'But the property is worth more than Rh\$200 and we have to satisfy our consciences as acting on behalf of the people'. Gondo claimed that he did not want the buildings at that price and had his bluff called by the councillor supporting Makunda, who promptly proposed that they be dismantled. Eventually a compromise was reached at Rh\$200, and Sifelani made Takawira, as Council chairman, take public responsibility for accepting this figure on behalf of Council, knowing that Takawira's position was already very weak and that any backlash from Council would catch the person who made the final decision: 'You've got to weigh it - all the rumours will rebound on you! Gondo abused his position as councillor and you connived at it. But a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush'. Gondo's offer of Rh\$200 was accepted. The secretary was told to draw up an agreement for signature after the meeting.

Then the district officer dropped two bombshells. Firstly, he reminded councillors that the Council was legally in a precarious position, because if an offer for compensation was not accepted in such cases, the new lessee was legally entitled to the buildings anyway if they were not dismantled. At this the councillors quickly re-affirmed their acceptance of the figure of Rh\$200 and negotiated payment by means of four equal monthly instalments. Secondly, the Council had in fact ceased to use the site, but had not legally vacated it, more than three months previously, without making arrangements regarding standing improvements: the new lessee was therefore entitled to these improvements without paying compensation. None of the councillors had realised that their delaying tactics might backfire on them. However, in an attempt to placate his critics, Gondo chose not to assert his legal rights in this matter but agreed to pay for the buildings, as a form of public atonement for using his knowledge gained in Council to lay claim to the stands before they were publicly advertised. In fact, of course, if Sifelani's allegation was correct that Gondo's brother-in-law was actually the purchaser, Gondo himself would not have paid the costs of his public atonement!

In this case, the accusation directed by Sifelani at Gondo of acting immorally in using his knowledge acquired as a councillor to negotiate a lease on the old beergarden stands, was at first unsuccessful. As Gondo



lost support in Council, however, other councillors sided with Sifelani on this issue. In the final analysis, though, all Sifelani could do was to ensure that Gondo paid heavily, in the form of cash compensation for the buildings on the site, for his behaviour. Legally, Gondo did not need to pay for these buildings, as the district officer pointed out, but he agreed to do so because there was organised opposition, among his constituents, to his lease on the site. In turn, Sifelani insisted on this payment because he did not wish himself or his supporters to be accused of complicity in Gondo's 'immoral' behaviour, particularly since he himself had initially drawn attention to the belief that councillors should not use their positions to advance their own interests in this manner. Since Sifelani's own power base, at that time, lay in the Finance Committee, he had to exonerate this committee from any suspicion of moral blameworthiness, if he wished to regain official control of Council as its chairman. This case, then, reflects the increasing support for Sifelani at the expense of Gondo: in the following case, one sees how the issue of moral blameworthiness may actually cause the political demise of a councillor.

#### Case 2: The Borehole Fiasco

At the beginning of April 1973, eight months after Takawira had become the new Council chairman, a European borehole contractor contacted the Council secretary about the possibility of sinking a borehole in Dombwe. At the time, Msengezi with the rest of the country was in the grip of one of the worst recorded droughts Rhodesia has experienced. The need for water was critical because the main dams were drying out rapidly, but also because the new pub was scheduled to open within a few months and would require its own water supply in order to comply with health regulations. The secretary, therefore, called an urgent Finance Committee meeting, under the chairmanship of Gondo, to consider the contractor's offer to sink a borehole which would yield a guaranteed minimum of 250 gallons per hour, for a deposit of Rh\$350 on a total outlay of between Rh\$675 and Rh\$1 095, depending on the pump chosen. This proposal was discussed briefly and the decision made, in principle, to borrow against Rh\$2 000 set aside for the construction of a weir in Dombwe. Nevertheless, Sifelani warned the committee members that the contractor had a bad reputation, was probably dishonest, and would require careful handling. He emphasised the need to commit every aspect of any agreement to writing in a legally binding document. He also reminded the committee of the

government water survey report on Dombwe done in 1968, which noted that the area was unsuitable for boreholes because it was situated on a granite shell protecting the subterranean water courses. Takawira opposed Sifelani on these issues, dismissing his reservations about the contractor and noting the Council's need for water in order to open the pub. A sub-committee of Takawira, Zhaka and Nzou was appointed to meet the contractor and discuss terms with him, and after the committee had concluded its business, Sifelani and Nzou went together to inspect the site marked by the contractor as suitable for drilling, Sifelani confiding to Nzou what he had heard from various sources about this particular contractor.

Some two weeks later, at the end of April, the sub-committee met the contractor and accepted his terms. The contractor claimed to have left his own contract forms at home, but agreed to complete and sign one of the Council's standard contracts, without, however, specifying any particular date by which he would commence drilling. Nzou's insistence on specifying a date was overridden by Takawira, who also intimated to the contractor that the Council would require two extra boreholes for schools threatened by closure because of lack of water, if the one at Dombwe was successful.

By mid-June, six weeks later, the drilling rig had still not arrived in Msengezi and, although Sifelani recommended cutting their losses then, the secretary was instructed to threaten the contractor with breach of promise if he did not start drilling shortly. Within two weeks the rig arrived. Three weeks later, having broken a number of cores on the granite shell, the contractor tried his alternative site, equally unsuccessfully. Sifelani then wished to reclaim the Council deposit, paid when the rig was moved into Dombwe, but although Nzou supported him, Takawira as Council chairman and Gondo as chairman of the Finance Committee decided that the deposit should be transferred to a drilling attempt at one of the schools. Accordingly, Takawira and the secretary signed a second contract with the borehole sinker. The Mkwasha project was finally completed in November, 1973, after Sifelani, as the new chairman of the Finance Committee, had had a very heated argument with the contractor about shoddy work and told him that the outstanding balance would not be paid until the work was completed to the entire satisfaction of the Council.

When the work at Mkwasha was finished, Takawira and the secretary both signed the cheque for the outstanding balance. This cheque, however, was made out for Rh\$188 more than the contract specified. Later they both argued that this additional sum had been the deposit for a well at

Maritangwe, the second school threatened by closure, but they did not sign any contract for such a project. Nor did they inform the Finance Committee, now under Sifelani's chairmanship, of the overpayment or of this new project at Maritangwe, even though Council had earlier agreed that all new projects were to have the approval of the Finance Committee before any work was started. It was at this juncture that the Finance Committee also discovered, by chance, that Takawira had signed another contract, this time for building at one of the schools, without prior authorisation: this contract was worth Rh\$1 200 altogether. A few weeks after these discoveries, the district officer threatened the Council with financial management by Internal Affairs.

Apart from Takawira's blatant disregard of the proper channels for authorising projects, which councillors deplored irrespective of their political alignments, two other factors were important in the process that led to his downfall. Firstly, both he and the secretary gave inadequate and conflicting explanations of where the Rh\$188 had gone in the overpayment to the borehole contractor, leading councillors to infer that there had in fact been a deliberate attempt to hide the payment from Council funds of a deposit for a well on Takawira's undercapitalised farm. In other words, councillors presumed that he had been guilty of misappropriating public funds to develop his own farm, and demanded that he be made to repay this money, as previous secretaries had been made to pay for missing funds for which they could not account. 'If I make a mistake, I pay and no questions. Same applies to him', argued Takawira's next-door neighbour who had voted for Takawira as Council chairman: such demands reflected the councillors' belief that Takawira had used Council money for illicit purposes. Secondly, the building contract Takawira had signed without the knowledge of the Finance Committee allowed for an extremely inflated price: the builder was a close relative of his wife. Again, councillors had no alternative but to presume 'immoral behaviour' which was considerably more serious than Gondo's had been. But where Sifelani had attacked Gondo directly, nobody accused Takawira in public of misappropriating Council funds. The presumption was always implicit, reflected in allusory language which left no doubt of the councillors' views, but which did not bring them into open conflict with Takawira. Takawira himself never challenged these remarks: he simply remained silent, even when Sifelani offered him some form of protection from public exposure. Since he had frequently alleged corruption on the part of councillors such as Sifelani, with absolutely no evidence to substantiate his allegations, it is clear that Takawira considered misappropriation of



public funds to be inevitable and one presumes that he did not wish to lose out on what he considered to be his turn while he had the chance. My own impression was that Takawira never accepted that his fellow-councillors were, in all material respects, exceptionally honest men working within the public service ethic, and simply assumed that not being exposed in fraudulent practices would be enough to satisfy their expectations.

Following the discrediting of Takawira, the Council attempted, unsuccessfully, to claim back its money from the borehole contractor, but he applied for a bankruptcy discharge in June 1974. Because no contract for the Maritangwe project had been signed, Sifelani and the Finance Committee decided against trying to recover the money through lawsuit, and instead made a public example of the secretary who had succumbed to Takawira's pressure to keep the whole affair from the Council's knowledge: Takawira had, some six months earlier, persuaded Council to fire the previous secretary. The secretary was required to repay the R\$188 and, shortly thereafter, left the Council voluntarily. The councillors' censure of Takawira was expressed indirectly in a proposal by a Vapostori polygynist, that the chairman of Council should no longer be co-signatory with the secretary for Council cheques, but that the Finance Committee chairman should assume this responsibility. Although this proposal received enthusiastic support from most councillors, it was never put to the vote and, when Sifelani became Council chairman once more in 1974, the matter was allowed to drop. For some months, however, 'our Watergate' was the subject of interested comment, from councillors and farmers alike, and comparisons between Takawira and ex-President Nixon were frequent.

It was Takawira's behaviour, together with Sifelani's refusal to expose him to public censure, which resulted in Sifelani's return to the overall control of Council, having previously established himself, in the chairmanship of the Finance Committee, as the effective controller of Council policy. In one sense, then, the change in leadership in 1974 was a form of triumph of 'progressive' over 'conservative' interests, of the capable and successful over unsuccessful incompetents. As one farmer said: 'Better the educated devil you suspect of fiddling the books because you don't know exactly what he is doing, than the uneducated fool who will mess everything'. This particular farmer was, of course, 'educated' and a Sifelani supporter! However, the role of the 'uneducated' polygynists belonging to the Vapostori sect, themselves successful accumulators in the traditional idiom, should also be noted in the events causing this change: at each stage, they supported the Sifelani group and were, on occasion, instrumental in advancing his cause.

Between 1972 and 1974, then, people in Msengezi saw, for the first time, the practical consequences of uneducated leadership: stagnation in development projects; financial instability; mishandling of public funds; and a decline in the prestige of their Council. This experience is likely to remain in people's minds for some time and I would predict that power will not be allowed to pass into 'uneducated' hands again, at least for some considerable time. Indeed, the replacement of Gondo and Nzou as councillors in 1975, perhaps expressed the people's censure of their role in the 1972-74 débâcle in Council, at least in part. Nevertheless, leadership within the policy-making arm of Council is by no means the only factor which affects Council's ability to function adequately. At least as important is the administration, which is supposed to translate Council's policy decisions into practice.

#### Council Administration

In all, the Msengezi and Kutama Council employed some eighty people at the time of fieldwork, of whom forty-four were teachers who fell, indirectly, under the Division of African Education in the Ministry of Education. Two others were teachers employed solely by Council to guide the students studying for public examinations at the lower secondary level. None of the teachers is part of the Council administration. The remainder of the employees, however, were all concerned with administering Council policy. In order of their authority, these employees included: the secretary; the treasurer; the Council clerk, who ran the postal agency and book store; the salaried staff - nurses, bar managers, drivers; and the unskilled workers - road labourers, waitresses, messengers, caretakers, cleaners and beergarden 'police'.

The secretary, treasurer and clerk form the core of the Council administration and carry the greatest responsibility: the secretary is in overall control. These three officials are trained at the Domboshawa centre and have at least four years of secondary education. They are also generally young men, much younger than the councillors who employ them and the people who work under them: in itself their youth may cause problems, which are reflected in their apparent inability to prevent petty theft among Council employees handling cash in the course of their duties. Such theft is so rife in Msengezi that the secretary now has standing orders to suspend any employee who is Rh\$10 short in any month and to report to the Finance Committee on the results of his investigations. The guilty person is then required to sign an admission of debt to the Council and the money is deducted from his or her monthly pay. When the debt has been repaid,

the employee is fired. However, this procedure requires stringent checking by the secretary and treasurer, to make sure that no further money is stolen, and frequently the system breaks down because these checks are not made properly. In such cases, the councillors hold the secretary ultimately responsible and may even demand that he repay the money himself, as happened when the secretary conspired with Takawira to keep certain expenditure from the councillors' knowledge.

The reason why Council makes these demands on their administrators arises from the rewards that administrative responsibilities earn. Both secretary and treasurer in Msengezi were paid on the government-approved scale, which started at Rh\$85 per month, rising by Rh\$5 increments to Rh\$115 per month. The Council also paid workmen's compensation insurance, contributed to the administrators' pension fund and provided free medical attention at the clinic. Secretary and treasurer were each provided with modern, three-bedroomed houses belonging to the Council, at a nominal monthly rental of Rh\$2. In contrast, councillors themselves received a Rh\$2 sitting allowance for each Council or committee meeting attended, together with morning tea and lunch. Committee chairmen received an additional subsistence allowance of Rh\$0,60 (sixty cents) a day once a month, to check that their committee projects were proceeding as planned. The average net farm income in Msengezi, reduced to a monthly figure for comparative purposes, was roughly Rh\$35. Given their pay scales relative to income levels in Msengezi, then, councillors expect that their administrative staff will function effectively: if they do not, they receive little sympathy from their employers.

Yet administrative staff are basically ill-equipped to shoulder the responsibilities expected of them. Their training course lasts for one year only, which is hardly an adequate period for people expected to assume responsibility for administering business enterprises with an annual turnover of Rh\$100 000 or more: no private firm would countenance such a situation, yet local government in African areas has no option. Furthermore, these young men have very little experience in administration or personnel work: they gain this experience at the expense of their employing Councils. Finally, they are expected to operate on their own: apart from a quarterly audit check, Council administrators receive very little supervision from the district commissioner's office, their nominal controllers. They are expected to control Council affairs by themselves and to ask for assistance only when they cannot manage. This particular expectation spells inevitable trouble in an area such as Msengezi, where some of the councillors themselves have considerable experience in administration and can check on their employees, for the administrators



resent such checks.

The failure of effective administration in African councils at present is seen in the high rate of turnover among administrative staff. In Msengezi, for example, a local man served as secretary from 1949 to 1964; from 1964 to 1971, an ex-teacher ran Council affairs very efficiently, before leaving the area because of Gondo's threats to his family; and since 1971, the Council has employed three secretaries and two treasurers. The first secretary was fired partly because he was slow and somewhat incompetent, but mainly because Takawira, as Council chairman, took an active dislike to him, possibly because he refused to co-operate with Takawira in defrauding the Council, possibly because he regarded Takawira as an uneducated man who could not be expected to understand Council affairs. The second secretary, who was treasurer before the first secretary was dismissed, left voluntarily after bearing the brunt of the blame - which should have devolved upon Takawira - for the overpayment of Rh\$188 to the borehole contractor. The third secretary, who completed his course at Domboshawa in 1974, is presently rumoured to have defrauded the Council of some Rh\$500 and to be paying this sum back: I heard this rumour only in October 1975 and could not verify it.

Clearly, then, the administrators are not solely to blame for financial and administrative problems in Msengezi: Takawira himself, at least during the period 1972-74, must share a considerable portion of the blame for Council problems. The councillors, too, should perhaps have insisted that Takawira shoulder the blame publicly, rather than penalising the secretary in the way they did. Problems of administration, while conceptually and to some extent in practice distinct from problems of policy, cannot be divorced completely from the ongoing process of defining policy. The Council is faced with the dual problem of controlling, if not eliminating, the possibilities for financial misappropriation among councillors and among employees. In this process of instituting checking systems on an impersonal basis, councillors have to remember that they are representatives of the public, to whom they are answerable. In order to continue in office and to continue the process of bureaucratisation, they cannot move so fast that they alienate those who elected them. Besides which they have to live with their neighbours. Controlling potential misuse of public moneys among themselves is, therefore, more difficult than blaming an employee and firing him. For this reason, employees may be used as convenient scapegoats and will probably continue to be used thus until the internal controls are functioning properly. An early end to administrative problems, therefore, does not appear likely in councils

such as the one in Msengezi. Nevertheless, the situation could be improved through better training and more rigorous controls among administrative staff.

It is axiomatic, of course, from the development viewpoint, that the existing situation should be improved. At present, valuable time is being expended on the establishment of controls, the discussion of individual cases of peculation, and condemnation of all administrative staff as untrustworthy. Money is being wasted in the legal recovery of debts. The situation is rapidly deteriorating into one in which neither councillors nor administrators trust the other side: councillors regard administrators as incompetent and untrustworthy young fools, while themselves gaining a reputation among their staff for being unreasonable, unsympathetic and autocratic. Unless these attitudes change, relationships between policy-makers and administrators will become more and more difficult and unpleasant, especially as the budget grows and more complex development projects are envisaged. In the words of one development economist, 'As ye grow, so shall ye weep'.<sup>8</sup>

Under the Rhodesian government's policy of community development, which includes the transfer of local government to African control, these problems must be resolved by the people themselves: central government, fearing accusations of paternalism, has abdicated from this field. The data contained in this chapter indicate that Msengezi councillors are aware both of the problems and of their own responsibilities to solve them. They have already gone some way towards solutions, in the impersonal checks they have instituted and in the removal from power of those whose personal ambitions might jeopardise collective development. As problems have arisen, they have been resolved and the precedent remembered for future use. There is thus reason to believe that future problems will be handled in the same rational, collected, bureaucratic manner and that Msengezi's development problems will not prove insurmountable.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Footnotes

1. Kutama is a small purchase land, comprising only six farms, which lies some six miles to the east of Msengezi. The Council administers both areas, hence its name.
2. P. Mtatabikwa, Msengezi, to Native Commissioner, Hartley, 22.2.1938 and 21.6.1938, in file S 1033/4, Rhodesia National Archives, Salisbury.
3. Proclamation no. 3 of 1944, Southern Rhodesia Government Gazette, 18.2.1944.

4. The combination of government grants and self-help schemes proved so unsatisfactory to Council that, in 1961, it requested the Native Education Department to take over all seven schools. This request was refused, leaving Council no option but to increase the rates substantially in order to operate the schools in line with government requirements. Council therefore centralised control of educational facilities in Msengezi, removing the schools from the control of the individual Parents' Associations. In 1961, the rates were doubled from 10/- to £1 and, in 1964, they were further increased to £5 per land-holder. Given the level of services provided today, the unchanged rate of Rh\$10 is uneconomic and pressures on Council to increase rates once again are substantial, particularly in the light of increased salaries for administrative and teaching staff.
5. Government grants cover 95 per cent of teachers' salaries, 60 per cent of the salaries of approved administrative staff and 50 per cent of expenditure on roads.
6. This figure is the overall, projected estimate of local government per capita spending for all African rural councils in Rhodesia, in tribal areas as well as purchase lands. Its validity is dubious, however, given the lack of accurate demographic data on tribal areas; and it includes expenditure by the African Development Fund in tribal areas. The Msengezi budget for 1975-6 is approximately Rh\$100 000: Rh\$18 per capita.
7. Even though Sifelani regards himself as Zezuru, he admits that his paternal grandfather was Rozwi by tribe. However, he is widely thought to be of Ndebele or Shangane origin by people in Msengezi.
8. From the cover of Mishan (1969).



CHAPTER FOURTEENCONCLUSIONS

As I have shown in previous chapters, development in Msengezi, at both individual and collective levels, is impressive. Though not unprecedented in Africa (cf. Hill, 1962; Richards *et al.*, 1973), this development is remarkable in its extent. In this thesis, therefore, I have attempted systematically to document the achievements of Msengezi farmers, the reasons for these achievements, and their consequences. I have examined in some detail the sociological factors which have affected the development process, individually and collectively, in Msengezi itself; as well as those historical, political, administrative and economic factors which have impinged on Msengezi from the wider Rhodesian society. In short, I have attempted a comprehensive study of the development process in this particular area, focussing mainly on sociological factors, both to explain the reasons for development and to explain the particular forms which this development has taken.

Particularly at the collective or societal level, Msengezi has proceeded much further along the development continuum than most other rural societies in Africa, including most other Rhodesian purchase lands. The reasons for this greater degree of success include: the quality of leadership in Msengezi; the general compliance with rather than rejection of government attempts to assist development; and the formation of an impersonal, bureaucratic system, which is designed to maintain future development irrespective of the particular individuals who, at different times, will direct this process.

At the level of individual farm development, however, success in agricultural production in Msengezi has been somewhat less spectacular. Certain farmers have indeed been very successful, but many more have achieved relatively little: there is a wide range of farming success in this area. For example, whereas non-resident businessmen who own farms may be dedicated purely to achieving the greatest returns to capital investment, resident capitalists (such as Sifelani, cf. chapter nine) may deliberately restrict their visible success for political reasons. Likewise, many farmers have invested in their children's education, from which returns are extremely variable, rather than developing their farms into more productive assets. Some farmers are caught in the trap of inadequate labour supplies and lack of financial resources and cannot, at this stage, accumulate successfully. Such factors as local politics,

place of permanent residence, lack of knowledge, commitment to education and particular stages in the family developmental cycle may all affect the process of accumulation through agricultural production. Social factors are thus very important in the development process, even in freehold areas, and may constitute temporary hindrances to increased production. There are, of course, other important, general constraints on production: the size of Msengezi farms, which is particularly important among the more successful producers; a generalised lack of adequate working capital; generally low levels of education; and the increasing conflict of interest between the more and the less successful producers. Nevertheless, despite these constraints, the general level of production has risen noticeably during the past ten years, as loan finance facilities have become more widely available.

Perhaps the most important influence on farm development, however, has been the idiom of accumulation selected by individual farmers. The use of the traditional idiom of accumulation, despite its proportionately greater success in farm capitalisation, appears to be decreasing in the face of the greater popularity and prestige of the modern idiom. In one way, this decrease should be encouraged, because it does reduce dependency ratios. However, the modern idiom of accumulation is much more difficult to use successfully, especially if the farmer has a low educational level and no access to external funds.

These modern and traditional idioms of accumulation must be seen in perspective. They are not reflections of 'modern' or of 'traditional' spheres or institutions in Msengezi: instead, they are specific behavioural constructs for the purposes of accumulating material wealth, one modelled on the behaviour of white Rhodesians, particularly farmers, and the other on the strategy of accumulation resembling that which was common to most African societies in the past. As I have shown in detail in chapter eight, there are important differences in the sociological profiles of men using each of these idioms, the traditional idiom being selected by some of those farmers who have little familiarity with the 'European' sector of the Rhodesian economy.

Although there might appear to be a fundamental difference between men using each of these idioms, the most basic distinction, in Msengezi, is actually between successful and unsuccessful accumulators, not between apparently 'traditional' and apparently 'modern' farmers. In Msengezi, the converging economic interests of the successful are more important than their cultural differences, at least as far as the development process is concerned. Irrespective of their use of modern or

traditional idioms in their own farming enterprises, the successful accumulators support the policy of guiding collective development along modern, bureaucratic lines, stressing the need for competition, progress and educated leadership in order that development may continue.

Clearly, then, in a new society such as Msengezi, Garbett's (1967) point is correct: attempts to analyse behaviour in terms of a 'modern' and 'traditional' dichotomy may indeed be misleading. 'Tradition', at least in Msengezi, is not what it might seem: customary behaviour in fact conceals, from the casual observer, important, ongoing change in this society, as I have shown in Part III of this thesis. Nevertheless, the traditional idiom is important, in respect of individual accumulatory strategies, public behaviour and new institutions arising from the production process, such as the machangano groups. If such 'customary' behaviour is taken at face value, as itinerant civil servants tend to, it may be extremely misleading, because people are principally concerned not with custom but with accumulation. In situations where 'custom' does not contradict accumulation, therefore, certain aspects of customary behaviour may still be found, in a new context in which they may be positively useful to accumulators who have neither the knowledge nor, initially at least, the resources, nor perhaps the desire, to adopt 'European' behaviour in all fields.

The convergence of interests between successful accumulators using either idiom of accumulation is hardly surprising, for a number of reasons. Firstly, the cultural differences reflected in these different idioms may not in fact be as great as they might superficially appear. Secondly, all of the successful accumulators have vested interests in ensuring that the development process continues, because their power and status in Msengezi rest on their control of this process, whether in local government or in agricultural associations. And thirdly, while presupposing the accumulation of resources, the concept of development itself does not require that such accumulation should occur in any particular cultural idiom. I am aware, of course, that some of my more radical colleagues in the field of development studies, at least at the University of Rhodesia, may dispute the idea that private accumulation in any form is necessary for development, since they believe that the process of modernising production can be achieved without the entrepreneurial factor, which supposedly must lead to 'westernisation'. Yet this view is not supported by the Msengezi evidence, which suggests both that individual entrepreneurship is vital to development, and that neither entrepreneurship nor development need necessarily lead to indiscriminate 'westernisation', particularly among those using the traditional idiom of accumulation.



Indeed, in its early stages, the development process in Msengezi generated totally new norms and relationships which were found neither in old-established, indigenous societies nor among Europeans. The machangano groupings are one example of this emergence of new organisational forms in response to the demands of large-scale farming. However, in the longer term, such novel responses may prove ephemeral, as the developing society in fact moves closer to the 'European' model, as has happened in Msengezi.

Although development is not, then, invariably linked to any particular cultural variety, in practice in Msengezi it seems as though the accumulation of wealth on a large scale through farming may effectively predicate a movement towards the behaviour patterns of white Rhodesians. Partly this movement results from constraints within the production system itself, which requires organisation and skills beyond those which were necessary for production in African societies in the past. Partly, too, the adoption of the 'European' model reflects the present power structure in Rhodesia and its concomitant prestige rankings, together with the desire of certain black farmers to compete within this system. Men such as Sifelani (cf. chapters eight and thirteen) have deliberately guided development in Msengezi into a 'European' model, both because they believe this course of action to be in the long-term interests of the society as a whole and because their own individual interests in local politics dictate such a move.

The decisions of certain individuals, then, may have great importance for the development process in general. These influential individuals are those with the widest knowledge of Rhodesian society and the way in which it works, knowledge gained during the process of education and later in relatively high-level employment. It is particularly in this aspect of educated leadership that the individual and collective levels of development in fact meet in Msengezi, being articulated through certain key individuals, such as Sifelani.

Because development at the collective level still relies so heavily for its operation on these few individuals, it is perhaps too early to assert positively that development has become a self-sustaining process in Msengezi, despite the inter-related evidence of increased production, increased wealth, the ongoing process of farm capitalisation and a birth rate that is apparently declining. Even though the framework for development is well-established, control of the development process is still restricted to a small number of key men: until the base of effective, knowledgeable participation in institutions such as the Council is more

widely spread, therefore, it is somewhat premature to assume that the development process will encounter no major set-backs in the future. Nevertheless, the ongoing growth of a bureaucratic society in Msengezi will probably ensure that such set-backs will not halt the development process, even though they may interrupt it for short periods.

The key factor which has permitted this early emergence of a society bound by impersonal, bureaucratic relationships is, in my view, freehold ownership of the land itself, which has resulted in a clear distinction between public and private domains of behaviour. It is through the private domain that the enabling effects of freehold tenure on development actually operate, by permitting men and their wives to act in accordance with their own individual inclinations, in agricultural production as in the marital and domestic spheres, on their own farms. No-one within this society has any right to suggest, much less insist, that farmers do not plough before a certain date, or work on certain days, or plant certain crops, even though government may introduce controls over production (for example, in stipulating the time limits within which cotton may be grown). Msengezi people value their privacy highly, recognising explicitly that the private domain is much more confined in areas of high population density, where production is based on some form of communal land tenure and where pressure to conform to customary expectations of behaviour is considerable. I would suggest that this creation of private domains of behaviour is possibly the most important, long-term contribution that freehold tenure can make to the development process, in removing the constraints on innovative behaviour that exist in other societies. There is aggregate evidence, from Buganda and Kenya as well as the Rhodesian purchase lands, that producers in freehold areas use their land more productively than do producers in areas of communal landholding.

However, whether this greater success is proportional to the costs of establishing these areas has not, to the best of my knowledge, been calculated, either in economic or in social terms. A full cost-benefit analysis of freehold land tenure in individual countries would be of considerable value to everyone concerned with development, even though such an exercise would be extremely difficult: the assessment of political ideologies and ideals in monetary terms, for example, is virtually impossible but necessary to such analysis. This problem is not simply a matter of deciding whether individualism or egalitarianism is more conducive to economic development: historical evidence suggests strongly that individual entrepreneurship is correlated very closely with economic

development, while socialists such as Nyerere (1969) admit that some degree of economic development may have to be sacrificed in order to maintain a communal, egalitarian society. Instead, the issue becomes one of choosing between political and moral alternatives. Nevertheless, despite these difficulties, the cost-benefit approach could provide a firmer basis on which to plan agricultural modernisation and land reform than presently exists.

In addition to an economic assessment of freehold land ownership and its relationship to development, I would suggest further that social anthropologists and sociologists working in the field of development studies might investigate more intensively the importance of public and private behaviour domains, particularly in new societies in resettlement areas, as well as the strategies of accumulation adopted by agricultural producers. Long (1968) and Parkin (1972) have already made important contributions in this field, of course, but much remains to be done, especially in societies which are undergoing rapid development.

Particularly in rapidly developing societies, the findings of research may be outdated very quickly. Since fieldwork was finished in Msengezi, one year ago, changes have already occurred: some farmers have died; cases of pending inheritance have been finalised; the Council budget has grown by over 10 per cent; the composition of Council and other organisations has altered. Some of the data presented in this thesis have, therefore, been superseded within a very short space of time and have passed into the realm of history. Nevertheless, by examining Msengezi society as it was in 1973-74, I have been able to show how, at that particular point in time, the development process had already affected that society, and to offer some suggestions regarding possible future developments. With such limited achievements, which do, I believe, represent an addition to our knowledge of development in Rhodesia, I am reasonably content.



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