

**Land Dispossession and Restitution in South Africa: A Case Study  
of the Ravele Community in Luvuvhu Valley, Limpopo Province  
(1890-1994)**

by

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## Declaration

I declare that the thesis titled “**Land Dispossession and Restitution in South Africa: A Case Study of the Ravele Community in Luvuvhu Valley, Limpopo Province (1890-1994)**” is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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**Fhatuwani Eric Ramudzuli**

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**Date**

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated in remembrance of my late parents, my mother Mundzhedzi Ramudzuli, and my father, Wilson Ramudzuli, as well as my deceased elder brother, Thanyani Ramudzuli

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## Abstract

Based on the Afrocentric perspective, this study explored the impact of landlessness that descended upon the Ravele Community after their forced removal from original Mauluma, around the Luvuvhu River and on western side of Tshakhuma: in 1921 and in 1936. The river was then corruptly renamed Levubu River. It is as a result of the impact of the forced removal of the Ravele community during that period that the study is located around the Luvuvhu Valley. The Raveles were relocated to New Mauluma (Beaconsfield) in the Nzhelele Valley. During that period the Raveles were forced to occupy different places around the Luvuvhu Valley and elsewhere as some of them became scattered. It suffices to say that the establishment of the Luvuvhu Valley was meant to benefit the newly resettled 'poor whites', as part of the resettlement programme of the white administration, such that the Raveles bore the sever brunt of the forced removal. They became impoverished since their source of socio-economic life had been taken away when they were removed from the Luvuvhu Valley.

The study shows that poverty had many dimensions because it is/ was not only limited to economic poverty but permeated all spheres of life. This included a person's self-respect, the harshness of living as well as a feeling of powerlessness and hopelessness. It suffices to say that impoverishment was made to strategically maintain the political and economic power of the white minority, especially in this study of the Luvuvhu Valley. Their forced removal affected their livelihood because the Nzhelele Valley is/ was rocky, dry, barren and even infertile. As a result, they were unable to cultivate as productively as before and/ or provide adequate grazing for their livestock. At New Mauluma the Raveles were placed under George Mbulaheni Mphephu, whose *thovhele* (kingship) status had by then been reduced to that of *khosikhulu* (principal senior traditional leader). Their socio-political life was affected since their *vuhosi* (senior traditional leadership) status was reduced to *vhugota* (headmanship/ vhamusanda). In essence the Raveles' new status was a demotion because to this date they are still fighting to restore their *vuhosi* status.

Although, land restitution is one of the pillars of land reform in South Africa, since it was implemented in the mid-1990s, after the implementation of South Africa's democratic dispensation in 1994 (and is still in progress), the Raveles are still in the dark regarding the

finalization of their claim to have Old Mauluma fully restituted to them. Experience in some restituted land in South Africa has shown that direct transfer without sufficient post-settlement support could lead to land restitution failures which are a source of embarrassment to the democratic government. Equally the government has been blamed for adopting a top-down approach in finding a solution to the challenge of transferring the expensive fertile Luvuvhu Valley to the Raveles as the rightful and original owners. The government has also been blamed for using the expertise of white owned agribusinesses, whose interests on land restitution are/ were to make profit. As a result, of their class position, as members of the petty bourgeois, many white settler farmers opposed land restitution by refusing to sell their farms to the government. The researcher identified and preferred to ground the study on the Afrocentric theory since it puts African values at the centre. It will also assist in debunking the Eurocentric/Western and liberal approach to issues that affect Africans,

**Keywords:** Afrocentricity, Luvuvhu Valley, Ravele community, forced removal, land dispossession and land restitution

## List of Abbreviations

ANC-	African National Congress
ARDC –	Agricultural and Rural Development Corporation
BAO-	Archive of the Secretary for Bantu Affairs
BEE-	Black Economic Empowerment
BENSO –	Archive of the Bureau of Economic Research
BSV -	Archives of Bantu Administration and Development
BTA / BTS –	Archives for Bantu Affairs / Bantoe Traditionale Sake
CAD –	Central Achieves Depot
CNC-	Chief Native Commissioner
CODESA-	Congress for Democratic South Africa
CRLR –	Commission on the Restitution of Land Rights
DAFF –	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
DLA –	Department of Land Affairs
DNA-	Archives of the Department of Native Affairs
DWAFF-	Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
EFF-	Economic Freedom Fighters
ESTA-	Extension of Security Tenure Act 62 of 1997
FTLRP-	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
FFP-	Freedom Front Plus
GAPWUZ-	General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe
GG –	Archives of the Governor General / Central Government
GOV –	Archive of the National Government
HKN –	Archive on the Chief Natives Commissioner
HTL –	Home of Traditional Centre
ICRA-	International Credit Rating Agencies
JVC –	Joint Venture Company
KNP-	Kruger National Park
LCWG –	Land Claims Working Group
LD –	Land (Affairs) Department
LDE –	Archive of the Department of Land Affairs



LLCC-	Limpopo Land Claims Commission
LRLCC –	Limpopo Regional Land Claims Commission
MLRA –	Market-Led Agrarian Restitution
MMS –	Mavu Management Services
MST –	Landless Workers Movement in Brazil
NAD –	Native Affairs Department
NDA-	Nkuzi Development Association
NGO –	Non-Governmental Organization
NP –	National Party
NTS –	Archives of the Natives Commission
RCPA-	Ravele Community Property Association
RSA –	Republic of South Africa
SAB-NTS –	Archives of the Secretary for Native Affairs
SAFM-	South African Farms Management
SAGG –	Archive of the Governor- General
SAHRC-	South African Human Right Commission
SAIRR-	South African Institute of Race Relations
SAIRR –	South African Institute of Race Relations
SAR –	South African Republic / Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek
SPP –	Surplus People Project
TA-	Traditional Affairs
TAB –	Archives of the Transvaal Administration Board
TA.GOV –	Archives of the Transvaal Administration Government
TCA –	Thematic Content Analysis
TLM –	Thulamela Local Municipality
UG –	Archives of the Union Government / Union of South Africa
URU –	Archives of the Prime Minister / Kantoor van die Eerste Minister
VNP –	Venda National Party
VTT –	Venda Territorial Authority
UNIVEN –	University of Venda
WAD-	Water Affairs Department
WB-	World Bank

WTO- World Trade Organisation  
ZAR- Transvaal Boer Republic

## Glossary

Thovhele Khosikhulu- king, sovereign, highest royal tittle, national leader, symbol of unity.

Khosikhulu- A position lower than a thovhele khosikhulu; also referred to as a principal traditional leader; also referred to as territorial leaders, who rule through mahosi. Their territories are defined by natural boundaries, such as river, mountains. They were called 'paramount chiefs' during apartheid/ colonialism

Mahosi (plural; singular khosi)- senior traditional leaders, 'chiefs during apartheid; they administered lands (mashango), each with its own name and defined by natural boundaries.

Vhamusanda/ Gota - headmen according to apartheid lexicography. Unfortunately, the same concept is still being used by the present government kusi (sgnl./ plural zwisi).

Mukoma / Vhakoma- They work directly with the community. They operate under magota

Vhuxwa- It is also the name of the territory which is found in Zimbabwe

Alilali Mphephu fled to during the Mphephu-Boer War; also regarded as place of exile, also called Bubi

Mufumakadzi - Wife

U shuma - to work

Tshizwa tsha - A token of tribute and loyalty given to the king

Voho la musumo- A token of tribute and loyalty given to the khosi

Khotsimunene- Younger brother of the khosi

Hogoo- A song sung at the initiation school for boys

Vhatanuni (pl.) / Mutanuni (sngl.)- Royal wives

Dzikhadzi- Aunts in the royal house / kraal

Thebvu- Nuts

Maafukhada- Avocados

Mukumbi- beer brewed from Marula fruit. The inside of the seed of the fruit also provides nuts which had a dual role as a delicacy spice.

Mufula- Marula tree, Susa paradisiaca

Ndumi - A person installed as a right-hand man of who also acts like a protector to the

king

Uswa dzina- To be given a name

Tshiendeulu- Burial site for royalty

Dzekiso- marriage goods paid for a wife who should bear/ or has borne an heir to the throne

Muvuvha- A tree used for iron melting

Vhulungu-a-denga – Beads for royalty

Ngoma-Lungundu- A drum used by Masingo during wars to weaken the enemies and the sleep

Khotsimuhulu- elder brother or senior paternal uncle

Muzwala- Cousin

Vhutshavhelo- Place of refugee

Murundu- Circumcision school

Malume- maternal Uncle

Khadzi- sister to the khosi (also acts as the adviser to the royal house)

Khaladzi- Sister

Mundende- grant meant for the aged

Mukano / Mikano- Boundaries

Muunga- Acacias

Mutshetshete- Palm tree

Phala- Impala

Mmbi- Army

Murangaphanda wa mmbi- Army General

Madumuka- Quagga

Thavhandalila- Black Wild-beast

Ngwele- Waterbuck

Mbavhala- Eiland

Nari- Buffalo

Phulu- Antelope

Mvuvhu- Hippopotamus

Ngwena- Crocodile

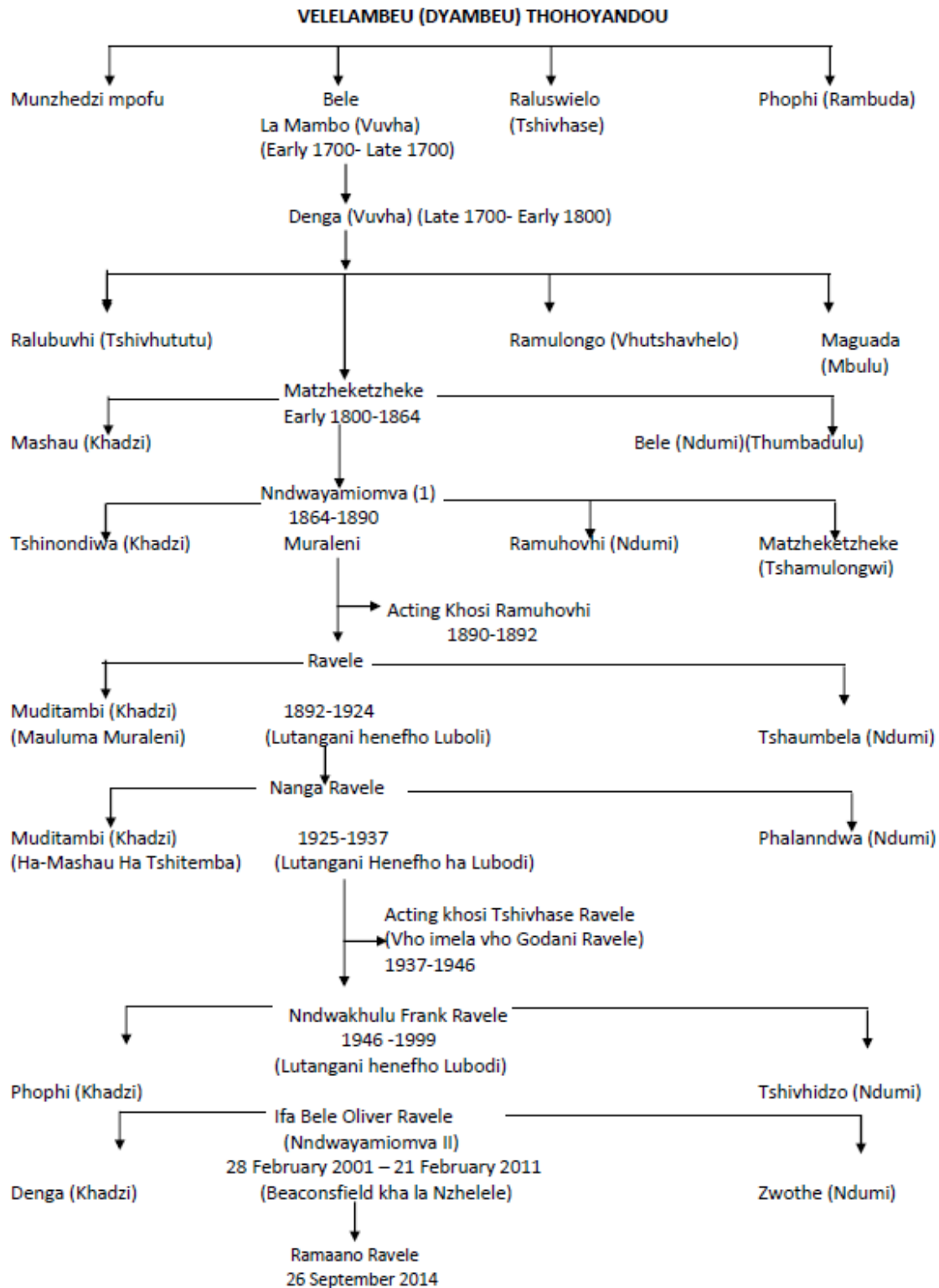
Luthwethwe- Sugarbird

Vulture- lianga  
 Gwith- Owl  
 Khokhonyamutanda- Woodpecker  
 Thavhine- Entabeni  
 Ndum- Advisor and would later assume the role of makhadzi or khotsimunene  
 Ndilo- wooden dishe  
 Tshikovha- Field on a hillslope  
 Mutanga - piece of land on the riverbank  
 Ponda- groundnuts  
 Tshikhopha- aloe  
 Mavhungo- wild granadilla  
 Vhuswa- porridge  
 Tshisevho- Supplement dish  
 Mafhi- Milk  
 Nama- Meat  
 Khovhe- Fish  
 Mahafhe- traditional beer made of sorghum  
 Muthetshelo- traditional beer brought to the ruler to be tasted by those without money  
     to buy  
 Mufhoho- Eleusine  
 Fola- Tobacco/Snuff  
 U daha- to smoke  
 Mbanzhe- Hemp/ dagga  
 Muvuvha- Sausage tree Kigelia africana  
 Muzwilu- wild medlar, Vagueria infuasta  
 Mukolokota- Picture-Tree. Camel Foot, Pilotigmathonningii  
 Muhuyu - Fig tree  
 Mutanzwa- Sourplum, Ximenia  
 Mavhele- Mealies/ maize, Zea mays  
 Muomva- Banana tree/ fruit, musa paradisiaca  
 Muduhwi- Wild petunia, Ipomoea odscura  
 Mutshevho- Cape Date Palm, Phoenix reclinate

Mufhoho- grain millet, sorghum bicolor

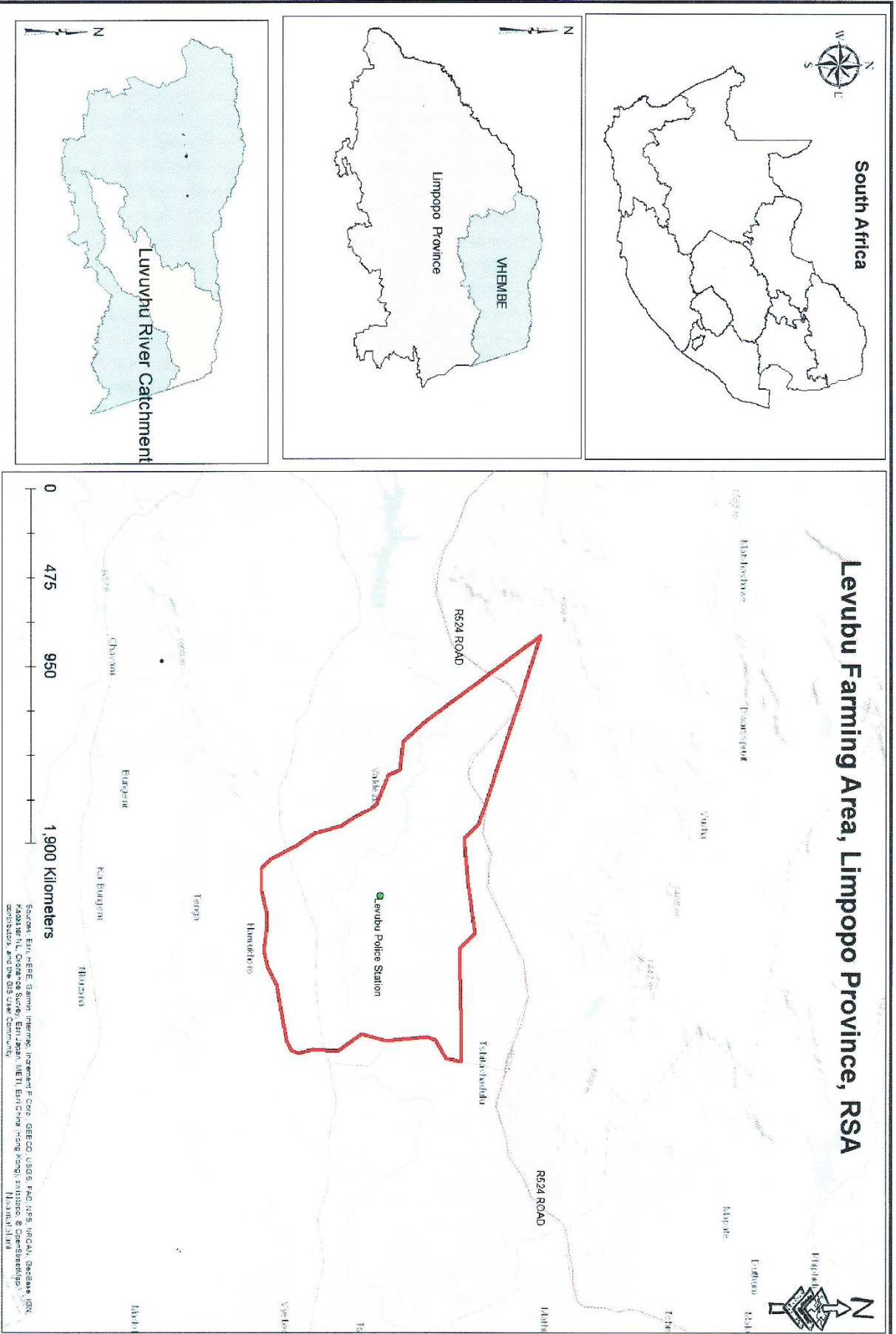
Muvhungo- Rubber Vine, Landolphia Kirkii

# RAVELE'S GENEALOGICAL TREE









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## Chapter 1

### Contextual Orientation of the Study

#### 1.1 Background and Motivation

The land question remains a sensitive and emotionally charged issue in Africa, and South Africa in particular. For that and many other reasons, a cursory look at the discourse about land in South Africa reflects that land dispossession is primarily the result of white misrule. In South Africa, different white administrations, from colonialism to apartheid, did not view Africans as people who should be consulted on issues that politically, socially and economically affected them, and as such they did not take into consideration their historical, social or contemporary experiences (Pellerin, 2012: 149). Pellerin (2012: 149) further asserts that the colonial and/ or apartheid administrations concluded that African people were “innately culturally, politically and economically inadequate and deficient.” This shows that without even giving themselves an opportunity to understand the lives, cultures, traditions and socio-political organization of the African people they went about imposing their way of life, the socio-political and economic life and different laws on them willy-nilly. This was also as a result of the white administrations conducting studies about Africans and/ or South Africans for on their behalf for their own benefit only and not with them or in consultation with them and thus this put them on a socio-political and economic collision course for years to come.

The foregoing should be understood within the context that the process of land dispossession in South Africa started as early as 1652 after the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in the Cape of Good Hope (Muller, 1993: 18-25; Davenport and Saunders, 2000: 27-29). Following this was the establishment of the Dutch East Indian Company (DEIC/ VOC) which subsequently acquired large tracts of the land that belonged to the indigents of this land through nefarious means, either with the use of physical force which also involved military action or the process of purchase of the land which was based on deceit (Atuahene, 2014: 25). This saw the majority of black South Africans being faced with the imposition of options; either to remain in the occupied land as servants of the DEIC/VOC or vacate their historical and sentimental natural

possession. The extent and impact of dispossession of land on the black population of South Africa has been irreversibly enormous because the period that followed saw a rapacious continuation of the process of racial land conquest and occupation (Mahosi, 2020: 5).

Almost two centuries later, when the British conquered the Dutch in South Africa in 1806, they continued with the policy of racial land conquest which resulted in friction and tension between them and the DEIC/ VOC on the one hand and/ or black South Africans on the other (Worden, 2012: 9). Between this period and the inception of the Union of South Africa in 1910 many wars were fought over land occupation, dispossession and/ or forced removal as well as relocation. This consequently disadvantaged black South Africans while creating an industrial and monopolistic state that has one-sidedly benefitted whites (James and Fay, 2010: 19). The establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910 aggravated the situation since it was followed by the enactment of different legislation on land, with the Forestry Act of 1912, the Natives Land Act 27 of 1913, the Native Trust and Land Act 18 of 1936 and Expropriation Act 63 of 1975 as standing out in the project of land dispossession and occupation. In terms of these pieces of legislation the majority of black South Africans were left occupying only 13% (thirteen percent) of their ancestral land while the white minority occupied the other 87% (eighty-seven per cent) (Hall, 2010: 12; Pienaar, 2017: 23). This affected their livelihood because they lost the basis of the communal land rights and communal life.

According to Nxesi (2015: 1) these different pieces of legislation took away the land which was crucial to the livelihood of black South Africans and thus rendered them landless, destitute and poor. Resultantly, black South Africans who were largely excluded from the country's main economy, were reduced to the status of cheap labourers on the demarcated white commercial farms. Some years after the enactment of these legislation, in 1948 the white government introduced apartheid as an official racial policy, the result of which saw an increase in forced removals of black South Africans on a large scale. According to Nefale (2000: 1-2) the relationship between the state and black South Africans continued to be volatile during the coming

years. This situation was aggravated by the fact that many African kingdoms<sup>1</sup> in South Africa had been forced into a state of demise; a situation which greatly affected their socio-political organization and the economic life of their communities. Most of these kingdoms were either dissolved and/ or demoted and placed under collaborative and/ or created *mahosi* for opposing the colonial/ apartheid hegemonic laws (Mahosi, 2020: 177-179, 189-199, 241-245). This turn of events compelled many black South Africans, especially young-bloodied men, to migrate to the cities to look for employment, while others were forced to stay in the infertile land of the reserves or even migrated to the white commercial farms to work as sources of forced cheap black labour (Mahosi, 2020: 177-179; Keegan, 1988: 15).

The *mahosi* of Ha-Ravele and their community are such a people who fell victim to the cruelty of forced removal and the gradual land dispossession between the mid-1920s (nineteen-twenties) towards the 1930s (nineteen-thirties). The Raveles and their community had originally settled at original Mauluma, along the Luvuvhu River, which land was very fertile and productive; and was thus able to sustain their everyday lives and livelihood. However, during that period the original Mauluma area, then christened Levubu<sup>2</sup> Valley, was gradually invaded by new arrivals who the Union government had classified as 'poor whites' (Morrel 1992: 17). These 'poor whites' co-existed alongside a small number of wealthy white landowners who then ironically rented out land to original and historical Vhavenda landowners. As things turned out over time Vhavenda lost their ability to live off the land and were constrained to live a life of miserable poverty, while the 'poor whites' received material support from the government in the form of formal housing, agricultural implements and seeds as well as fertilizers to produce agriculturally. The Levubu Settlement Scheme enabled the 'poor whites' to cultivate and produce agriculturally, to either feed themselves or to

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<sup>1</sup> Seeing that is study is grounded in the Afrocentric theoretical perspective the current researcher does Not feel comfortable using Eurocentric and/ or colonial apartheid concepts such as 'chief', 'chieftainship' and 'chiefdom', to mention a few that generally appear in Eurocentrically influenced sources and scholarship. The current researcher is of the view that the use of such concepts does not depict the true nature of African traditionalism and royal status. Therefore, wherever, such concepts appear, and they are not in a quotation, they will be depicted in inverted commas. It is for this reason that the current researcher devoted some time to explaining the true nature of Vhavenda hierarchical concepts in a glossary, whereafter they are used throughout the study to avoid the influence of Eurocentric concepts.

<sup>2</sup> During this time the Tshivenda name of Luvuvhu had been corrupted to Levubu; hence the names Levubu Settlement Scheme and Levubu Valley.

engage in small-scale commercial agricultural activities (Mphadzha, 1991: 13; Nefale, 2000: 30). Ironically, while this programme afforded the 'poor whites' a fresh start in life since they benefitted from the government, it involved the forced removal and subsequent displacement of Vhavenda from the Luvuvhu Valley; this included the Ravele community among others who had been found settled in the area for many years (Nefale, 2000: 32). According to Delius et al (1986: 37) this settlement scheme was called "accumulation and dispossession". The current researcher would like to opine that the phrase in quotation makes the process self-explanatory in that during the forced removal from and dispossession of Vhavenda of their land, the 'poor whites' were benefitting from the acquisition and accumulation of the same land: Luvuvhu Valley. The Raveles were forcibly removed to Beaconsfield (New Mauluma) and placed under *Khosi* George Mbulaheni Mphephu Ramabulana (who by then had lost the family's *thovhele* status to *khosi*) as *magota* ('headmen' according to colonialism/ apartheid).

The establishment of a democratic South Africa after the African National Congress (ANC) had assumed political power following the 27 April 1994 first democratic general elections, necessitated the initiation of land reform and restitution to the majority black South Africans who were forcibly removed from and dispossessed of their ancestral land. This was in line with what was prescribed in the party's policy documents of the Freedom Charter and later the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (Anseeuw and Alden, 2011: 14). Between 1992 and 1993 the ANC developed a policy document which was specifically intended for the country's land problem *vis-à-vis* restitution and redistribution, as a way to compensate those suffered during the process of land dispossession and occupation (Nxesi, 2015: 15). Since then the ANC government has mandated the Departments of Agriculture and Forestry as well as the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, to conduct land reform in terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), section 25 (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996); based on the following three pillars: land redistribution, land restitution and land tenure reform, as well as to provide support to the victims in the process of reconciliation, reconstruction and development (Hall, 2010: 17).

The Ravele community are among the many such people who submitted a land claim when the process to submit the claims started, particularly for the return of the Luvuvhu Valley (Old Mauluma) in terms of the Restitution of the Land Rights Act 22 of 1994 (Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994, 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa). Against this background, this study researched on “Land dispossession as well as land restitution and livelihood transformation in South Africa by essentially focusing on the Ravele community in the Luvuvhu Valley, 1890-1994”. The study has identified 1890 as a starting point because by this period the process of land dispossession around the Soupansberg had already started to affect the Raveles and their *vhuhosi* status. Equally the year 1994 was included because after this period new democratic South Africa had been established and introduced legislation and policies to address the country’s land dispossession as well as offer redress for forced removal, land dispossession and landlessness. This period is arbitrarily considered by the researcher as adequate to paint a qualitative picture of the study and thus arrive at the intended findings as set out in the aim and objectives.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

The subject of forced removals and land dispossession in South Africa has been researched across different disciplines such as Agriculture, Rural Development, Law, Political Science and History, to mention a few. However, when embarking on this study, the current researcher realized that the subject of land dispossession around the Luvuvhu Valley has never been afforded an African voice before. It is the submission of the current researcher that in the past the approach on the subject has generally, if not always, been steeped in the Liberal and Eurocentric/ Western perspective, in the exclusion of the Afrocentric perspective. The current researcher has equally hoped to demystify the general belief that black South Africans were equal partners in the process of land dispossession by grounding this study in the Afrocentric paradigm. Therefore, the study has sought to explore the debacle around the removal of the Ravele Community from the Luvuvhu Valley, by focusing on the period of dispossession to that of land restitution and how this impacted on their livelihood. This is because the Ravele community was moved from fertile Old Mauluma, Luvuvhu Valley, to Beaconsfield (New Mauluma) in the stony and barren Nzhelele Valley under the Ramabulana-Mphephu dynasty. Based on this, in 1998 the Ravele community, like many other communities in

South Africa whose land had been expropriated by the colonial, and later apartheid government, applied for the restitution of their land in the Luvuvhu Valley, in terms of the 1996 of Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act No. 3 and the 1994 Restitution of Land Rights Act No. 22 (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996).

### **1.3 Operational Definition of Concepts**

Given the contestation of the definitions of concepts in disciplines like Historical Studies relating to the subject on land, dispossession, landlessness and restitution, the following concepts are embraced and used in the study to mean the following:

**1.3.1 Land Reform:** the redistribution of rights in land for the benefit of the landless (Buys, 2012: 23).

**1.3.2 Livelihood:** A livelihood refers to the necessity of life for individuals or a community to live (Chamber and Conway, 1992: 127).

**1.3.3 Land Tenure:** Refers to the ownership of land by an individual or community which is protected from the injustices of the past (Pienaar, 2017: 380-386).

**1.3.4 'Willing Buyer Willing Seller Principle':** It is the idea that those with the desire to possess land, need to be afforded the price put on the land. Simultaneously, the owner of the land must be willing to sell the land in question. (Pienaar, 2017: 34; Du Plessis, 2009: 54).

**1.3.5 Market Value:** Refers to the price value of the land in the selling place (Du Plessis, 2009: 51).

**1.3.6 Land Redistribution:** The process during which the land which was forcibly taken during colonial and apartheid rule is given back to the original owner(s) (Cross and Hornby, 2002: 57; Kepe, 1999: 426-427).

**1.3.7 Land Restitution:** A situation during which the land which was taken by force during colonial and apartheid rule is restored back to the original owner(s). Therefore, restitution embodies(d) two kinds of justice: procedural and restorative justice (Pienaar, 2014: 854).

**1.3.8 Expropriation of Land:** The taking of land by force, with or without compensation. (Du Plessis, 2009: 30; Expropriation Acts of 1965 and 1975).

## **1.4 Literature Review**

Contextualizing the current study necessitated a selection of various sources across disciplines for the purpose of literature review. This statement is borne out of the fact that literature review is one of the essential parts of any research process (Shai, 2016: 15, quoting from Ridley, 2008). Therefore, a few sources were identified and selected to assist in the literature review of this study as will be seen below.

### **1.4.1 Land discourse in South Africa**

For the rural poor to secure the necessities of life, access to land is important (Buys, 2012: 11). Although some scholars (Cotula, Toulmin and Quan, 2006: 11; Hall, 2011: 18; Schirma, 2009: 81) have identified land as a commodity that is meant to support any community, and the poor black South African in the rural areas, in particular in this study, the objective is far from being realized. The provision of land is not a means to reduce poverty; even some scholars (Walker, 2005: 805; Unterhalter, 1987: 41; James, 2005: 21) regard it as a means to lend support to the rural poor blacks. In the same vein the belief is that the involvement of poor rural black South Africans in the tilling of the soil for their own agricultural production can reduce poverty and the disparities between them and white farmers (Hall, 2004: 815). Essentially, increased access to land by the poor can contribute significantly to reduction in food insecurity, poverty and inequality, as it enables the poor to participate in agricultural production. Therefore, is the duty of the ANC government in South Africa, or any government for that matter, to ensure access to land by poor people (Buys, 2012: 11). In this regard the success of land restitution could improve the alleviation of poverty for the rural poor, depending on the manner in which the restituted and/ or acquired land is being used (Hall, 2016: 18).

This study argues that research on forced removal, dispossession, relocation and land restitution has not been conducted from an Afrocentric perspective, if none at all, on the forced removals as well as land restitution in the Luvuvhu Valley. Therefore, more studies of this nature are necessary on the subject from the Afrocentric perspective. Mphadzha (1998: 39) highlights the effects of the relocation of Vhavenda from the area around the Luvuvhu River in 1938, however with particular reference to the social, economic and political consequences. In this work, the author indicates that,

resettlement and lack of facilities after removal perpetuated hardship as evidenced by the adversities that the Raveles and the accompanying communities around the Luvuvhu Valley experienced during their forced removal: land dispossession, landlessness, poverty, lack of agricultural production as a result of the infertility of the area(s) they were resettled, among others.

However, Mphadza's study was not extensive enough to reveal adequate information on the meaning and value of the land to black South Africans since it was conducted at honours level in History. In the same vein Nefale's (1998) honours research, also in History, focused on the conditions of farm workers in the Levubu area of the Northern Province, between 1980 and 1997. Despite its apparent theoretical weaknesses, the work is significant as a source as it deals with the experiences of ordinary people in the Luvuvhu Valley, especially women and children, as farmworkers in white farms. Similarly, Nefale's (2000) study at Masters' level in History on land dispossession in the Luvuvhu Valley, lacks analytical and theoretical approaches, even though the researcher had consulted oral sources extensively. Regardless of this the study looked at the "Politics on land in Levubu of the Northern Province 1935- 1998".

Unfortunately, as it was the trend and influence during that period, in their studies Mphadza and Nefale deliberated about their accounts on the history of the Luvuvhu Valley from a Eurocentric perspective. However, these researchers cannot be faulted since the Eurocentric voice was dominating South Africa's scholarship, especially because the Afrocentric approach had not yet really occupied an influential space in the historical and political discourses. In contrast, the Afrocentric theory is rooted in the culture, history and values of African people which thus influence and mould their experiences. Equally, Conerly (1990: 57) examines the subject of the "surrendering of land in the Northern Transvaal<sup>3</sup> by the communities of Mphephu, Davhana and Sinthumule" wherein the author maintains that until 1926 there was land dispossession by whites, which study did not include the land around the Luvuvhu Valley within the same area, the Northern Transvaal. If anything, Conerly's approach is more Liberal and Eurocentric than Afrocentric. However, this does not mean that the source cannot add

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<sup>3</sup> Before 1994 the Transvaal Province included what is today known as the Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Gauteng and eastern part of the North-west Provinces. The Northern Transvaal was what is today mainly the Limpopo Province and included the former Venda, Lebowa and Gazankulu homelands.



value to the aim and objectives of this study since it contains experiences of and about Vhavenḁa during land dispossession under their individual *mahosi*.

Morrel (1992: 17) shows that the state has sponsored the idea that settlement in the countryside was the best available means to solve the problem of dislocation which was closely associated with the 'poor white' problem. Equally the corollary would mean that the idea was to address the need for rural black South Africans to be freed for resettlement. It suffices to say that if anything the resettlement process was being addressed from the white administration's racial policy perspective. Importantly, the author failed to acknowledge the role played by race in the removal of blacks from their land, especially the Luvuvhu Valley in this study. This shows that non-Afrocentric scholars like Morrel refuse to acknowledge the fact that race did influence the construction of knowledge (Reverie, 2001: 718), especially during the period of this study. Scholars such as Aliber et. al. (2010: 95) maintain that the central problem in assessing the impact of land reform on the livelihoods of the poor is the paucity of post-settlement evaluation studies *vis-à-vis* the dignity and identity that the land affords the people; above all land should be regarded as a source of income for any community. For example, challenges such as disputes within and among the beneficiaries, lack of skills transfer, unavailability of machinery and poor consultation processes with and/ or among beneficiaries has tended to generally lead to a decline in agricultural production to their benefit. In essence, for production to increase, state and development agencies should lend support to the new landowners in financial and material terms (Buys, 2012: 11). In the same vein Didinger and May (2000: 43) argue that in order to appreciate the challenges facing new landowners, an understanding is essential of both the profound nature of discrimination that resulted from the apartheid policy and the limited capacity of land reform beneficiaries as compared to white farmers.

Equally the 'willing buyer, willing seller' approach is a concept formulated by the ANC government and the World Bank when they attempted to find common ground in addressing South Africa's land problem. However, the rural poor black South Africans, whose land was dispossessed, opposed this approach. Instead, they wanted land expropriation without compensation. To them the "the willing-buyer-willing seller" notion gave advantage to the politically connected elite and white farmers concerning the decision on the price for the land to be restituted (World Bank, 1994; Hall, 2010: 30). In

this instance people saw the slow pace of the restitution process and the increase in the cost of buying land meant for restitution as a way to let them let the process slide. Equally, the majority of the claimants believed that this situation continued to make it difficult for the South African government authorities to acquire such land; the essence of which process is to restore land taken by force and dispossessed from the previously disadvantaged groups: black South Africans (Hall, 2010: 35).

Flowing from above, and to support the “willing buyer, willing seller” policy has also been found to be unworkable, because the land to be restituted became very expensive and made the government to be unable to pay for it (Buys, 2012: 12). Overall, the land restitution process in South Africa has not been as effective as promised and/ or expected. The result has been that restitution of land in the country has remained insecure such that land-based inequality has continued to be common course. This is because over 80 (eighty) percent of the land is still concentrated in the hands of the minority white farmers such that the situation of most farm workers who are the rural poor, the majority of who are women and children who have no access to and authority on land, has not significantly improved (Cross and Hornby, 2002: 42). This has fundamentally been due to the slow pace of land restitution since the dawn of democracy; hence the disparities between white farmers and rural poor blacks will remain entrenched for years to come.

The above developments have been placed at the doorstep of constitutional constraints that emanate(ed) from Section 25 which deal with restitution of land in South Africa. While Section 25(3) of the Constitution of South Africa gives powers to the government to expropriate land for commercial or public use, the same government has failed to apply what is referred to as “positive rights” as contained in section 25(5-7) of the Constitution (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996). Flowing this section 25(5-8) has placed constraints on the South African government when it comes to the adequacy of the powers to reconstitute the land due to the price tag that is usually put on the land to be purchased. This means that the government has faced challenges when it comes to buying the land for the purpose of restitution from the white owners who usually hike the price(s). Therefore, since most of the land to be restituted has remained under the control of white farmers, they have in most cases been employed as consultants and developers of black owned land. This has further delayed and/ or

derailed the pace of restitution of the land to the victims of dispossession (Manenzhe, 2007: 53; Makutane, 2011: 153; Aliber et.al., 2013: 155). The result has been that the question of land restitution as proposed by section 25 has remained under attack from both the rural black poor and political parties such as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), to mention a few. Such political parties have generally been sceptical of section 25, particularly on whether it would be able to effectively and efficiently restore the land which was stolen during colonial and apartheid rule (Manenzhe, 2012: 11). For the rural black South Africans poor, expropriation of land without compensation has been considered to be the only way to address the land issue. However, this has proved to be quite a challenge because the reality has been that this cannot materialise without enough post-settlement support, such as financial and technical support. (Aliber et.al., 2013: 155; (Manenzhe, 2007: 53; Makutane, 2011: 153; Hall, 2012: 830; *City Press*, 10 December 2017).

As a result, the new landowners who should benefit from the process of restitution have generally found themselves being turned into occupants instead of landowners (Aliber et.al., 2013: 155; (Manenzhe, 2007: 53; Makutane, 2011: 153; Hall, 2012: 830; *City Press*, 10 December 2017). Just as it has been indicated above, the blame has been apportioned on the result of lack of effective authority, lack of political will, lack of financial and technical support for the restituted, as well as would-be, black landowners *vis-à-vis* the application of the section 25 of the constitution. As it has already been mentioned earlier, section 25 of the Constitution has been regarded as favouring only the politically connected elite and white farmers. This has seen many communities waiting for restitution of their land for over 19 (nineteen) years since the dawn of democracy; thus they have thus far descended into despair.

According to the Land Claims Commission (News 24, 2019) since the process of restitution started there have been approximately 7 000 (seven thousand) land claims which have not been settled. The result has been that the claimants that have not yet been catered for have reportedly been restless and as such this has created tension among the claimants. They believed that there has not been any meaningful mediation processes flowing from government to help alleviate these tensions. In addition, such situations have given an organisations like the EFF ammunition to criticize the government, blaming to be pandering to white monopoly capital as if it was South

Africa's land restitution programme has conclusively been regarded as a massive institutional failure (Land Claims Commission, News 24, 2019). In addition, neither the rurally based citizens nor farm dwellers have enjoyed the security of restitution because the legislative programme has been accused of being a mirror of the apartheid spatial design which also influenced the Bantustan era, thereby severely curtailing land rights of black South Africans (Hall, 2012: 843). In essence during that period the status of black landowners was based on rigid geographical location and unimaginative legislative as well as racially based policy development. However, this has not been unique to South Africa since many post-colonial societies have struggled to re-imagine geographic designs that break away from the colonial legacy (Hall, 2012: 843). Therefore, the current researcher cannot be faulted to opine that the colonial and/ or apartheid legacy will remain a dent on the socio-political and economic development of the continent, and South Africa in particular, for generations to come.

#### **1.4.2 An African perspective on selected cases of land reform**

This study identified the land reform programme in Tanzania that started soon after independence in the late 1960s, for discussion in the literature review under this subtopic. This is because soon after assuming power after independence in 1961 then Tanzanian President, Julius Mwalimu Nyerere, sought to transform the lives of the rural poor by introducing the policy of *Ujamaa* or 'villagisation' (Ilfie, 2007: 256). The *Ujamaa* programme owed much to Mao Tse Tung's socialism in China, which was influenced by the belief that the socialist transformation could come from peasants. In the African context, the proponents of African socialism professed that this was well suited to African socio-economic conditions of underdevelopment which according to Rodney (1981; quoted in Makgoba et al, 1999: 42) "created the conditions for arrested development and the development of underdevelopment." Therefore, the conviction was that the best way to reverse Africa's underdevelopment and arrest the development of underdevelopment was through the adoption of an African brew of socialism which was traditional, original yet suited for modernization (Kotzé, 1982: 65). However, suffice to say that the originality of African socialism is a debate for another study since the ideology was copied from Mao Tse Tung who had tailored it for China's conditions.

Regardless of this it was the conviction of Nyerere's post-colonial government, that the *Ujamaa* programme could be fashioned along Mao Tse Tung's socialism, by making it

well suited for the socio-economic conditions that beset Tanzania and Tanzanians (Kotzé, 1982: 66). They believed that the *Ujamaa* programme would address the legacy of colonialism which had stunted Africa's development while in the process it promoted underdevelopment. They were convinced that the programme would promote a shareholder kind of scheme in the communal patrimonium that was well suited for the underdeveloped grazing and agriculture (Kotzé, 1982: 66). The Tanzanian experiment attracted much attention because of its emphasis on the promotion of equity and self-sufficiency (Siddle and Swindell, 1990: 223). According to Siddle and Swindell (1990: 223) "the *Ujamaa* programme was meant to curtail individualistic tendencies that were encouraged by the colonial regime and the power of capitalist large scale farmers." As a result, by 1974, 1.2 (one-point-two) million rural dwellers were resettled in the villages, and this became the largest resettlement in Africa". Regardless of its ambitious influence that was underpinned by solidarism, communitarianism and African humanism (Kotzé, 1982: 66), Tanzania's post-independence socialist policy failed in the realms of populist strategies.

Cliffe *et al* (1973: 195) note that the unfortunate part was that the *Ujamaa* programme was doomed to fail right from its inception because after independence many poor people flocked to the towns and cities in search of better socio-economic conditions. This would mean that the potential beneficiaries of the programme who were rural bound envisaged the dawn of greener pastures in the towns rather than in the rural areas where they had been confined to by the colonial spatial policies for centuries. As a result, "the villages were not popular and the programme met resistance which rose from hasty planning, conflict of interest between peasants and their traditional leaders and bureaucrats, as well as the misunderstanding of the fundamentals of peasant production" (Makere, 1972: 23; Mugoya, 1972: 21; Owens, 2014: 209; Saul, 2012: 121). This must be understood within the context that peasant agriculture is not based on the idea of sharing the produce and the profit attached to it in the capitalist sense, except in special cases, because it is/was based on subsistence and the accumulation from surplus production for subsistence.

The result was that many villagers felt that communal farms as aspired to by the *Ujamaa* programme were a waste of time, more so because they had spent their whole lives confined to the villages without any indication of socio-economic transformation

(Makere, 1972: 23; Mugoya, 1972: 21; Owens, 2014: 209; Saul, 2012: 121). This lack of commitment and attraction to the programme which was accompanied by mismanagement contributed to poor yields which eventually saw the failure of the socialist programme. The fall of *Ujamaa* in Tanzania in the 1970s revealed some of the weaknesses of a partnership or joint venture in agriculture or farming among the rural poor blacks, especially when it came to the political will on the part of the government to effect implementation (Makere, 1972: 23; Mugoya, 1972: 21). The current researcher would like to posit that this could serve as a warning for South Africa not to follow Tanzanian's comprehensive and populist approach on land restitution. The joint venture on land restitution could lead to lack of production due to conflict among family members or communities. It is for this reason that this study has also sought to investigate from the land claimants whether they understood the concept of joint venture, collectivisation and partnership in farming or agriculture (Makisamoto, 1968: 186; Lai, 2010: 4; Sheikheldin, 2014: 81).

### **1.5 The Role of Theory in the Study**

This study is grounded in the Afrocentric theory which is rooted on African values of culture, history, experiences, beliefs, values and expectations of African people (Asante, 1998: 38). In corroboration of this assertion by Asante, Riviere's (2001: 713) contention is that the "...Afrocentric theory is a theory of social change which is aimed at questioning all forms of degradation and dehumanisation of blacks by whites as a result of racism manifested in colonialism and imperialism." The current researcher takes the cue from the Afrocentric perspective that land has much importance to any African people such that it cannot be separated from the values that underpin their communal existence (Masaka, Guaravanda and Mukusha, 2010: 137). Flowing from this the study presupposes that the ownership of the land entrenches these values as much as loss of the land undermines the essence of these values as located within the socio-economic life of African people. The current researcher is of the view that while the process and purpose of land restitution is meant to address land ownership challenges caused by the unjust laws of colonialism and apartheid, it is in the process significant in that it is steeped in the essence of these African values. It is in this respect that the current researcher believes that much as land is an important aspect among African people, and black South Africans of the Luvuvhu Valley in particular, in this study, it also

symbolises life, dignity, identity, life and humanhood (Masaka, 2011: 334), in addition to the values mentioned above that underpin Afrocentricity.

Riviere (2001: 713) is supported by Masaka, Guaravanda and Mukusha (2010: 137) who maintain that the “Afrocentric theory allows the researcher to put African ideas and values at the centre of inquiry and phenomena as well as the interpretation of data as opposed to the dominant Eurocentric view that sees/saw African people as a primitive race, objects and no subjects in human history. Afrocentricity is a critique of European domination and opposes white supremacy.” Masaka (2011: 334) further posits that the Afro-centrists refused the Eurocentric ideal that is against indigenous African people’s contributions to the betterment of themselves because it is the white settlers’ myth that Africans were unable to sustain the use of resources available to them in order to improve their lives; hence this proposition was used to justify the need for Africans to be colonised.

It is a known fact that European also regarded Africans as inferior, primitive and sub-normal. According to Masaka (2011: 334) “the forceful recovery of the land that had initially been violently taken away from the local people by white settlers was not only an open indictment of white settlers’ lack of respect by indigenous people and the ability to sustain the use of their own resources for their own good, but also retributive stands towards white settlers that had earlier disposed them of their land resources in a violent and insensitive manner”. In this regard Masaka (2011: 334) and Riviere (2001: 713) are supported by Kapuire et.al, (2015: 67) who argue that “the experiences of the African community members are the ultimate authority in determining what is true, and therefore are the final arbiter of the validity of the research about their lives”. It is against this background that the current researcher saw the Afrocentric perspective as well suited for this study, which is about the disadvantages that saw the Ravele community as victims of being unable to utilise the natural resources that were bestowed on them for their socio-economic and political development as a result of colonial and apartheid constraints.

## **1.6 Purpose of the study**

### **1.6.1 Aim of the Study**

Based on the Afrocentric perspective, the study seeks to explore the impact of the forced removal of the Ravele community, while on the other hand it intends to look at how the restitution programme by the democratic government contributed to the transformation of their livelihoods with specific reference to the period 1890-1994.

### **1.6.2 Research Objectives**

Based on the above aim the study was intended to achieve the following objectives in order to reach its findings:

- To account for the geopolitical situation of the land of the Ravele Community before their forced removal from the Luvuvhu Valley;
- To identify the causes and the impact of the forced removal from the Luvuvhu Valley on the Ravele Community;
- To describe the process of land restitution and its impact on the livelihood of the Ravele Community;
- To analyse how farm workers within the Luvuvhu Valley were affected by the process of land restitution.

## **1.7 Research Methodology**

The study was understandably based on human interaction and socio-political relations as well as the experiences that were borne out of external pressure; in this case land dispossession and occupation as well as the impact thereof on human livelihoods within the Luvuvhu Valley. In addition, the study looked at the flipside thereof as it casts an eye on the impact of the process of restitution of land on human livelihoods within the same space. It is from this premise that the current researcher chose to employ the qualitative research method while allowing it to be underpinned by the Afrocentric paradigm which accentuates African values of culture, history and communal interaction or communalism (Asante, 1998: 38; Revier, 2011: 713; Shai, 2016: 36). According to De Vos et al (2011: 397) and Du Plooy-Cilliers et al (2014: 232) the qualitative research



method is holistic in approach. As a result, the current researcher sought to situate the meaning of particular behaviours and ways of doing things in a particular context. The researcher constantly tried to make sense of what he heard and saw in a scientific context. The current researcher sought to eliminate subjectivity in the approach of the study. The internal beliefs and assumption used in the research must be supported by evidence (Babbie, 1990: 16). The study was generally open-ended and in-depth in approach, and this allowed the researcher to obtain sufficient information from the participants of the study.

### **1.7.1 Research Design**

The study has identified the Ravele community as a case study to explore the impact of land dispossession and restitution on the livelihoods of a community in the Luvuvhu Valley. In order to do this the research was grounded in the Afrocentric perspective. There is no denying the fact that the subject of land dispossession occupies a central place in the socio- political history of South Africa and black South Africans in particular. In light of the vastness of the field to be explored, the research realised that focusing on the subject from a local point of view, Luvuvhu Valley of the Limpopo Province of South Africa, would contribute so much by its nature to the development of local communities (Babbie 2008: 96, Mouton 2011: 108; Fossey et.al, 2002: 724).

### **1.7.2 Sampling**

Babbie (1998: 111) defines sampling as "...any procedure for selecting units of observation." According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2011: 390-391) in qualitative research sampling is less structured largely because of the methods of data collection: observation and interviewing. These authors further remind the researcher that "...there are no rules for sample size in qualitative enquiry ...because the process is undertaken after the actual investigation has commenced. It is for this reason that Neuman (2014: 190) also asserts that the definition of sample does not say that "...the sample drawn is in fact representative", but that the sample taken is "...*considered* to be representative." To this effect purposive sampling was found to be relevant for this study because in an instance where the Afrocentric method is used, the researcher is not allowed to determine the size of a sample or participants in the research.

In view of the above the current researcher has used purposive and snowball sampling to select people who could give testimony of their experiences on the forced removals and land restitution, particularly those from the Luvuvhu Valley in the Limpopo Province. In purposive sampling participants with the know-how of land restitution were interviewed, with the aim to be referred to other potential participants. To this effect, claimant communities, land restitution beneficiaries, community leaders (both traditional and local government officials), villagers, Rural Development, Resettlement and Agriculture personnel, farm workers, women and elders were targeted as informants. It is for this reason that the size of the sample to be sampled would be determined by the amount of data available. The study focused on the sample of an adult South African population (of 18 (eighteen) years of age and older) in the Luvuvhu Valley, which in this case is mainly the Ravele community. The total number of participants is illustrated in the table below:

**Table 1: Summary of the sample**

Academics	<i>Mahosi</i>	Government officials	Ravele Royal Council	Other community members	<b>Total</b>
3	3	2	12	36	<b>56</b>

### 1.7.3 Data Collection

A semi- structured interview was used to collect data. According to Doody and Noonan (2013: 143; Fossey et.al, 2002: 227) “a semi- structured interview is in-depth interviews where the respondents have to answer present open-ended questions.” This method is appropriate for this study because a semi-structured interview allows the researcher to clarify ambiguous statements and permit explorations of topics, especially from the members of the community who were either directly or indirectly affected by the forced removal, land dispossession and land restitution.

Upon obtaining a permission from the Ravele Royal Council, a tape-recorder was used in the collection of oral data from the participants whereafter the researcher transcribed

the recorded information and then coded it into relevant themes. On the other hand, “notes were taken to supplement the recording” (Mouton, 2011: 197). Notes taking was useful in collecting data from a few participants who were not comfortable in having their views being tape-recorded. In permissible interview settings, a camera was also used to capture non-verbal gestures that supported the information provided by participants. This refers to a situation where the participant(s) has/ have a hearing impairment which then would necessitate the use of sign language. Therefore, the current researcher found face-to-face interviews to be very useful in conjunction with focus group interviews because “...the group interview is proposed as a source of validation” (Mouton, 2011: 197-8). Written sources from the notes were compared with the information gathered from the interviews. To this end, an interview schedule was useful in giving focus and/ or direction of the interviews. Therefore, each participant was interviewed at the time suitable for them whereafter the interview had been transcribed and a further appointment was made with each participant to verify that the true meaning of what they said was captured. Oral presentations were also found to be very important as additional sources of oral data,

The current researcher also supplemented the data collected from interviews with primary sources in the form of archival material. Added to these were secondary sources such as published books, journal articles, newspaper material, internet material and unpublished theses and/ or dissertations, conference papers, seminar papers, public addresses and manuscripts.

#### **1.7.4 Data Analysis**

The current researcher used the Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) method to analyse and interpret the data obtained. Brann and Clarke (2006: 6) define thematic analysis as “...a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data.” The author further mentions that these patterns or themes are built by compiling expressions, phrases or ideas that would be common among the participants who would show their different or common experiences, together with their different or common viewpoints on land restitution and livelihoods regarding the Ravele Community. In the same breadth Creswell (2009: 168; Mouton, 1996: 161; Ronald et.al. 2007: 27; Fossey et.al., 2002: 729) state that data analysis includes the stages of generating raw data and organising it, making notes, identifying themes, attitudes and behaviours, amalgamating themes

and interpreting data. Therefore, data analysis should be regarded as inseparable from *methodology*. In this regard the study has taken the cue from Neuman (2014: 507, quoted in Mahosi, 2020: 25) who opines that in qualitative studies of this nature data analysis commences during the process of data collection. The author further cautions that such analysis only involves the identification and interpretation of relevant information such that at this stage the research process would be tentative and incomplete. Lastly, Shai (2016: 63) reminds the researcher that the Afrocentric research must be located and grounded in the culture, ideals, religion, history, among other aspects, of the African and African Diasporan peoples through orientation and location to Afrocentricity. It is for this reason that data analysis was underpinned by the principles of the Afrocentric method as espoused in the research problem of the study. It is again important to take the advice of Newman (2014: 507, quoted in Mahosi, 2020: 25) who contends that in research we analyse by systematically organizing data into categories, reading, coding and recoding, where necessary, examining, integrating and interpreting it while searching for patterns and relationships among specific details, connecting particular data to concepts, advance generalizations and identify broad trends.

#### **1.7.5 Quality Criteria**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2010: 274) reliability, objectivity and validity are of essence in qualitative research if the study is to achieve *trustworthiness* in its findings and that "...objectivity means doing justice to the object of the study" and that "...the key criterion of good quality research is found in the notion of *trustworthiness*." In this regard emphasis is found laid on four interlinked concepts that guide the researcher in ensuring *trustworthiness*. These are *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *confirmability*, and they are discussed below:

##### **(a) Credibility**

According to Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014: 258) *credibility* "...refers to the accuracy with which the researcher interpretes the data that was provided by the participants. As such *credibility* is increased when the researcher spends long periods of time with the participants in order to understand them and to better gain insight into their lives." In this study extensive data collection conducted by the current researcher was accompanied by as much accuracy as possible. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 513) *credibility* requires that the researcher demonstrates that the study was

designed to describe what it was intended for. Therefore, the duty of the researcher is to interpret the collected data provided by the participants with accuracy. Importantly, the current researcher ensured a balance between word of mouth and written sources to ensure *credibility*.

### **(b) Transferability**

*Transferability* refers to the degree to which the results can be applied in other contexts or with other interviewees. According to Babbie, Mouton, Vorster and Prozesky (2011: 277) *transferability* is the extent to which the researcher can provide data sets and description that are rich enough such that other researchers are able to make judgements about their findings and their *transferability* to different settings. In this study the participants were selected using purposive and snowball techniques to promote the *transferability* of the investigation.

### **(c) Dependability**

Collins and Hussy (2003: 278-279), Lincoln and Guba (1985: 15) as well as Shenton (2004: 36-37) define *dependability* as "...the quality of the process of integration that takes place between the data collection method, data analysis and the theory generated from the data." In the same vein, Zhang and Wildemuth (2009: 6) define *dependability* as "the coherence of the internal process and the way the researcher accounts for the changing conditions in the phenomena." Flowing from this the current researcher ensured that the findings of the study were reported accurately and that they were properly managed so that they could be acceptable.

### **(d) Confirmability**

According to Babbie, Mouton, Vorster and Prozesky (2011: 278) *confirmability* is the degree to which the findings of the study are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not the bias of the researcher. Similarly, Lincoln and Guba (1985: 15-16), Collins and Hussy (2003: 278-279) as well as Shenton (2004: 36-37) are in unison that *confirmability* denotes "how well the data collected supports the findings and interpretation of the researcher. It also indicates how well the findings flow from the data. In this instance it requires the researcher to have described the research process fully in order to assist

others in scrutinizing the research design.” Therefore, this means that after looking at the data, the other investigators must reach the same conclusion with the investigator. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the findings of the study stick to its aim and objectives by putting them to the test and by avoiding bias.

### **1.8 Significance of the Study**

The study has sought to add to the body of knowledge in History, Political Science and other cognate disciplines. It will also add value to the limited literature on land reform and restitution, particularly on land restitution and livelihoods transformation together with challenges and opportunities of land restitution through an Afrocentric perspective; especially around the Luvuvhu Valley. It will also provide a nuanced insight for policymakers about other forms of land redress which remain largely unexplored. The study endeavours to provide more information that will enhance an understanding of the land restitution programme. Therefore, the study hopes that the findings of the research will also motivate prospective researchers to expand their research scope, as a frame of reference for policymakers and researchers. Importantly, the study will stimulate more debate on land restitution, as well as its challenges and opportunities as experienced by beneficiaries. It can also be used as a guide for policymakers and land commissioners on land restitution matters by identifying the success and failures in transforming the livelihoods of the rural black people. This could inform incumbent leaders, future leaders and other stakeholders involved in land restitution on what improvements need to be effected on land restitution in order to assist in the transformation of the livelihoods of the claimants and beneficiaries. Understanding the failure of ‘willing seller, willing buyer’ market-related policy will give advantage to policy makers, researchers, non-governmental organisations and other organisations as well as relevant individuals in assisting them to provide appropriate interventions.

### **1.9 Ethical Considerations**

This study was conducted in line with the ethical principles that are discussed below:

### **1.9.1 Ethical clearance to conduct the study**

The current researcher applied for ethical clearance from the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) to be allowed to conduct the study. The same was granted to the current researcher and it is duly attached as 'Appendix B'.

### **1.9.2 Confidentiality/ anonymity and privacy**

The current researcher has observed the ethical principle of anonymity and privacy in conducting the study. In this study the participants were "assured of confidentiality and anonymity of their identity and of their privileged information" (Robison, 1991: 22; Du Plooy-Colliers et al, 2014: 267). In this regard the information that was provided by the participants was only used for academic purposes and was never shared with the third party. In addition pseudo-names were used for the part where applicable.

### **1.9.3 Respect of persons**

The researcher ensured that the dignity of the participants is maintained. To this end, the data obtained from them was used for study purposes only.

### **1.9.4 Informed consent**

According to Bless et al (2006: 61) "...informed consent is the ethical principle that research participants should be told enough about a piece of research to be able to make a decision about whether they participate or not." Both the advantages and disadvantages to participate in the study were duly explained to the participants.

### **1.9.5 Voluntary participation**

According to Welman and Kruger (2005: 12) "...voluntary subject participation means that the participants are allowed to volunteer by themselves and will not be forced to participate" in the study. Therefore, the participants were given an option to either participate in the study or not, and wherein confidentiality of information was promised and taken into consideration.

### **1.9.6 Avoidance of harm to the participant(s)**

Any form of harm to the participant(s) was avoided during the operation of the study and the writing of this thesis. This was done by conducting face-to-face interviews in a closed and secure place. In addition participants were assured of secrecy and anonymity.

### **1.9.7 Dealing with sensitive information**

Sensitive information obtained from participants was not disclosed to any third party (Sandelowski, 2004: 10374).

Based on the aim and objectives of the study, the next chapter focuses on the history of *vhuhosi* of the Raveles when they were still settled at Old Mauluma (Luvuvhu Valley), on the western part of Tshakhuma. This chapter opens by looking at the relationship the hierarchical structure of Vhavenda in order to make it understandable to the reader. In addition, the study paints a picture of the nature of the relationship between the Ramabulanas and the Raveles before the latter were forcibly removed from Old Mauluma (Luvuvhu Valley) and relocated at New Mauluma (Beaconsfield). It also casts a glance at their customs and *mahosi* of the Ravele family who ruled the community before they were downgraded to *vhugota* under *vhuhosi* of Ha-Ramabulana.



## Chapter 2

### The History of *Vhuhosi* of the Raveles at Old Mauluma

#### 2.1 Introduction

The current researcher found it necessary to open this chapter by briefly discussing the nature of the institution of *vuhosi* of Vhavenda before the arrival of the white settlers in South Africa, and in Venda in particular, so as to paint a picture of its hierarchical structure. The idea was to afford the reader an insight into the institution as a basis to the relationship between the Ramabulanas and the Raveles before and after the establishment of colonialism as well as during and after the emergence of apartheid as a policy of racial administration. This subsequently corroded the originality, essence and the African values on which the institution was founded and operated (Wessmann, 1900: 11; Mahosi, 2020: 57 to 64; Mulaudzi, 2020: 2, 5 and 24). Seeing that the study is grounded in the Afrocentric perspective, this allowed the current researcher room to demystify the notion of Eurocentric scholars on *vuhosi* who, whether deliberately or unintentionally, did not shed much light on the nature, status, power, role and functions of the position of *thovhele khosikhulu* (an equivalent of the European kingship or supreme ruler) and his subsidiaries. This can be attributed to Eurocentric writers, as advanced by the authors cited below, who (Eurocentric writers) looked at African history through the spectacles of western imperialists, and in so doing failed to bring to light what the position and its related subsidiaries actually entailed (Davidson, 1996: 249, 255-6, 263, 269; Neluvhalani, 2018: 19-29, 23, 86; Nemudzivhadi, 2017: x-xi, 5, 8; Ndou, 1993: 23; Khorommbi, 1996: 19).

A closer look at some sources that discussed the hierarchical structure of *vuhosi* of original Vhavenda, or Vhavenda proper as Vhangona are referred to in scholarly works, shows that they somehow shared an equivalence with their European counterparts. This was before the arrival of Vhasenzi or Masingo of Dimbanyika/ Vele-!a-mbeu/ Thohoyandou/ Mpopu/ Ramabulana/ Makhado (in that order) in Venda, around the 1600s (Nemudzivhadi, 2017: 3; Mabogo, 1990: 19- 20; Khorommbi, 1996: 19; Khangala, 1999: 2-3; Mulaudzi, 2020: 30, 53 and 68; Mahosi, 2020: 59-66, 123-129). The period that followed, these two groups assimilated into each other and welded into a complex,

but heterogenous, Vhavenda people with their own hierarchical structure that one way or the other mirrored that of their European counterparts as it will be seen later (see also Nemudzivhadi, 2017: xix; Mabogo, 1990: 11- 20; Mulaudzi, 2020: 30; Mahosi, 2020: 65-66). However, an acknowledgement by the Europeans of the equivalence of their political hierarchical structure to that of Africans, and Vhavenda in particular, would have denuded the fact that the socio-political administrative structure of the latter was at least comparably and reasonably developed to their level, which they were loath to admit lest they found themselves with egg in the face. However, this would have been in conflict with the Europeans' nefarious intentions of locating Africans and/ or Vhavenda, and everything about them, within the 'dark continent' context of backwardness, uncivilized, uncultured, primitive and incapable; such that Africans and/ or Vhavenda were made to regard themselves as inferior and inhumane (Gottschling, 1905: 365).

Therefore, as a result of the Eurocentric depiction of Africans, and Vhavenda in particular, as belonging to the 'dark continent', their history was seen as an extension of that of Europeans, dating from the arrival of Portuguese traders, Dutch Colonists to the British Imperialists on these shores, who portrayed it as a history of contact, hunting and exploration (Gottschling, 1905: 365). This was regardless of the fact that, Africa is/ was regarded as 'the cradle of humankind and of civilization'. In this regard, Ndou (1993: 30-31) is quick to point out that God was no stranger to Africans, such that Europeans were naïve not to have given themselves time to study and understand about the Africans' way of life. In the same vein Khorommbi (1996: 27-33, 35) avers that as usual Western researchers have given a wrong impression that African religion is/ was animism, whereas ironically Europe had experienced a resurgence of Satanism, which went against their 'holier-than-thou' attitude about Africans. This can be understood within the context that the Europeans themselves did not really give themselves the time and opportunity to study about and understand the lives of the Africans in whose continent they had come to exist and exploit natural resources for processing and economically develop their home countries. The result was that whenever and wherever imperial powers researched about Africa it was for the benefit of drafting racial policies that were beneficial to their colonial objectives. Yet it was in Africa where transformation was taking place and *mahosi* were moulded, wars were fought, treaties were concluded, and where social, political and economic development was afoot. Nevertheless, it was within this situation of wars and treaties, where the African appeared to be non-existent as the

result of the Eurocentric approach which regarded Africans as inhumane (Gottschling, 1905: 365; Delius, Maggs and Schoeman, 2014: 45).

This unhappy background leads us to the institution of *vhuhosi*, of Vhavenda which, according to Van Warmelo, (1932: 15) "...in ancient times had the so-called sacred Kingship, a system entirely depending on magical and religious sanctions. The purpose of the king was surrounded by taboos, and mysteries. Common people were not his subjects, not his fellowmen, but his children. The ruling families of Vendaland constituted small governing classes closely knit together either through innumerable marriages or probably because nowhere else in the sub-continent will one find such a tangle of family ties... where the whole nation seems divided for the sake of the royal house to rule." Flowing from the preceding assertion by Van Warmelo, the current researcher would like to advance that this paints a picture of a ruling structure which had a socio-political structure, given that regardless of the mention of taboos, mysteries, magic and religion, it "constituted small governing classes". Although Van Warmelo's (1932: 16) assertion, is not comprehensive enough to include fatherhood, priesthood (even if religion is mentioned as one of the cornerstones) it constitutes the best observation by a European researcher or scholar. The essence of the assertion(s) is that their father, *thovhele khosikhuku* was both a socio-political and a religious figure as an overlord of governance and a priest who officiates(ed) during ancestor worship. After enthronement, he is/ was elevated to a higher status in which he regards(ed) all the people the same such that *vhuhosi* involves(ed) relationship since this figure is/ was regarded as 'the begetter of many'<sup>4</sup> and it embraces(ed) people who look(ed) to it for security, peace and everything good (Holomisa, 2009: 15; Nemudzivhadi, 2017: xix; Neluvhalani, 2018: 7; Mahosi, 2020: 69-72; Delius, Maggs and Schoeman, 2014: 45).

Amongst Vhavenda who had by then emerged as a heterogenous group between the 1600s and 1700s, kingship in which there is/ was no automatic succession, evolved from Dzata in the 18th Century, where the three houses descended. The main or senior house was that of Thohoyandou, who descended from Dimbanyika and Vele-la-mbeu (in that order), which means that this is the house of *thovhele khosikhulu* (Stayt, 1968:

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<sup>4</sup> As 'begetter of many' and the one who occupied the apex position of *vhuhosi*, *Thovhele Khosikhulu* was called *mazwale*, a concept which meant that it permeated through the levels of society, from the family to the whole community.

11; Nemudzivhadi, 1977: 3; Nemudzivhadi, 2017: xix; Mulaudzi, 2020: 11-12). The house of Ṭhohoyandou, later to be commonly known as the house of Ramabulana to date, remained supreme throughout the ages within the hierarchy of *vhuhosi* of Vhavenda despite colonial and imperial interference. Therefore, among Vhavenda the personality of the incumbent does not matter. Whether the throne is occupied or vacant the house continued as if the incumbent was there. The other two junior houses of Tshivhase and Mphaphuli had their own titles as *mahosimahulu* (principal traditional leaders, to be explained below); which titles are/ were Nyolimane and Gole, respectively (Van Warmelo, 1932: 16). The current researcher would like to take this opportunity to briefly explain the hierarchical concepts of the structure of governance which Masingo of Dimbanyika/Vele-la-mbeu/Ṭhohoyandou adopted from Vhangona following the dual assimilation of the two groups between the 1600s and the 1700s (Wessmann, 1900: 9-10; Nemudzivhadi, 2017: Nemudzivhadi, 1977: 3; Mulaudzi, 2020: 2; Mahosi, 2020: 70-71). Based on the background painted above, the current researcher would like to give a brief explanation of the different levels of the structure of *vhuhosi* of Vhavenda and/ or Ramabulana/Mphephu, in particular, so as to help the reader to gradually locate the relationship between the Ramabulana and Ravele families, as shown by Nemudzivhadi (2017: xix) and Mahosi (2020: 63-66) below:

### **2.1.1 Thovhele Khosikhulu**

*Thovhele Khosikhulu* means king, sovereign, highest royal title, national leader, symbol of national unity who occupies the apex of the socio-political rung. Apart from being the supreme head of the nation, he has his own territory which he reigns through *mahosimahulu* and *mahosi* (below them). As a king and monarch, he is also referred to as *Muzwale* or *Mazwale*, meaning father and begetter of many.

### **2.1.2 Khosikhulu (singular)/ Mahosimahulu (plural)**

This level is below that at the apex of the structure of the *vhuhosi* hierarchy. These are territorial leaders who rule through *mahosi*. Their territories are defined by natural boundaries such as rivers and mountains, among others. This level of *vhuhosi* hierarchy is usually occupied by two people in the persons of *mahosimahulu*. Nemudzivhadi (2017: xix) refers to this position as being that of 'paramount chief(s)'<sup>5</sup>. However, since

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<sup>5</sup> As shown above, the concept 'paramount chief' is referred to by Nemudzivhadi (2017: xix) as an

this study is grounded in the Afrocentric perspective, the current researcher would rather prefer to use Tshivenda hierarchical concepts during the course of the discussion to avoid being controversial.

### **2.1.3 Khosi (sng.)/ Mahosi (pl.)**

The colonial or apartheid equivalence of *khosi* is 'chief', which according to the Traditional Leadership Governance and Frameworks Act (Act 41 of 2003), amended by Act 23 of 2009, is referred to as senior traditional leader. It is also found in the Limpopo Traditional Leadership and Institutions Act (Act 6 of 2005), amended by Act 4 of 2011 (Mahosi, 2020: 65). *Mahosi* ruled *mashango* (sng. *shango*) lands; each with its own name and defined natural boundaries (Nemudzivhadi, 2017: xix). Just like with 'paramount chief' and principal traditional leader above, the current researcher will steer away from them and use Tshivenda concepts throughout the study.

### **2.1.4 Gota (sng.)/ Magota (pl.) vhamusanda**

The level which is below that of *mahosi* is that of *gota*, which is referred to as 'headman/headmen' in the colonial and apartheid administrative vocabulary, and has been adopted as such by the democratic government, as seen in the Traditional Leadership Governance and Frameworks Act (Act 41 of 2003), amended by Act 23 of 2009 and the Limpopo Traditional Leadership and Institutions Act (Act 6 of 2005), amended by Act 4 of 2011 (Mahosi, 2020: 65). They are/ were responsible for the administration of defined entities called *zwisi* (kusi sng.) or land which constitute *shango* (*mashango* pl.) (Nemudzivhadi, 2017: xix).

### **2.1.5 Mukoma (sng.)/ Vhakoma (pl.)**

This level is not named in Nemudzivhadi and is nevertheless mentioned by Adolf Ravele, a senior member of the Ravele Royal Council (2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021) and in Mahosi (2020:

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equivalence of *mahosimahulu*. However, the current researcher has written it in inverted commas above because he does not feel comfortable equating *mahosimahulu* with 'paramount chief' since this is a colonial and/ or apartheid creation. Therefore, the current researcher felt more comfortable referring to *mahosimahulu* or as **principal traditional leaders** as and when it is cited and as it appears and is explained in Traditional Leadership Governance and Frameworks Act (Act 41 of 2003), amended by Act 23 of 2009 (Mahosi, 2020: 65).

66), Khangala (1999: 12), Mudau (1940: 11) and Mulaudzi (2020: 23) to mention a few sources. *Vhakoma* administered even smaller areas called *midi* (sng. *mudi*) or villages which together constitute *zwisi* (Traditional Leadership Governance and Frameworks Act (Act 41 of 2003), amended by Act 23 of 2009 and the Limpopo Traditional Leadership and Institutions Act (Act 6 of 2005), amended by Act 4 of 2011; Mahosi, 2020: 65;).

Although the above discussion might seem to have been meandering around the illogical and the irrelevant, the current researcher saw it necessary to briefly explain the hierarchical structure of Vhavanḁa. The idea was in order to lay the basis of later enabling the reader to gradually understand the crux of the relationship between the Ramabulana and the Ravele families. This forms the subject of the discussion of the section or subtopic that follows below.

## **2.2 A Discussion of the Raveles within the Expanded Vhavanḁa Territory**

Nemudzivhadi (2017: 3) and Khangala (1999: 2) maintain that during the period from 1600s-1700s, of the first three monarchs of a united Vhavanḁa people, Ḍimbanyika/ Vele-ḁa-mbeu/ Ṱhohoyanḁou of political development, the area experienced rapid territorial expansion that led to the formation of a large but centralised state that was administered from Dzaḁa. During the period of Ṱhohoyanḁou, who has been credited as the most powerful and legendary leader of Vhavanḁa people, with a land and language of their own, the territory reportedly experienced rapid expansion and development; also regarded as the golden era in the history of Venḁa, during which period it had not yet experienced imperial interference (Mabogo, 1990: 30; Khangala, 1999: 2; Mulaudzi, 2020: 11; Mahosi 2020: 136-142). According to Van Warmelo (1975: 1-2) Nemudzivhadi, (1977: 11), Nemudzivhadi (2017: 1-4), Neluvhalani (2018: 28) and Mahosi (2020: 136-137) the more the territory expanded, and the population grew, this presented a challenge to exercise effective control throughout the kingdom such that although centralised it became unmanageable; a situation which was compounded by lack of transport and difficulties in communication for a trading state. Nemudzivhadi (2017: 3), Hanisch (1994: 68) and Khangala (1999: 2) aver that Ṱhohoyanḁou's empire was so vast that its borders extended as far as the Olifants River in the south and the Limpopo (Vhembe) River in the north.

According to Mahosi (2020: 136) although the territory had become very large and unmanageable for Thohoyandou administratively, the legendary ruler saw in it something positive in that he decided to consolidate Masingo's dominance by appointing his sons, brothers, half-brothers, cousins and a royal 'chief' priest as overseers of the territories in a decentralised kingdom, in what may be regarded as a "diplomatic-defensive strategy". In corroborating this Mulaudzi (2020: 69, citing from Nemudzivhadi, 1998: 4)<sup>6</sup> avers that the introduction of this 'diplomatic-defensive' move was in order to face the challenges of external threats on the powerful Venda polity (See also Mudau, 1958; Nemudzivhadi, 2017; Khangala, 1999; Marole, 1966; Flygare, 1899). The 'chief' priest mentioned above was one Nelunguda, the progenitor of the Mphaphuli dynasty, who are presently one of the powerful *mahosi* of Vhavenda group of Mbilwi, near Sibasa. Although some authors (Mudau, 1940; Ndou, 1993; Khangala, 1999; Nemudzivhadi, 1998) claim that Nelunguda Mphaphuli was related to Thohoyandou by blood, Mahosi (2020: 137-138) challenges this in his doctoral thesis based on the personal interview he avers he and a former colleague in the Department of History at the University of Venda (Dr. Humbulani Tshamano) conducted with *Inkosi* (King) Makhosoke<sup>7</sup> at his palace in March of 2012, who pointed out that the Mphaphulis had agnatic links with the Nzunza/ Manala royal lineage at Kwamhlanga. In addition, Mahosi shows that he also interviewed the late Professor Emeritus Ralushai (23 August 2012) on the matter, to which he responded in confirmation of *Inkosi's* pronouncement. In order to further confirm this matter, Mahosi avers that he further telephonically interviewed Tshamano (11 October 2018) during the process of writing his doctoral thesis. Tshamano unequivocally confirmed the story as a first eyewitness. Importantly, Tshamano alluded to the fact that the Mphaphulis arrived at Dzaṭa as powerful *dziṅanga* (traditional healers

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<sup>6</sup> This is Nemudzivhadi's PhD thesis in History the title of which is "The Attempts by Makhado to Revive the Venda Kingdom, 1864-1895", which was conferred by the Potchefstroom University in 1998. The institution has since been renamed the North-West University (NWU).

<sup>7</sup> During the same interview *Inkosi* revealed that the Mphaphuli's had fled from Kwamhlanga during succession dispute and thereafter settled in Venda, when the area's ruler was Dimbanyika, father of Vele-la-mbeu/ Dzhambeu and grandfather of Thohoyandou. During Mahosi and Tshamano's visit to Kwamhlanga, the Department of History, through the School of Human and Social Sciences, had entered into a Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement (MoU/A) which commissioned the University to research about the History of Amandebele of Nzunza/ Manala. The purpose of this specific visit was to set the tone of the research process. However, the project died its premature.

and diviners) such that soon thereafter they gained the trust, confidence and favours of the royal house, especially Ḍimbanyika, because of their magical powers (See also Mulaudzi, 2020: 69). However, the current researcher would like to put it on record that it is not the intention of this study to cast aspersions on *vhuhosi* of the Mphaphulis, but to state historical facts around its origin and how it fits within the Ramabulana equation. Mahosi (2020: 138) further accentuates this by saying that above all Nelunguda Mphaphuli himself had become part of the royal family by virtue of marrying into the Ramabulana family (Mahosi, 2020: 138).

Suffice to say that although the paragraph above initially intended to elaborate on the 'diplomatic-defensive' strategy of Ṭhohoyandou and the implementation thereof, the current researcher felt compelled to concisely point out the position of the Mphaphulis in Vhavenda's royal equation. The second objective of this subsection was to make it logically clear why the Raveles became the beneficiaries of one of Thohoyandou's territories during decentralisation. In other words, the intention was to denude the relationship between the Ramabulanas and the Raveles. The objective was also to prepare ground to show that the Raveles were initially *mahosi* whose status was affected by their removal from Old Mauluma, during the period of this study.

When Ṭhohoyandou designated *mahosi* under him during the decentralisation process, and *magota* below them, he first posted his heir apparent Munzhedzi Mpofo, who later adopted Ramabulana<sup>8</sup> as a name/ surname to Swongozwi/ Swunguzwi; while his other sons Ratombo and Mandiwana he stationed at Tshikombani and Vari respectively. His brothers/ half-brothers Raluswielo (later to be known as Tshivhase), **Nelunguda** (a brother of Ṭhohoyandou according to Nemudzivhadi, 2017: 3 but an in-law according Mahosi, 2020; see footnote 8 above), **Bele-la-mambo** (herein shortened to **Bele**<sup>9</sup>, a progenitor of the Ravele dynasty) and Magoro were appointed to oversee the territories

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<sup>8</sup> Munzhedzi was apparently given this name after he mythically assisted Batlokwa with rainmaking during the time he was in exile, during the succession dispute with his brother Ramavhoya (See Mulaudzi, 2020: 73-77).

<sup>9</sup> It needs to be noted that, at that point in time the surname Ravele had not yet been adopted because it was initially a name of one of the persons that ascended the throne during the later period of the line of succession.



of Dopeni/ Depeni, Tshitomboni, Vuvha (which then later stretched up to Old Mauluma or Luvuvhu Valley in this study) and Mbwenda, respectively (Nemudzivhadi, 2017: 3; Mahosi, 2020: 136).

It is very important to show that there is some confusion in some sources regarding the correct status of **Bele** *vis-à-vis* Ṭhohoyanḁou. Nemudzivhadi (2017: 3) refers to him as a brother/ half-brother whereas in Nemudzivhadi (1977: 11) he is referred to as one of the sons of the monarch. However, Stayt (1968: 15) and Marole (1966: 9) both also refer to **Bele** as one of the sons of the *Thovhele Khosikhulu*. The current researcher has chosen not to embed himself in this confusion lest it derails the aim of this study. Importantly, the current researcher has been comforted by the fact that either son or brother/ half-brother, these sources point to an agnatic link between **Bele** and the monarch, since the in-depth research into the matter belongs to another study. Importantly this discussion points to **Bele** being a member of the Masingo dynasty. Therefore, the current researcher's depiction of **Bele** in bold is meant to single him out as a member of the royal family and the subject of the discussion of this sub-topic. In addition, the purpose is to lay emphasis on the fact that from that period onwards **Bele**, and the generation that followed after him indeed inherited or were designated *mahosi*, which *vuhosi* then endowed them with royal status. The current researcher also chose to focus on Nelunguda for attention above as a way of refreshing the mind of the reader about the perceived blood relation between him and Ṭhohoyanḁou which was non-existent.

Therefore, although the Raveles are related to the Ramabulanas by blood, this designation into *vuhosi*, brings into focus an extension and consolidation of the relationship to the politico-strategic-diplomatic level. This is essentially, noticed when a lens is cast on the later politico-diplomatic relationship that developed between Makhado, Ṭhohoyanḁou's grandson and Nndwayamiomva, Bele's great-grandson. Besides the fact that Nndwayamiomva was Makhado's nephew, made the politico-diplomatic relationship between the two individuals to grow stronger when the two ruled for the house of Ramabulana and Ravele, respectively (to be discussed later below), a situation which was also bolstered by the fact that they were circumcised during the same period (Nemudzivhadi, 1977: 17; Mulaudzi, 2020, 80).

Ṭhohoyandou's territory was eventually decentralised into territories under various persons who benefitted by virtue of their relationship, either through the bloodline or otherwise, with the ruling family. Mulaudzi (2020: 69) is of the opinion that this turn of events resulted in the four major centres of power: Dzata, Swongozwi, Dopeni and Tshitomboni and thus implies that this was the start of an unintended disintegration of the once powerful kingdom. In contrast, Nemudzivhadi (2017: 3) and Mahosi (2020: 138) argue that the decentralization process did not necessarily mean the creation of eight independent states, since each territory still answered to *thovhele khosikhulu* during the process of administration. The only difference was that each territory was given lands with defined borders under *mahosi* and *magota*, which *magota* paid homage to the newly installed *mahosi*, who in turn paid homage to *thovhele khosikhulu*. Ironically though, unbeknown to Ramabulana, and Makhado after him, this would be the beginning of the undoing of the once strong and prospering kingdom of Dimbanyika/ Vele-la-mbeu/ Thohoyandou.

This division of the empire into territories under *mahosi* actually prepared ground for the colonisers and apartheid authorities to capitalise on pitting brother/ half-brother against each other, especially during the creation of reserves, later homelands, a process which was inclusive of forced removals. In the main, the traditional and historical royal arrangement was interfered with when the colonial and/ or apartheid South African authorities abolished the hierarchical levels of *thovhele khosikhulu* and *khosikhulu* as they were both collapsed to a lower level of *mahosi*. This must be understood within the context of the opening of this chapter where and when the current researcher showed how the Europeans never acknowledged the equivalence in their status with those of Africans, and that of Vhavenḡa in particular. Equally, when they pitted brothers against each other they extended favours to those who collaborated by creating positions for them and/ or elevated some from nonentities to be *mahosi* while they demoted or dismissed uncooperative ones (Nemudzivhadi, 2017: xix; Mahosi, 2020: 184-199); this being the subject of another study. By this time, however, the sword had become double edged for the once powerful dynasty of Ṭhohoyandou, when Tshivhase became a thorn on the side. This above discussion was meant to lead to the one below on the conflict between Tshivhase and Rammbuda, as a catalyst for the Ramabulana-Ravele politico-diplomatic relationship.

### 2.3 The Politico-diplomatic Relationship between the Ramabulanas and the Raveles

During the period within which Tshivhase had started to interfere in the succession dispute of the Rammbudas, a breakaway from the Tshivhase royal house to be independent, the Ramabulanas and the Raveles grew more closer politico-diplomatically. In the main the influence of the Ramabulana royal family remained evident in any disputes within the already splintered kingdom, especially because wherever and whenever any conflict had to be resolved the Ramabulanas were usually accompanied by a Ravele to help intervene in ascendancy disputes (Marole, 1966: 19). For example, during the struggle for ascendancy between the two sons of *Khosi Vele* Rammbuda (Tshikosi and Siphuma), *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Makhado Ramabulana and *Khosi Nndwayamiomva* Ravele (Bele's great-grandson) succeeded in forestalling *Khosi* Ligegise Tshivhase's incessant attempts to regain control of Dzimauli, through tact, diplomacy, statesmanship and military strategy (Nemudzivhadi, 1977: 69; Nemudzivhadi, 2017: 75). In this way, Makhado and Ravele spread their influence over Dzimauli. From that time onwards, a strong bond developed between Dzanani, Mauluma and Dzimauli. Through these military, political and diplomatic efforts Makhado and Ravele were regarded as liberators who freed Dzimauli from the clutches of Tshivhase's despotic interference. The presence of Makhado and Ravele's forces from Gogogo, Vhufulwi, Tshamulungwi to Tshavhaḍiḍa, apart from military assistance, boosted Tshikosi in the eyes of the people of Dzimauli, making him to gain their confidence, support and sympathy (Marole, 1966: 23).

Although the assistance that Makhado and Ravele rendered to Tshikosi was part of their ambitious plan to save Venḍa from further division and disintegration and in the process bring various *mahosi* under Makhado, thereby attempt to re-unite and restore Ṭhohoyanḍou's kingdom to its former glory and power (Dzivhani and Mudau, 1958: 32) they also fulfilled the traditional obligation of rewarding Tshikosi for supporting them in this endeavour against Tshivhase's bullying tactics. In return for the assistance rendered, Tshikosi offered his sisters to Makhado and Ravele as *vhatanuni* (royal wives). Tshikosi eventually became the next *khosi* of Dzimauli; which development he was aware would not have been possible without Makhado and Ravele's military assistance. As further appreciation of their help, Tshikosi handed a portion of his territory

to Makhado and Ravele, which were Dzamba and Tshamulungwi, respectively, as a token of tribute and loyalty (Marole, 1966: 19). In this regard, Ravele showed his appreciation by sending his *khotsimunene* (younger brother) Muzila Matzheketzheke as his representative, who left Mauluma to rule at Tshamulungwi (Dzivhani and Mudau, 1958: 32; Marole, 1966: 19-25). This strategic move was meant to guard against any military attack that could be planned by Tshivhase against Tshikosi. This narrative about the war of succession in Dzimauli concludes the account of Makhado and Ravele's military and diplomatic relations *vis-a-vis* other loyal rulers of Venda. In essence, this means that Makhado and Ravele succeeded in keeping Tshivhase's influence out of Dzimauli, because their military personnel stationed across Lambani, Tshivhulana, Ha-Mubvumo (near Ha-Lambani), Mbwenda (Magoro), Ṭavha (Malavuwe) with the Maunavhathu military division being credited for posting numerous victories over their enemies, during which occasion, they would behead them and celebrate by beating a drum with a spear, as a sign of victory (Marole, 1966: 19-20; Dzivhani and Mudau, 1958: 32).

#### **2.4 The History of the Ravele Community of Mauluma**

Maingo/ Vhasenzi are historically and generally believed to have originated from Central Africa around the Great Lakes Region wherefrom they crossed into the southern part of the Limpopo River (Vhembe River in Tshivenda), being the northern border of South Africa, the Soutpansberg District, under the leadership of one Dambanyika/ Dimbanyika and settled at Lwandali (the first Dzata) around the 1600s (Mahosi, 2020: 1). They were accompanied by a minority group of Vhalemba (who also call themselves the Black Jews), and on their arrival they found the area occupied by Vhangona, whereafter Masingo conquered the latter and became supreme rulers of Venda as *vho-thovhele mahosimahulu*. Nefale (2000: 19) points out that *Thovhele* Dimbanyika died in a cave which later came to be known as *tshiendeulu* (the burial site of royalty) during one of his hunting errands when he was accidentally entombed (Moller – Malan, 1953: 20). He was succeeded by Vele-la-mbeu/ Dyambeu who in turn was succeeded by Ṭhohoyandou around the year 1790 (Van Warmelo, 1932: 14-15). It is not the intention of this study to embark on a winding road about how the Raveles fit into the Ramabulana *vuhosi* equation, either genealogically or through any politico-diplomatic connections, as discussed earlier in the study. It suffices to say that the houses of Ramabulana,

Tshivhase, Sinthunule, Kutama, Ravele and Rammbuda share agnatic links (Nemudzivhadi 1977: 49; Nemudzivhadi, 2017: 57; Mulaudzi, 2020: 38), save for the Mphaphulis as it has already been discussed earlier above.

Essentially, it should be evident by now that the history and/ or legacy of the Raveles is so much linked to the history and legacy of *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Ṭhohoyaṅdou (Nemudzivhadi, 1977: 11; Mulaudzi, 2020: 68). The emergence of the Raveles as *mahosi* owes so much to the decentralisation of Ṭhohoyaṅdou's empire. It is no wonder that their progenies, Makhado and Ravele, ended up forging a politico-diplomatic relationship after the demise of Ṭhohoyaṅdou's empire. This relationship was still in existence between the two royal families, in the form of Vhavenda homeland's arguably most influential leaders, *Khosikhulu* Patrick Ramabulana Ramaano Mphephu and 'Gota' Ndwakhulu Frank Vele Ravele of New Mauluma (Beaconsfield), between 1969 and 1988, and abruptly ended due to the untimely death of the former. During this period Patrick Mphephu continued to regard Frank Ravele as a truly trusted nephew and confidant to the grave (Mahosi, 2020: 200-213, 227-231; Khangala, 1999: 8, 27). However, the irony of the situation is that the loss of *vhuhosi* status of the Raveles that they attained through and from Ṭhohoyaṅdou, whereafter they administered at Vuvha (Seville) and in the Luvuvhu Valley, is so much linked to the downgrading of the Ramabulana family's status from *vhuthovhele* status by the white administration.

#### 2.4.1 The customs of the Ravele community

- *Thavha* or headkraal(s) are/ were Mubvumela, Vhuxwa, Tshiendeulu (burial place), Vuvha and Mauluma;
- Place of origin: Dzata (the first royal kraal of Masingo in the Nzhelele Valley);
- 'Tribe'<sup>10</sup>: Vhasenzi, refers to Masingo of Dimbanyika to Ṭhohoyaṅdou (Vhavenda)
- Clan: Ravele (the subject of this study);
- The mutupo or totem of the Raveles is Singo or Masingo;

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<sup>10</sup> Due to the controversial history of the word "tribe", it is mainly substituted in this study with the word cultural community or group. This decision is in line with Afrocentric lexicon, which calls for the elimination of the use of vile and derogatory words in the explanation of the lived experiences of Africans, and Vhavenda in particular, in this study.

- Muano (motto): Nga Muofhe or nga Vele;
- Tshiila: What is avoided for consumption, in-take or as food is regarded as *tshiila* or taboo): Mutshila wa mbudzi na musingo wa ndou (Goat tail and elephant tusk) (Interview with M. Mphigalala, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021. Mphigalala is/ was a female elderly member of the Ravele royal family).
- ‘Vhulungu-ha-denga’, meaning Vhavenda traditional beads, were a heritage of Masingo royalty which together with the sacred drum of Ngomalungundu were important religious paraphernalia especially during *thevhula*<sup>11</sup> and the toasting of the first fruit and vegetables of the year, by *khosi* and *makhadzi* at the royal graves. Ngomalungundu was also used during wars to weaken the enemies and prepare them for annihilation, and even appease the ancestor (Interview with Mphigalala, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

#### **2.4.2 Kurendelwe kwa vha Ha-Ravele (How they were praised or praised themselves)**

“Dzulani zwanu Singo Rambau Mphwambobvu,  
wa mphwa vhulungu vhutete ha denga  
vhuno lunzhedzwa nga ana nzhele  
a sin a nzhele afhaladza.

Matzheketzheke wa u la mbudzi a dzima vhalanda,  
ari ndi do ni thavhela kholomo buka la mutsindo,  
ari mutshila wa mbudzi ndi mutupo wa masingo a u liwi nga masingo.  
Muila musingo wa ndou ene e singo,  
banga la mutshea hothe.  
Ravele Matzheketzheke,  
mupfufhi milenzhe mahada u a dudumela,  
duhulu la ha Vele-la-mbeu,

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<sup>11</sup> *Thevhula* rituals are customary practices that are conducted to either appease the gods during bad seasons and/ or celebrate good harvest, the return from initiation schools, the birth of a child, among others. During these rituals a goat is slaughtered, and traditional beer brewed for the purpose of the traditional ritual. The beer is usually used to sprinkle on the graves of the forebears, which practice is called “u phasa”.

Matzheketzheke banga la mutshea hothe” (interview with Mphigalala, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

### **The English Translation of *tshirendo* (praise poem)**

May you sit down, you the progeny of the Singo Rambau Mphwambobvu clan  
You whose sister’s child is Mphyavhulungu  
The ones who are careful when doing their things  
Whereas the one who is not careful is a spoiler

Matzheketzheke who eats a goat alone without sharing with his subjects  
And promises to slaughter you a cow which is bigger than a goat  
And says a tail of a goat is a totem of Masingo hence they won’t eat it  
Who does not eat an elephant’s trunk because he is a Singo  
He does not use a double-edged sword to kill a goat

Ravele Matzheketzheke  
Of short legs and high shoulders (meaning a proud character)  
Grandson of Vele-la-mbeu  
Matzheketzheke a double-edged sword

#### **2.4.3 Other customary observations: The custom of naming royal wives**

The wives of *khosi* are referred to as *vhatanuni* or royal wives since they are married into the royal family. Therefore, they are accorded a befitting ceremony when they are married, where and when they are christened in names befitting their new status, which occasion is also equivalent to graduating into the status of the royal family (Interview with Adolf Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). The names they are given are usually reminiscent of those of Masingo ancestors. For example, Nya-Vele is derived from the name Vele; Nya-Tshavhumbwa from Tshavhumbwa, Nya-Vheani from Avheani, Nya-Bele from Bele, among others. Such names are/ were usually given to women especially who are/ were commoners but who are eventually married into the royal family as a symbol of acceptance. Resultantly their first-born children are/ were named Vele (male), Tshavhumbwa (female), Avheani (female), Bele (male), among others. This customary

practice is still observed but this is not as compulsorily as it was in the past (Interview with T.B. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; member of Ravele Royal Council).

#### **2.4.4 The essence of traditional names of *mahosi* and *dzikhadzi* (aunts)**

*Vhaṭanuni* of *Thondoni* (head or royal kraal) and *makhotsimunene* (junior paternal uncles) of the Ravele royal house usually obtained the following names from the names of *khosi* and *dzikhadzi*. Below is an example of such derivations of names: (Interview with M.P. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; member of Ravele Royal Council)

- Bele-la-mambo (*khosi*, male) would become Nya-Bele for *muṭanuni* (the literal translation of Nya is mother of, meaning that the first-born child of the same *muṭanuni* would be christened Bele);
- Vele-la-mbeu (male) would become Nya-Vele; the child's name would be Vele;
- Tshikalange (male) would be Nya-Tshikalange and the child's name would be Tshikalange;
- Phophi (male or female) would be Nya-Phophi and the child's name would be Phophi;
- Denga (male/ female) would be Nya-Denga and the child's name would be Denga;
- Masindi (male/ female) Nya-Masindi and the child's name would be Masindi;
- Lulambe (male) – Nya-Lulambe and the child's name would be Lalumbe;
- Tshisevhe (male/ female) – Nya-Tshisevhe and the child's name would be Tshisevhe;
- Tshavhumbwa (female) – Nya-Tshivhumbwa and the child's name would be Tshavhumbwa;
- Muofhe (male/ female) – Nya-Muofhe and the child's name would be Muofhe;
- Munzhedzi (male/ female) – Nya-Munzhedzi and the child's name would be Munzhedzi;
- Avheani (female) – Nya-Vheani and the child's name would be Avheani;
- Khakhu (male/ female) – Nya-Khakhu and the child's name would be Khakhu;
- Luvhengo (male/ female) – Nya-Luvhengo and the child's name would be Luvhengo;
- Kutama (female) – Nya-Kutama and the child's name would be Kutama



It is the informed view of the current researcher that the evidence advanced above shows that while the essence of the customary practice of renaming the *vhatanuni* was as much hinging on their acceptance into their royal family, these derivatives were also accompanied by keeping the names of the male and female ancestors, be they *mahosi*, *dzikhadzi* or *makhotsimunene*, alive; by reviving them through naming of their progenies, referred to as “u swa dzina.” This practice was mainly pronounced by the naming of *vhatanuni* of Thondoni, especially where and when they had two or three children, in order to distinguish the rightful successor from the others (Interview with D.E. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; Senior member of Ravele Royal Council); hence the first-born child or son obtained the name of the *khosi* through the mother. In contrast, however, a royal *mutanuni* whose father was a Singo by origin, in other words who did graduate into royalty through marriage, but did so naturally by birth, would be named Vho-Ñwa-*Thovhela*(e). The royal *mutanuni* who gives birth to the successor to *vuhosi* is/ was referred to as *vhakoma* (mother of *khosi* or successor-in-waiting) and had her separate residence which was called *tshiozwi* (residence of the mother of heir apparent) (Interview with S. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; member of the Ravele Royal Council. In addition, the royal *vhatanuni* from the family of commoners were expected to raise their children in accordance with the culture and traditions of Masingo, understand the royal secrets, the language of the Thondo and the rituals of *vhakololo* (royal princesses), for example “U imbelwa musi vha tshi fhisa” (attending initiation when they reached puberty or teenage stage) (Interview with M.P. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; member of the Ravele Royal Council).

#### **2.4.5 The customary law of succession of the Raveles**

As Masingo, and through their agnatic links with the Ramabulana family, the two families share the same customary law of succession. The Masingo customary law of succession states that the successor to the throne must be born of the *dzekiso* wife (Stayt, 1930: 196). The *dzekiso* wife is married through the marriage goods from the father of potential successor to the incumbent. Regardless of how many wives would have been married before her, she remains the senior wife by virtue of being the *dzekiso* wife and the mother of the *thovhele/ khosi* to be. The mother of the potential successor must always be a member of his royal family (Ralushai Commission into *Vuhosi* Affairs). If such a wife is barren or dies before producing an heir, she is replaced by a sister, or *makhadzi* will provide the *khosi* with a second royal wife. The appointment of the successor is in

the hands of his father's sister (*makhadzi*) and his father's brother (*makhadzi*). *Makhadzi* is generally the late *khosi*'s sister from a different mother, usually the eldest daughter of the third wife, while *khotsimunene* is barely the uterine brother of the late ruler. An heir to the throne will be rendered ineligible for *vhuhosi* if it can be proven that he has slept with one of his father's wives or has committed debauchery (Stayt, 1930: 196).

## **2.5 Mahosi who Ruled the Ravele Community to Date**

The subsections below give a genealogical discussion and succession of *mahosi* of the Ravele royal family from Bele-la- mambo:

### **2.5.1 Khosi Bele-la-Mambo: Early 1700s to Late 1700s**

According to Stayt (1968: 15) and Marole (1966: 9) *Khosi* Bele-la-mambo was one of the sons of *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Ṭhohoyandou, who was designated as a *khosi* of Vuvha around the late 1600s. As it was indicated earlier in the study, after the decentralization of the kingdom by Ṭhohoyandou, Bele-la-mambo was posted to Vuvha (Nemudzivhadi, 2017: 1). He also inherited an ancestral name in memory and honour of *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Bele-la-mambo who was one of the rulers of Masingo/ Vhasenzi and Vhalemba during their sojourn in Zimbabwe (Nemudzivhadi, 2017: 1). Vuvha is historically acknowledged as the fountain of *vhuhosi* of the Raveles since the departure of Bele-la-mambo from Dzata to Vuvha after decentralization of Ṭhohoyandou's empire. To date the history of *vhuhosi* of Bele-la-mambo at Vuvha is remembered by a well-known plain named 'mudavhini wa Bele', which means (the ground of Bele) where Bele-la-mambo originally built his royal kraal after his departure from Dzata to Vuvha (Nemudzivhadi, 2017: 3). The name Vuvha originated from a tree called "Muvuvha" whose wood was used in furnace during iron smelting, the ashes of which can still be located at the place identified from such furnace even today for iron smelting. Bele-la-mambo ruled from Vuvha up to the Luvuvhu River which eventually included the Luvuvhu Valley or Old Mauluma (Interview with M. Lalumbe, 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021; one of the beneficiaries of the land restitution; TA. Gov., 1087, P550/8/02 History of the Ramabulana Tribe, Native Location Commission, p. 9; Nemudzivhadzi, 2017: 1).

### 2.5.1.1 The boundaries of Bele-la-mambo's territory (early 1700s to late 1700s)

- The eastern boundary is Mukumbi River, which forms(ed) a western border of *Khosi* Madzivhandila's area of Tshakhuma, with Old Mauluma;
- The southern boundary is the Luvuvhu River bordering *Khosi* Mashau's area on the eastern side of Elim Hospital, but south of Valdezia;
- The western boundary is the Mulozwi River bordering on Matidza and stretches up to Nyatema's area, Mailula, on the eastern side of the farm Welgevonden.
- The northern boundary bordered with Nyatema of Vhulaudzi (Witvlag) Nyatema was a sister to *Khosi* Raluswielo Tshivhase (reference)

When Nyatema passed away during the late 1700s she did not leave an heir to the throne. As her brother/ half-brother, Tshivhase sent Muofhe, another *makhadzi*, to rule Vhulaudzi (Interview with N.P. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; member of Ravele Royal Council). Muofhe was then married to *Khosi* Denga's of the Raveles descendant, by the name of Ramulongo, who bore the first male ruler of Vhulaudzi, Radzilani. He was named Radzilani because the community had been waiting earnestly for a male leader to be born, since their first ever leader was a female, and Ligeigise Tshivhase's sister. When these people praised themselves, they used to say "Ri vha ha Radzilani zwanu vha Vuvha, *Khosi* yanu l a da l tshe Mbwenda" (literally meaning: we are the Radzilanis of Vuvha, our *khosi* is yet to be born from Mbwenda), Mbwenda being one of Thohoyandou's areas where he posted his *mahosi* during decentralization. When Radzilani was eventually born he became the first male ruler of Vhulaudzi (Interview with Prof. M.A. Mafukata, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021, of UNISA).

Bele-la-mambo later relocated his royal kraal to the lower part of Vuvha at Tshamako to avoid windy seasons when unbearable winds would blow on the plain and unprotected area because he feared that this could be disastrous for cultivation and food security for his community (Interview with Mphigalala, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). Bele-la-mambo distinguished himself as a specialist in agricultural practices such as cultivation and the rearing of animals, which counted in his favour because the area around Vuvha was suitable for these agricultural activities (Interview with Mphigalala, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). His other specialty while at Vuvha was iron smelting out of which hoes, traditional

weapons and other artifacts were made in the “Muvuvha” (tree used for iron smelting). It was out of this iron smelting practice that the name “Vuvha” was derived.

Bele-la-mambo’s children were:

Denga

Tshivhututu

*Khosi* Bele-la-mambo died during the late 1700s and was buried at Tshiendeulu-tsha-Tshamakoko (Interview with R.E. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; member of the Ravele Royal Council). His son Denga succeeded him to the throne. It has now become a norm for the Ravele family to have the name Denga in each generation (Interview with R.E. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

### **2.5.2 *Khosi* Denga: Late 1700s to Early 1800s**

When his subjects praised Denga, they would say:

“Ndi ene Denga wa Mutanga wa Bele-la-Mambo,  
wa mphwa vhulungu vhutete, ha Denga,  
vhuno lunzhedzwa nga ana nzhele,  
asina nzhele a fhaladza” (Interview with Mphigalala, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

### **English translation of *Khosi* Denga’s Praise Poem**

He is Denga of the garden located on swampy ground  
The son of Bele-la-mambo, whose sister’s child  
Is known as mphwavhulungu’s soft beads of Denga  
Of the necklace is made by one who is careful  
The one who is not careful spreads them onto the ground

Like his father, *Khosi* Bele-la-mambo, Denga ruled the same territory of Vuvha whereat he was assisted by his brother Tshivhuṭuṭu. *Khosi* Denga ruled Vuvha during *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Mpofo of the house of the Ramabulanas and when Madadzhe was a *khosi* at Ha-Mphaphuli. Denga’s reign was a brief and uneventful one (interview with Mafukata, 13 May 2021). He died during the early 1800s and was also buried at *Tshiendeulu-tsha-*

Tshamakoko. His children were Matzheketzheke, Ramulongo, Magwada, Ralubuvhi, Bele, Mashau and others. Matzheketzheke succeeded his father as the next ruler at Vuvha (TA. Gov., 1087, P550/8/07, History of the Ramabulana Tribe, Natives Location Commission, p. 9; Interview with G. Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2021; member of Ravele Royal Council).

### **2.5.3 Khosi Matzheketzheke: Early 1800s to 1864**

Matzheketzheke ascended to the throne after the death of his father, *Khosi* Denga. His mother was Vho-Nyamuofhe of Vuvha. Matzheketzheke was closely related in blood to Ramulongo and his young brothers, Maguada, Ralubuvhi and Radzilani. After graduating at Thondo for royal men, he was given the prefix of Ne- before the placename of Mauluma, and was known as Matzheketzheke Nemauluma which gave him the ownership of Mauluma territory (Mudau and Mutenda, 1958: 6). After his installation as *khosi* of the Ravele community, Matzheketzheke moved to a territory he named Mauluma: Old Mauluma, in the Luvuvhu Valley, which attracted him because of its fertility. Matzheketzheke's relocation to Mauluma was a boon to him and his community because it made them agriculturally self-sufficient and improved their livelihood (Interview with N.S. Mathivha, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and M.P. Kutama, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021; elderly community members).

Matzheketzheke's territory was divided into the following areas under *magota* (headmen):

<b>Place</b>	<b>Gota</b>
Mbudani	- <i>Gota</i> Nembudane
Thumbadulu	- <i>Gota</i> Bele Matzheketzheke (Thumbadulu means a hill like a roof of a granary)
Tshiungani	- <i>Gota</i> Netshiungani (Tshiungani means a place with echo sounds)
Kutamane (Ha- Bvumbi)	- <i>Gota</i> Bvumbi
Tshavhalisa	- <i>Gota</i> Nemauluma (Tshavhalisa means a grazing place for livestock)
Dovhoni	- <i>Gota</i> Havhi
Maulumane (Vilimadi)	- <i>Gota</i> Nemauluma

Lukau - *Gota* Nwamatzheketzheke  
Muindingwe - *Gota* Mukomafhedzi  
Tharwi (Mutavhanani) - *Gota* Ramukhesa and  
Mulanduausini Vilimadi - *Gota* Nevilimadi  
Mutaduni - *Gota* Nemutaduni

Matzheketzheke divided his territory among his brother, sons and confidantes in order to protect his *vhuhosi* against those who may conspire to overthrow him, like his elder brother, Ramulungo; (BTS 1/237/3, Vol. 3, July 1982, A Short History of Vhavenda; Interview with T.G. Ravele, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021; member of Ravele royal family)

Matzheketzheke's praise poem read as follows:

“Ene wa ula mbudzi a dzima vhalanda  
Ari ndi do ni thavhela kholomo,  
buka la mutsindo,  
muila musingo wa ndou,  
ene e Singo,  
Matzheketzheke banga la mutshea hothe”.

### **English Translation of the praise poem**

The one who eats the got alone and does not share with his subjects  
And say I shall slaughter a cow which is bigger  
The one who does not eat a trunk of an elephant because he is a Singo  
He is Matzheketzheke, the dangerous one  
Like double edged sword

Before Matzheketzheke was installed as *khosi*, there was a succession dispute between him and his brother, Ramulungo, who refused to agree that Matzheketzheke should be a successor to his father's throne (Interview with Adolf Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021). According to Ramulungo, *vhuhosi* could not be ascended by youngsters while he was there as an elder male succeed his father, Denga. Heavy fighting arose at Lamisevhe black forest (in a banana plantation), east of the confluence between Lutanandwa and Dzenda Rivers on the western side of Tshakhuma. whereat with the help of his cousin

*Thovhele Khosikhulu* Ramabulana, *Khosi Matzheketzheke* defeated his elder brother and his supporters, thereby remaining at Mauluma. However, Ramulongo was defeated and fled to the north of Mbulu Mountain where he took refuge and renamed the place Vhutshavhelo (place of refuge). In remembrance of his victory over his brother, Ramulongo, Matzheketzheke named his son Nndwayamiomva, meaning the war of the bananas or the war that was fought at a banana plantation (Interview with Adolf Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021).

Thereafter, Matzheketzheke installed Ramulongo as a ruler of a place called Vhutshavhelo; which was a gesture of reconciliation. His other brothers, Magwada was stationed at Mbulu. Meanwhile Tshivhase had installed his own *magota*, Ralubuvhi at Ha-Ralubuvhi and Radzilani at Vhulaudzi, Ha-Maelula. Matzheketzheke's capital remained at Mauluma (Interview with Adolf Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021; Interview with M. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; member of Ravele Royal Council). All of Matzheketzheke's successors were recognised as *mahosi* of old Mauluma until the forced removals in terms of numerous colonial laws in 1921 and 1938, which came into effect after the enactment of the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 respectively (Interview with S.D. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; member of Ravele Royal Council).

When Matzheketzheke was *khosi* of Mauluma, and Ramabulana was *thovhele khosikhulu* at Dzata/ Swunguzwi, Luvhengo Tshivhase was at Phiphidi and Ratsibi Mphaphuli was at Mbilwi (UG, Archives of the Republic of South Africa, Vol. 61 of 1955: Ramapulana of Bavenda Tribe of Magato (sic) Location Commission, 1906-1907, 13 September 1926; Interview with M.P. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). In 1864, Prince Nndwayamiomva, the son of Matzheketzheke and his nephew Makhado Ramabulana, son of *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Ramabulana, and their cousins Funyufunyu and Rasivhetshela, secretly entered a circumcision lodge with the influence of Mutheiwana Tshipfulambwa Matumba, which circumcision lodge was set up by *Khosi Mammbeule Mashau* of Ha-Mashau at Tshamatangwi. Matumba was a traditional healer/ doctor and *khotsimunene* of Luonde at Ha-Matidza. The enlisting of Nndwayamiomva and Makhado into circumcision was an unusual occurrence, as this ritual was foreign and unacceptable to Masingo (HKN Tribal Authority, Bantu Commissioner 17N12/10, 17N1/12/2 Native Circumcision, Louis Trichardt, 1905).

However, the fact that the traditional doctor of the circumcision lodge was an uncle to both Nndwayamiomva and Makhado; made it easy for the matter to be settled amicably (Van Warmelo, 1932:25-27; Nemudzivhadi, 1985:5; Moller-Mallan, 1953: 138; Marole, 1966: 17-18). Matzheketzheke's daughter, Muofhe Mashau was later married to *Khosi* Ranndogwana Mphaphuli and gave birth to *Khosi* Makwarela Mphaphuli. She was later called Nwa-Matzheketzheke at Ha-Mphaphuli as she was from the Ravele royal family. The mother of Nndwayamiomva and Muofhe Mashau was Nya-Miomva. Because of incessant heavy rainfall and mist at Tshavhalisa, whereafter Matzheketzheke moved his capital to Muraleni, in the vicinity of *Khosi* Kutama's area (interview with Ramaano Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; *Gota* Ravele and leader of Ravele Royal Council at New Mauluma, Beaconsfield).

Because of the tradition and customs which state that the *khosi's* mother does not stay in the same kraal with him, Matzheketzheke built his mother Nya-Muofhe (Nyamuofhe of Vuvha) a residence at Lukau (Tomboni-la-Nwa-Mphaphuli). Lukau is/ was situated on a beautiful place which is surrounded by indigenous Miumo (Wild Fig trees) trees which give/ gave shade to the big flat stone which was used for ceremonial occasions (Interview with M.P. Kutama, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021). *Khosi* Ranndogwana Mphaphuli used to entertain himself at the stone when he visited his mother-in-law Nya-Miomva. There was also a sanctuary called Mishashani-ya-Matzheketzheke where Matzheketzheke received his cousin *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Ramabulana after he could not be healed at Nngwekhulu for an unknown decease (Interview H. Muhanganei, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021; community member at New Mauluma).

The children of *Khosi* Matzheketzheke were:

Nndwayamiomva

Ramuhovhi

Tshinondiwa and others

*Khosi* Matzheketzheke died in 1864 and was buried at Tshiendeulu-tsha-Tshamakoko. This is where *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Ramabulana was also laid to rest after his death. *Khosi* Matzheketzheke was succeeded by *Khosi* Nndwayamiomva (Interview with T.B. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; member of the Ravele Royal Council).



#### 2.5.4 *Khosi Nndwayamiomva (1865 – 1890)*

Nndwayamiomva succeeded his father, *Khosi Matzheketzheke* in 1865 during the same period when Makhado of Ramabulana succeeded his father to the position of *thovhele khosikhulu* of Vhavenda. *Khosi Nndwayamiomva* who was the leader of a military group of Maunavhathu which was assigned a task by *Thovhele Khosikhulu Makhado* Ramabulana of keeping an eye on Davhana, his elder brother who fought with him for the kingship throne after the death of *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Ramabulana. He was also assigned a duty of being a buffer against the marauding Swazis whose invasion always came from the east (UG, Archives of the Republic of South Africa, Vol. 61 of 1955: Ramapulana of Bavenda Tribe of Magato (sic) Location Commission, 1906-1907, 13 September 1926; Nemudzivhadi, 1998: 49). During his time *Khosi Nndwayamiomva* added the following areas and Magota under his jurisdiction:

Muraleni - *Gota Ramuhovhi Ravele*

Matondoni - *Gota Mukhathedzwa Ravele* (Matondoni means a place full of Kiata trees)

Divhani - *Gota Lalumbe Ravele*

Tshivheulwa - *Gota Sigwavhulimu Ravele* (Tshivheulwa means a hill created like a man's barbered head).

The addition of these areas was initiated by *Thovhele Khosikhulu Makhado* as a strategic measure to safeguard against his elder brother Davhana, the Swazis and Nguni attack; especially Davhana was still bitter that Makhado had beaten him to the throne of Ramabulana (UG, Archives of the Republic of South Africa, Vol. 61 of 1955: Ramapulana of Bavenda Tribe of Magato (sic) Location Commission, 1906-1907, 13 September 1926; Interview with Adolf Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022).

*Khosi Nndwayamiomva* received a certain refugee by the name of Mphagi who was in flight from Bolobedu fearing Mohale's campaign of forced circumcision. As a refugee or fugitive, Mphagi settled on a certain forest west of the present Levubu Garage which later was known as Tshitakani-tsha-Mphagi (Mphagi's forest). Mphagi's plea to settle at that forest was to initiate musevhetho (a tribal initiation ritual for females. Mphagi was later married to *Makhadzi Mutsharini Ravele*, a sister to *Khosi Nndwayamiomva*, which further cemented their friendship and relationship (Interview with G. Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2021; member of Ravele Royal Council),

Meanwhile when *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Makhado Ramabulana ascended to the throne after the death of his father, his brother Rasikhuthuma Masakona fled from Tshirululuni to Mauluma and was received by *Khosi* Nndwayamiomva and Ratombo, their half-brother (Interview with N. Nelwalani, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; a *makhadzi* of the Ravele royal family). As a prince of Ramabulana royal family, Rasikhuthuma was given a portion of land to rule, which land had traditionally belonged to *Khosi* Nndwayamiomva Ravele, thus reducing his own land in size. On the south the beacon of *Khosi* Nndwayamiomva's land became south of Tshitakani-tsha-Mphagi by the Tshamukorosi Valley and stretched to east where Barotta school was situated (Tshiomvani) (Interview with N.T. Bvumbi, 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021; a *mukoma* of the Ravele Royal Council).

#### **2.5.4.1 Boundaries during the period of Nndwayamiomva**

- The northern boundary was Lutanangwa River and Tserekanya River;
- The western boundary was Muunga River bordering on Ha-Ratombo;
- The southern boundary was Tshamukorosi Valley, which passes(d) north of Tshitungulu Mountain which bordered on Rasikhuthuma Masakona to Senzi River;
- The eastern boundary was Mukumbi River bordering on Madzivhandila's Tshakhuma (Interview with N. Nelwalani, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; *makhadzi* of Ravele royal family).

According to the current researcher each time that Nndwayamiomva gave a piece of land to a cousin or any refugee, this effectively affected the original boundaries of his territory, thereby reducing the size of his land.

The mother of *Khosi* Nndwayamiomva was Nya-Miomva, sister of Limani, Makhado's mother. Both Nya-Miomva and Limani were the daughters of Vhakwevho of Luonde. *Khosi* Nndwayamiomva *khadzi* was Tshinondiwa and his *ndumi* was Ramuhovhi. Limani, came to stay at Mauluma with her sister Nya-Miomva (Van Warmelo 1932:25; Nemudzivhadi 1985: 20; Moller-Mallan, 1953: 138; Marole, 1966:17-18).

When *Khosi* Nndwayamiomva and *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Makhado formed their military groups, they first gathered guns from the Europeans. Since they were efficient hunters, they were given guns by Europeans to go hunt elephants at Vhukalanga and when they came back, they always reported that they have been chased by the enemies and lost their guns; which of course was far from the truth as they always hid their caches (Marole, 1966: 19-20; Moller-Milan, 1953: 60-169). Royal conflicts and further encroachment of Boers and other their African collaborators encouraged *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Makhado and his mahosi to form military groups to defend their territory. The royal military group which belonged to the Thondo (royal kraal) was known as Mavhoi; Mundalamo Mavhasa Musekwa's (another *khosi* under Makhado) group was Mañenu; Mañena Misipha Mulaudzi Maphaha of Phawe's group was Vhalube, Funyufunyu's group was Vhaingamela and *Khosi* Nndwayamiomva group was Maunavhathu. These were the armies that defended the Nguni's of Mzila, the Swazis. After conquest by the Boers, they attempted to subjugate the whole of Venda, under their control (Marole, 1966: 19; Nemudzivhadi 2017: 49-51).

*Khosi* Nndwayamiomva and *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Makhado were inseparable partners from youth until they parted ways on account of death. They had attended a circumcision lodge together at Tshamatangwi at Ha-Mashau, even if they risked being ostracized as this was not customary to the Masingos to do so. Thereafter they shared a common bond of ancestry that originated from the Dzata royal family (Van Warmelo 1932:25; Nemudzivhadi 1985: 20; Moller-Mallan, 1953: 138; Marole, 1966:17-18). Besides, their mothers were sisters from Vhakwevho from Ha-Matumba (Limani Makhado's mother) and Nya-Miomva (*Khosi* Nndwayamiomva's mother). Therefore, *Khosi* Nndwayamiomva and *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Makhado shared a multilayered relationship, apart from being ancestral relatives (brothers), friends and cousins. They were also comrades in arms as they had military groups that fought on each other side (Marole, 1966: 19; Nemudzivhadi 2017: 49-51).

The two royals also hunted elephants together with guns supplied by white hunters. They did this on behalf of white hunters but saw this opportunity and exploited it to their advantage by concealing some guns for future use in their armies and elephant tusks which they sold on their own for cash or exchange for additional guns to beef up their military arsenals. Their armies became more formidable against their foes as they were

not only relying on traditional weapons, but with modern weapons (Wessmann, 1908: 116; Marole, 1966: 19-20; Moller- Mallan, 1953: 160-169). They used the weapons effectively against the whites and their African collaborators (Muzila's Nguni, Mswati's Swazi and Albasin's Shangaans as well as Davhana) and their other enemies to their own advantage during the military encounters that saw the score of military triumphs without being defeated in their own time. It was for the good reason that *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Makhado was referred to as the "Lion of the North" (Wessmann, 1908: 116; Marole, 1966: 19-20; Moller- Mallan, 1953: 160-169). Taking from his relationship with *Khosi* Ravele during the succession dispute of the Rammbudas, his fearless stance against his elder brother Davhana, the Swazis, the Ngunis, Vatsonga/ Machangana and the settlers at Oudedorp/ Schoemansdal, this made Makhado an outstanding Vhavenda ruler of his time.

Flowing from above the bond between *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Makhado and *Khosi* Nndwayamiomva was also highlighted by the campaign which they conducted "of ferreting out the existence of opposition, active and passive and forcing loyalty from his contemporary rulers..." (reference). It has been pointed out that in his campaigns he was accompanied by twelve important persons who deserved his utmost trust and among them it was presumed there were Funyufunyu and Nndwayamiomva who was the chairperson of the Makhado's royal council (UG, Archives of the Republic of South Africa Vol. 61, 1955. Ramapulana of Vhavenda Tribe of Magato, Location Commission 1906-1907: The Makhado (Ramabulana Tribe), p. 9). Rasivhetshele was another one of those who were close to him even during elephant hunting expeditions (Nemudzivhadi, 2017: 44). *Khosi* Nndwayamiomva and *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Makhado inseparable partnership only ended during one elephant hunting expeditions. According to Nemudzivhadi (2017: 7) it was during these expeditions that *Khosi* Nndwayamiomva was trampled to death by an elephant as he attempted to sever (cut) its trunk by an axe. After his death, he was brought back home by Langalanga Ramovha and others for burial at Tshiendeulu. The death of *Khosi* Nndwayamiomva only physically separated him from *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Makhado, but the strong bond between their two royal families stood the test of times and it was persistently sustained even during their succession as it were the times of their forebears, as it was discussed above.

The children of *Khosi* Nndwayamiomva were:

Ravele Tshauambela Tshivhuyahuvhi

Muditambi and others

After the death of *Khosi* Nndwayamiomva in 1890, his *ndumi*, Ramuhovhi became the acting-*khosi* of the Ravele community of Mauluma between 1890-1892, until the heir apparent, Ravele came of maturity age. Ravele succeeded his father, Nndwayamiomva as *khosi* of the Ravele community of Mauluma in 1892 and ruled until 1924 (Interview with Adolf Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022).

### **2.5.5 *Khosi* Ravele (1892 – 1924)**

*Khosi* Ravele succeeded his father, Nndwayamiomva as *khosi* of the Ravele community around during the reign of *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Makhado Ramabulana. His mother was Nwa-Tshirangwana who was a member of Vhandalamo clan. He also ruled Mauluma during the reign of Makhado's successor, *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Alilali Tshilamulela Mphephu Ramabulana's wars with the Boers of the Transvaal in 1898 and Anglo Boer war from 1899-1902 (UG, Archives of the Republic of South Africa Vol. 61, 1955. Ramapulana of Vhavenda Tribe of Magato, Location Commission 1906-1907: The Makhado (Ramabulana Tribe), *Khosi* Ravele helped his cousin *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Mphephu to ascend to the throne in 1895 and supported him in his later conflicts with the Boers and in another conflict which out broke on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November 1898. The war was regarded as the last war against the colonialists in South Africa which saw the final subjugation of Vhavenda: also referred to as the last and the greatest war the Transvaal Republic fought against any Africa people. Referring to this War the *Pretoria Weekly* (Edition of the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1898) reported: "...fighting Mpefu, a formidable task". In the same paper also concluding his speech in a function organized for him to celebrate his victory, Commandant General Joubert said: "Although we have not done what we would have liked to do and Mpefu has escaped, we have subdued the natives, and though Mpefu's course is still open and he may still go about sowing seeds of discord, he can do nothing openly. We have put an end to his reign of terror in the Zoutpansberg." In congratulating the Commandant General, Wessamann wrote: "Edelen de macht gebroken werd van den gyzel van Zoutpansbergen die het land zoo vele Jaren verontrust heef." (literal translation of the text: "Noble power broken from the

gysel of Zoutpansberg which has troubled the country for so many years) (TAK. G305/5. R. Wessemann ann Komandant-General, 13 February 1899; Van Warmelo, 1932: 167; *The Pretoria Press*, Weekly Ed. 15<sup>th</sup> November 1898).

Besides *Khosi* Ravele, there were other *mahosi* under *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Alilali Tshilamulela Mphephu Ramabulana, hereafter to be referred to as Mphephu. These were Mavhasa Musekwa, Tshikota, Funyufunyu, Rasivhetshele and Ratombo, who had equally supported his father, Makhado, before him. However, and ironically, although Ramabulana was very strongly against the census for Vhavenda by the Boers, they also supported a survey and demarcation of their land by the Boers in May 1885 by the Commission whose members were, Pretorius H.P.N, Potgieter C.D and De Sourcer L.P. In contrast *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Mphephu never agreed to this move (Nemudzivhadi, 1998: 169; Nemudzivhadi, 2001: 7). Resultantly, *Khosi* Vele was years later to be prisoner-of-war together with other *mahosi* like Ratombo, Nelwamondo, and Matidza for supporting *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Mphephu in the Mphephu-Boer War of 1898-1899. They were first detained at Oudedorp (west of Louis Trichardt) and thereafter were taken to Pietersburg where they boarded a train to Pretoria Prison. When they crossed the Dwars River, the Boers told *Khosi* Ravele that they had arrested *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Mphephu and killed him. *Khosi* Ravele, out of the love for Mphephu and despair that the Boers would ill-treat him in jail, attempted to commit suicide inside the train by cutting his throat. He was stopped from committing this act of fatal desperation by the Commandant Trichardt and other *mahosi*. He had a nasty wound on his neck after this incident that remained as a defacing scar until his death (History: The Makhado (Magato) or Ramapulana tribe: Mpefu, Sintumula (sic) Sinthumule) Maemu, Ndabane (sic) Davhana. Office of the Native Location Commission, Pretoria, 16 February 1907; Nemudzivhadi, 1998: 7).

Thereafter, Wessmann (1908: 14) of the Berlin Missionary Society wrote a letter to the government pleading for the release of *Mahosi* Ravele and Nelwamondo, on the ground that they had not been arrested or followed in the bush like others. In this regard he said: "They came on their free will in response to General Joubert's warning". He was asking this in the interest of the church and the state. The request of Reverend Wessmann was seriously considered by the Executive Council whereafter they released them and nine others. They were warned to obey the government as they had been freed from

Mphephu's yoke (History: The Makhado (Magato) or Ramapulana tribe: Mpefu, Sintumula (sic) Sinthumule) Maemu, Ndabane (sic) Davhana. Office of the Native Location Commission, Pretoria, 16 February 1907). The Boers also requested *Khosi* Ravele to allow Sinthumule to become a *khosi* under Mphephu Ramabulana as the former was regarded as a stumbling block to Sinthumule becoming a *khosi* (Interview with N. Nelwalani, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

Thereafter, *Mahosi* Ravele, Mugivhi, Nelwamondo, Netsianda and Madzivhandila each paid respect to the Commandant-General and signed a peace agreement in November 1899. While Mphephu was still in exile, *Khosi* Ravele became the acting *khosikhulu* of Venda and was assisted by Rambiyana, another prince of the Ramabulana royal house (Chief Mpefu (sic Mphephu), Sintumula (sic Sinthumule), Kutama, Tengwe (sic Nethengwe), Ramaputa (sic Rammbuda), Ndabane (sic Davhana), Molimo (sic Mulima), Maemu, Netseanda (sic Netsianda), Mgibi (sic Mugivhi) Lomondo (sic Nelwamondo) and Madzibandela (sic Madzivhandila)); Nemudzivhadi, 1977: 89). All *mahosi* and other people who wanted to pay homage to the Mphephu while he was in exile, were to go via *Khosi* Ravele and Rambiyana. After the war 1902, Venda was divided into seven independent *mahosi* residing in seven locations. The rest of other *mahosi* who remained in trust, reserves and crown land were appointed as independent *magota*. Thus, was included in this category (Act No 42 of 1956 Section 2 (F). The Act states an "...independent headman shall be in such persons as appointed by the Governor-General to control a minor community or location under the direction of a Native Commissioner but shall not include persons commonly called headmen or indunas appointed by the Chiefs to assist in the administration of their community". That is where and when the whole mess started in the institution of traditional leadership. In 1903, the British Government appointed a Commission to allocate locations, farms, crown lands and reserves, to so-called independent *mahosi*. This was non-existent as per Venda culture because all *mahosi* were under *Thovhele Khosikhulu*. The long and short of it is that the Boers were applying the 'divide and rule' principle to divide the Vhavenda (Interview with T.G. Ravele, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021; Nemudzivhadi, 1977: 90).

It was around this period that the Ravele community was dispossessed of their land by colonial conquest and through legislation by the whites, starting from the Transvaal Boer Republic under Volksraad Resolution of 1853 (SAA LD 341593/129. 1735 Levubu

Irrigation Scheme, SAA Director-General of Demobilization (DGD) 413/18/22, 1243 Field of Employment, Levubu Land Settlement, Northern Province). The traditional and historical Mauluma under *Khosi Ravele* was divided and demarcated in the following farms, namely Lisbon No. 12, LT; Klein Australia No. 13, LT; Levubu No. 15, LT, and Barota No. 17, LT, Portions 2 and 3 (TA, NAD, File No. 176/308 No. 2029, Minutes by Native Commissioner, Soutpansberg-9. A Place meant for white Settlement, 24 November 1022). *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Mphephu and *Khosi Ravele* totally disapproved of what the white government had done to their land. When the Land Act of 1913 was legislated, it legalized the dispossession of the land that belonged to black South Africans, including that of the Raveles' land which was then accepted as the *de facto* and legal white settler occupation of Mauluma territory. Ravele's land was irreversibly affected in terms of the said Act and later led to the first forced removal of the Ravele community in 1921 wherein no compensation was paid (Interview with D.E. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). These forced removals affected the following areas of *Khosi Ravele* and his *magota*:

- | <b>Place</b>                             | <b>Gota</b>  |
|--|--|
| • Mbudani (Entabeni)                     | under <i>Gota</i> Nembudani                          |
| • Thumbadulu (State Sawmill)             | under <i>Gota</i> Bele Ravele Matzheketzheke         |
| • Ha-Bvumbi (Kutamane) (Klein Australia) | under <i>Gota</i> Sigwavhulimu Ravele Matzheketzheke |
| • Tshiungani (Klein Australia)           | under <i>Gota</i> Netshiungani                       |
| • Matondoni (Klein Australia)            | under <i>Gota</i> Mphephu Mukhathedzwa Ravele        |

The effect of the forced removals left much destruction to an extent that the people formed a very sad idiomatic expression which says: 'Ngilimane Tshitopeni (Hanglip), Kutamane (Klein Australia) yo sia mutshinyalo", meaning that it has wreaked havoc and destruction. It referred to the merciless destruction of the residential places by picks and shovels by government officials. The land taken was demarcated into plantations for blue-gum and pine trees. The subjects of *Khosi Ravele* also scattered all over Venda without compensation, as they looked for refuge and new settlement elsewhere, after which they had to endure the burden of heavy taxes that were imposed by the white administration (interview with Ravele, 2021).



As already mentioned earlier the Raveles had established a good relationship with one Mphagi, who had fled Bolobedu and sought refuge in their area and ended up settling at what came to be known as Tshitakani-tsha-Mphagi through the permission of Nndwayamiomva. Their relationship was further cemented by the marriage between Mphagi's grandson and *Khosi* Ravele's daughter, for whom an elephant tusk and twelve head of cattle were paid as dowry (Interview with T. Maiwashe, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020; Ravele community member). However, a bitter relationship had developed between Ravele and *gota* Rasikhuthuma Masakona of Tshitungulu, who had fled Tshirululuni from Makhado. Therefore, Rasikhuthuma was in constant fear of Ravele as he Masakona had occupied an area that was formerly under Ravele. This fear was relieved after Ravele had given his daughter, Aǀidzulwi, to Masakona's father, Tshinanga, in marriage (Interview with T. Maiwashe, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020; Ravele community member).

*Khosi* Ravele died in 1924 and was buried at Mauluma (Barotta) at the Raveles' royal grave site (Tshiendeulu). The suspected cause of his death was depression due to loss of property and subjects. Adolf Ravele (Interviewed 14 May 2022) advanced that word of mouth has it in good authority that the loss of land and the scattering of his community were of essence to *vuhosi* which was founded on African values of communalism and familyhood, which according to African culture and tradition was a bond to the livelihood of a community and its ruler. Therefore, the loss of land and community had weighed heavily on the *khosi* especially after many years that the Raveles had been leading in an area that they called their own and, where they had grown into a stable thriving community socio-economically. The current researcher is of the view that the loss of land and the fact that his community had scattered across the Soutpansberg region and elsewhere, must have been too much to bear for *Khosi* Ravele. Be that as it may, as it is/was the norm and official practice, his death was reported to the government of the Union of South Africa as he was regarded as an independent *khosi* (Adolf Ravele (Interviewed 14 May 2022).

### **2.5.6 'Khosi' Nanga Ravele (1925 – 1937)**

*Khosi* Nanga Ravele was the firstborn son and heir apparent of *Khosi* Ravele and Vhulahani Nya-Lulamba, from the Vhakwevho clan of Malimuwa. Nanga Ravele's brothers were Rasuwa and Thame and their sister was Vho- Mushaathoni, the mother

of *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Mphephu. This is further indication of a long-lasting relationship that had existed as far back as their progenitor Bele. Therefore, regardless of agnatic relationship that existed between the two families, this marriage that produced Mphephu further cemented this relationship (Interview with Prof. Mafukata, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021). Nanga Ravele succeeded his father as *khosi* of the Ravele community in 1924. It is worth noting that all the previous *mahosi* of the Ravele community used only names and did not have surnames. Therefore, Nanga was the first ever *khosi* of the Raveles to assume his father's name as a surname due to the influence of the missionaries; hence he was referred to as Nanga Ravele, whereafter, all *mahosi* of the Ravele community were called by name and surname, as will be seen later (Interview with D.E. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). His *ndumi* was Phalanndwa Ravele and his *khadzi* was Muditambi Ravele. His senior *mutanuni* was Vho-Tshamano from Vhandalamo clan, whose residence (*tshiozwi*) was at located at Muinzini. 'Khos' Nanga Ravele and Alilali Mphephu's successor, *Khosi* George Mmbulaheni Ramabulana Mphephu<sup>12</sup> were given the task of building a cattle-dipping tank at Ha-Matsa where their fathers' cattle were being kept and were grazing. During his reign, 'Khos' Nanga Ravele installed the following additional *magota*:

<b>Place</b>	<b>Gota</b>
• Divhani	- <i>Gota</i> Denga Ravele
• Kundende (Muindingwe)	- <i>Gota</i> Ramudzuli
• Ravele Muunga	- <i>Gota</i> Rerani
• Muinzini	- <i>Gota</i> (female) Tshamano Ravele
• Mutaduni	- <i>Gota</i> Matshikiri Ravele
• Tshingondoni	- <i>Gota</i> Netshingondoni
• Tshisengani	- <i>Gota</i> Netshisengani

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<sup>12</sup> 12 Note that during the installation of George Mmbulaheni Ramabulana Mphephu, the status of the Ramabulanas had already been downgraded after the Mphephu-Boer War of 1898-1899. Having said that it implies that much as the Raveles had known and regarded Nanga Ravele as their *khosi*, the downgrading of George Mbulaheni Mphephu to *vuhosi* equally affected the *vuhosi* status of the Raveles; the implication being that Nanga was either installed as a *khosi* but was soon thereafter demoted to *vhugota* when George Mbulaheni became a *khosi*. Subsequently this meant that Ndwakhulu Frank ascended the *vuhosi* throne as a *gota*.

- Mashavhanduna - *Gota* Mashavhanduna
- Tshilaphala - *Gota* Netshilaphala
- Lwalani - *Gota* Nelwalani
- Lukau / Tshiendeulu - *Gota* Netshiendeulu
- Mavhulani - *Gota* Mufunwaini

During the time that Nanga Ravele assumed *vuhosi* the government had already demarcated land into plantations, which implied that his land had been reduced in size. Regardless, Nanga Ravele increased the number of *magota* and appointed them into new more villages as a sign of defiance (Interview with M. Lalumbe, 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021)

While his territory was already greatly reduced in size by the 1921 forced removal in terms of the Land Act of 1913, his remaining territory was composed of Barotta No 17, LT Portion 3 and 3), where his capital was situated, and part of Klein Australia as well as part of Madrid, which forms part of Luvuvhu Valley. In 1934 his people were allocated alternative arable land at Barotta, on which the Luvuvhu Irrigation Scheme was later to be constructed in order to teach the Ravele community agricultural methods and thus help increase harvest (Interview with N. Nelwalani, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). When the government embarked on the second forced removal in 1936, the pleas of the locals fell on deaf ears. When the government noticed the extent of the from '*Khosi*' Nanga Ravele and his community, it promised him a very big land of Beaconsfield (New Mauluma) and told him that he was going to remain independent. Be that as it may '*Khosi*' Nanga Ravele died in 1937 and was buried at part of Old Mauluma (Barotta) at Ravele royal burial graves (Tshiendeulu). *Khosi* Nanga Ravele possibly died because of stress apparently affected his general health. By the time of his rule the government had passed the Native Trust and Land Act 1936, which was intended to enforce the removal of the Raveles Beaconsfield in groups of trust farms. He had attempted to resist the forced removal since this was tantamount to forsaking his status and the land of his ancestors. Just like in the case of his predecessor father, Ravele, his death was also reported to the government of the Union of South Africa as '*Khosi*' Nanga Ravele, the son of the late *Khosi* Ravele and Tshianzi, a sister to *Khosi* Madzivhandila of Tshakhuma (Interview with M. Mphigalala, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

The second forced removal of all the people of the Ravele community from the Luvuvhu Valley took place on 12 September 1938. Meanwhile Vho-Tshamano, the senior wife of 'Khosì' Nanga and her children, Muofhe, Thizwilondi and Nndwakhulu Frank Vele Ravele, heir apparent to the throne, remained at the Ravele royal kraal at Barotta looking after the royal graveyard. Be that as it may, they continued to resist the government's harassment until they were allocated three Morgen of land for their residential purposes and the graves (TA Gov. 17/12/2 vol.1/1/49. Memo Tribal Burial Ground, Ravele family, 23 November 1949). Meanwhile the Ravele community continued to scatter throughout Venda while on the other hand government trucks were being used to ferry people and their property from Old Mauluma (Barotta) to Beaconsfield Trust Farms (New Mauluma). During that time the road between Barotta and the Levubu garage was littered with bags of mealie and other properties, which ended up being damaged on account of rain or even got lost (Interview with M.P. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

As if that was not enough, their livestock was driven from Old Mauluma to Beaconsfield on foot with the result that some got lost. The change in the climatic conditions also affected many people and their livestock, resulting in loss of lives in both cases. To further compounded the situation, they experienced lack of arable land, while schools and health facilities contributed to the suffering sustained by the Ravele community. Between 1947 and 1948, the Union Government planted pine trees around the original Ravele royal kraal at Old Mauluma (Barotta) Portion C No. 65 (TA, NAD, Memoranda on file 2111/308 of the farm Beaconsfield 212MT, Boabab, 211MT and Mapela 209MT). This was in violation of the agreement of three morgen which was allocated to Vho-Tshamano, the senior wife of *Khosì* Nanga Ravele, and their children which the community had requested for and was granted by the government, although the graveyard was not disturbed by the afforestation. As the land below the Ravele royal graves was required for afforestation purposes, the Union Government allowed the royal kraal to be moved to the adjoining forestry farm, Klein Australia, next to Muunga River which was within easy reach of graves. (Interview with M. Netshisahulu, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

The children of *Khosì* Nanga were:

Muofhe, Nndwakhulu, Tshivhidzo, Phophi, among others.

Ndwakhulu Frank Vele Ravele succeeded his father '*Khosi*' Nanga Ravele as '*khosi*' of the Ravele community of New Mauluma at Beaconsfield (Interview with N.P. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

### **2.5.7 '*Khosi*' Frank Ndwakhulu Ravele (1946-1999)**

*Gota* Frank Ndwakhulu Vele Ravele was born on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 1926 at Old Mauluma (Barotta). He was the son of the late '*Khosi*' Nanga Ravele and Tshamano Nya-Vele, the daughter of Masindi Ramabulana and sister to Nthulane Ramabulana. His *ndumi* was Tshivhidzo Ravele and his *khadzi* was Naledzani Phophi (Ravele) Mashau, the daughter of Malira Mphephu. His *khadzi*, Naledzani Phophi, was married to *Khosi* Khwara Mashau (Interview with T. Maiwashe, 6 November 2020). The installation of Ndwakhulu Frank *gota* of the Ravele community took place at Old Mauluma (Barotta), old 'Chiefs' Kraal in August 1946. The installation ceremony was performed by the members of the Ravele royal family. *Khosi* George Ramabulana Mphephu was the guest of honour at this ceremony. The members of the family who performed the function were Ramulongo, Radzilani, Magwada and Ralubuvhi. The *tshikona* (Tshivenda traditional dance that is very important during such special ceremonies) group from Ha-Radzilani, Nyatema's place, graced and blessed the ceremony was (interview with T.B. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

Whilst Frank Ndwakhulu was still attending school in Johannesburg until 1952, his uncle, acting-*Gota* Tshivhase Ravele and his deputy Ramudzuli Ravele were administering the community. They were worked as an independent community although all matters concerning the community were dealt with by the Commissioner in Louis Trichardt and the community itself (Sibasa/Makwarela Archives File 177/362(1) No. 21. Modification of the area of the Vhavenda Tribe and Mpefu Tribal Authority under Chief Patrick Mbulaheni Mpefu, Louis Trichardt). For example, the person to be elected to represent the Ravele community at the Louis Trichardt Local Council was to be elected at the Raveles' Mauluma gathering with the help of the acting-*Gota* Tshivhase Ravele. *Khosi* Patrick Mphephu is the one who influenced Ndwakhulu's to return to Mauluma 1952/3. When the Mphephu community were made to impose 'tribal levy' on the instruction of the apartheid government in 1953-1954, Ravele's community was not affected as they were still independent. Instead, his community collected voluntary monies to build schools (Sibasa/Makwarela Archives: The Vhavenda united into a

homogenous nation, proud of their culture: “Shumela Venda”. Office of the State President, 1980).

In 1954, Dr. Hendrick Frederick Verwoerd, then Minister of Native Affairs, invited all independent *magota* and *mahosi* from Venda and from the Vatsonga – Machangana communities to a meeting at Sibasa. The meeting was to discuss the formation of tribal authorities amongst *mahosi* and independent *magota* (independent traditional leaders). Ravele and Musekwa were promised to establish their own tribal authorities which would affiliate to the Ramabulana Regional Authority (Sibasa/Makwarela Archives File 177/362(1) No. 21. Modification of the area of the Vhavenda Tribe and Mpefu Tribal Authority under Chief Patrick Mbulaheni Mpefu, Louis Trichardt). However, when the Mphephu Tribal Authority was formed in 1957 in terms of the Bantu Authorities Act No. 68 of 1951, the Ravele community was incorporated into the institution without being consulted by the Native Commissioner of Louis Trichardt (Sibasa/Makwarela Archives File 177/362(1) No. 21. Modification of the area of the Vhavenda Tribe and Mpefu Tribal Authority under Chief Patrick Mbulaheni Mpefu, Louis Trichardt). This incorporation resulted in the conflict between the Mphephu and Ravele community because the Mphephus started to suppress the independence of the Ravele community (Interview with M. Netshisaulu, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). Flowing from above, the current researcher is of the view that the Native Commissioner felt that he could install the Raveles as *mahosi* in the land where the Ramabulanas were *mahosi*. Secondly, historically and genealogically the Raveles have always been junior to the Ramabulanas. Consequently, in view of the Ramabulanas having been downgraded from *vhuthovhele khosikhulu* to *vhuhosi* (see footnote 13), they automatically had to subject them as *magota* at New Mauluma (Beaconsfiled). In summary, the Raveles could only have been *mahosi* at Old Mauluma, a situation which had been made untenable by the colonial and apartheid machinations.

As a consolation to *Gota* Frank Nndwakhulu, the Native Commissioner appointed him into the portfolio of Secretary of Treasury in the Mphephu Tribal Authority from 1958 until 1969, during which time he continued to administer the Ravele community as a *gota*. During this period, the Mphephu Tribal Authority morphed into the Thohoyandou Territorial Authority which by 1969 had been transformed into the ‘self-governing/self-ruling Venda Territorial Authority, in terms of Government Notice R167 of 20 June 1969

(Heroldt and Dombo, 1992: 73). *Khosi* Patrick Mphephu became the first 'Chief Councillor, responsible for Authority Affairs, wherein he was assisted by: *Khosi* T.T. Netshimbupfe, Community Affairs; *Khosi* J.R. Rambuda, Works; *Khosi* A.M. Madzivhandila, Agriculture; Councillor F.N. Ravele, Education and Culture; and Councillor I. Mudau Justice (South Africa: Time is Running Out, 1981: 153-154; Venda Verbatim Report, 1973: 10; Venda Territorial Authority: Minutes of the First Session, 6-9 October 1969). When Venda was granted 'independence' on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1979, as the "Republic of Venda" 'RoV', *Khosi* F.N. Ravele was appointed Minister of Finance, under 'President' P.R. Mphephu, a portfolio he held until in 1988, when the latter died, whereafter F.N. Ravele was elevated to the position of 'President' (Heroldt and Dombo, 1992: 76).

### **2.5.8 The short-lived 'reinstatement' of *vuhosi* status of the Raveles, 1989-1990**

After his ascension into the position of the 'President' of the 'RoV' after the death of *Khosikhulu* Patrick Mphephu on 17 April 1988, the incumbent 'President' appointed a Commission of Inquiry into *Vuhosi* of Vhavenda, also known as the Ravele Commission of Inquiry (Commission of Inquiry into Venda *Vuhosi* (VG) Part 1: 17 February 1989) On the 15<sup>th</sup> September 1989, the same Commission recommended 'President' *Khosi* Ravele's elevation to *vuhosi* of Mauluma, among other three such individuals, under Mphephu Royal Council: *Magota* N.H. Musekwa of Ha-Musekwa, C.M. Mphephu of Vuvha and T.T. Ramabulana of Ha-Maelula (VG. Part, 1989: 13-38, 56-71 and 104-119; Heroldt and Dombo, 1992: 84-85; *Thohoyandou* Newspaper, 22 September 1989). However, during that period South Africa and the homelands were experience a rapid and euphoric political transitional period which was influenced by the release of notable political prisoners such as Walter Sisulu, Andrew Mlangeni, Raymond Mhlaba, among others across the liberation movement, which was followed by the release of Nelson Mandela on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February 1990 (Heroldt and Dombo, 1992: 86-87). Following on the heels of this event military juntas were installed in all the former 'independent' homelands. Soon thereafter, the Chairperson of the Military Council in Venda, Brigadier Gabriel Ramushwana, appointed another Commission of Inquiry to investigate the legitimacy behind the elevation of *Khosi* Ravele and the other three individuals, chaired by one Advocate Mushasha (Commission of Inquiry into Venda *Vuhosi* Part 2: 1990; also referred to as the Mushasha Commission of Inquiry). Unfortunately, in 1990 the findings of the Mushasha Commission recommended that the

elevation of the three individuals by the Ravele Commission was unlawful and therefore should be rescinded; meaning that the four *mahosi* had to be restored back to *vhugota*.

### **2.5.9 Efforts by Frank Ndwakhulu Ravele and the Raveles to be reinstated after 1994**

The then deposed '*Khosi*' Frank Ndwakhulu Ravele did not take the findings of the Mushasha Commission lying down. He advised the royal family, his '*magota*' and the members of the community that he was the leader of a powerful political party, Venda National Part (VNP) and that, if he could take legal action against Mushasha Commission and the Government, he (Mushasha) may be arrested. He claimed that this was because the military Junta did not want to account to the Acting-*Khosikhulu*, Vho-Makhadzi Mphephu, the aunt to the late '*Khosikhulu*' Patrick as the Constitution of the 'Republic of Venda' of 1979 since the document required the 'President' to account to the House of Mphephu Ramabulana (Heroldt and Dombo, 1992: 83). *Gota* Ndwakhulu Ravele further advised that this could jeopardise the political negotiations which were underway in South Africa.

Immediately after the democratic government came into power after the elections of 26-27 April 1994, the Ravele royal family began the process to engage then Premier of the then Northern Province Adv. A.N Ramathlodi about their alleged deposition by the Mushasha Commission and requested his office to trace the whereabouts of the transcribed records and findings. The office of the Premier advised the Ravele Royal Council to wait for the establishment of another commission to investigate *vhuhosi* disputes and claims throughout the whole Province. While waiting for the said commission to be appointed, the Ravele Royal Council, '*magota*' and community members decided to unilaterally reinstate *Gota* Frank Ndwakhulu Ravele to *vhuhosi* of his traditional area of Mauluma, the ceremony which took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 1994 at Old Mauluma (Barotta). Some *mahosi* and *magota* who were either equally bitter about the prolonged process of restoration of their loss of their status, or were just supporters of Ndwakhulu Ravele, some members of political parties such as the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), the National Party (NP) and the ANC were in attendance and gave messages of goodwill. Most of Ravele's subjects who refused to relocate to Beaconsfield during the time of the 1938 forced removal also attended (Heroldt and Dombo 1992: 84). '*Gota*' Ramulongo of Vhutshavhelo, a relation of the



Ravele royal family said on the day: “today we have re- connected Nndwakhulu to his ancestors, we have reinstated him in the land in which his ancestors established themselves as *mahosi*. It is here where we installed him in 1946 as *khosi* of the community)” (Heroldt and Dombo 1992: 8%). Dr. M.H. Nemudzivhadi was the guest speaker. He narrated the origin of *vhuhosi* of the Raveles and the influence as well as effects of colonialism on the institution of *vhuhosi* in general (Interview with D.E. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

In his concluding remarks *Gota* Frank Nndwakhulu Ravele, one of the Royal Council members said: “Namusi Lushaka lwa ha Ravele lwo vhuedzedza dzembe mufhinini. Ane a tou dovha e hezwi zwe lushaka, na vhatu vhaita a si zwone...” (Today the community of the Raveles has reinstated the *Khosi*. Whoever will say that...). After the ceremony, the Ravele Royal Council applied for recognition and codification of their Chieftainship that was settled to be nullified by Mushasha Commission, to the Northern Transvaal Provincial Commission on Traditional Affairs in Pietersburg on behalf of the Ravele community (Interview with D.E. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

Following the above the Ralushai Commission into Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims was appointed to look at traditional leadership matters. The outcome of the Commission recommended that the original status of *vhuhosi* should be revived and restored to the Raveles (Interview with D.E. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). ‘*Khosi*’ Nndwakhulu Ravele Matzheketzheke died on the 25<sup>th</sup> December 1999 before he realized his dream of being restored as a *khosi* of the Ravele community. The children of ‘*Khosi*’ Nndwakhulu Frank Vele Ravele Matzheketzheke are:

Tutu (late), Zwothe (late), Shumani (late), Ifa Bele, Denga and Others (Interview with Adolf Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022).

#### **2.5.10 ‘*Khosi*’ Ifa Bele Ravele (Nndwayamiomva II) (2001-2012)**

Ifa Bele Oliver Ravele Matzheketzheke succeeded his father as ‘*khosi*’ of the Ravele community of Mauluma. His *ndumi* was Zwothe and his *khadzi* was Denga. Ifa Bele, known by his royalty and ancestral name as “Nndwayamiomva II”, was ‘*Khosi*’ of the Ravele community of Mauluma. His installation as *Khosi* was graced by the presence of *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Toni Peter Mphephu Ramabulana. Old Mauluma has since been

restituted to the Ravele royal family (Interview with Adolf Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022). 'Khos' Nndwayamiomva II Ravele Matzheketzheke died on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2012. He was succeeded by 'Khos' Ramaano Ravele, who is still the ruler of the Ravele community.

## 2.6 Conclusion

The above account testifies to the status of the Ravele royal family of Mauluma as *mahosi* and not as *magota* as colonizers have tried to portray them. Bele-la-mambo was one of the sons of *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Thohoyandou, one of the greatest rulers of Vhavenda. Bele-la-mambo installed himself at Vuvha as *khosi*, like all his brothers who ultimately became *mahosi* in their own territories. Having established himself at Vuvha as *khosi*, There was a special relationship between Thohoyandou and Bele-la-mambo. His successors did not even consider themselves as *magota*, but *mahosi* under various *thovhele khosikhulu* who belonged to the house of *thovhele Khosikhulu* Mpofu under *Khosikhulu* Toni Peter Mphephu Ramabulana. Bele-lama-mbo was the first royalty to leave Dzata before Raluswielo, Tshivhase, Munzhedzi, Mpofu and others to establish his *vuhosi* at Vuvha. Therefore, Bele-la-mambo was *khosi* under *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Mpofu Denga, under *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Rasithu Ravele Ramabulana. Matzheketzheke was *khosi* under *Khosikhulu* Rasithu Ravele Ramabulana, Nndwayamiomva was *khosi* under *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Makhado while Ramabulana Vele Ravele was also *khosi* under *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Makhado and Mphephu Ramabulana, Nanga Ravele became *gota* under *Khosi* George Mphephu Ramabulana. Its worth noting the change in the title of George Mphephu Ramabulana at this stage. This implies that by the time he was installed, the status of the house of Ramabulana had been downgraded two levels from *vhuthovhele khosikhulu* to *vuhosi*. This change greatly affected the status of *vuhosi* of the Ravele family

Frank Ravele was *khosi* under *Khosikhulu* P.R Mphephu, Dimbanyika Mphephu and Toni Mphephu Ramabulana. *Khosi* Ravele became the victim of demotion to *gota* in 1959 and re – instated to chieftainship in 1989 and once more demoted *gota* in 1991 by the Military Junta of General Gabriel Ramushwana.

The *vhuhosi* of the Ravele community was already established as at 01st September 1927. They are descendants of *Khosi* Bele-la-mambo. The last being '*Khosi*' Ravele Ramaano, with other who came before him are the *mahosi* of the Ravele community not magota. Their equals who originated from Dzata like Rambuda, Mphaphuli, Raluswielo, Tshivhase are *mahosi* in their territory. *Mahosi* like Nelwamondo, Madzivhandila, Netshimbupfe, Mashau, Masia, Netsiandsa and Mugivhi who were junior to the Raveles, who also suffered colonial conquest with the Ravele's, are independent *mahosi* in their territory (Black Authority 68 of 1951, Mushasha Commission, 1990).

The next chapter deals with the geo-political and the socio-economic situation in the Luvuvhu Valley.

## **Chapter 3**

### **The Geo-political and Socio-economic History of the Ravele Community before the Forced Removals**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In exploring the geo-political and socio-economic history of the Ravele community, it is proper, to begin with the discussion of its environment, its geographic location as well as its landscape. The way in which people see and relate with the environment depends upon the specific time, place and historical conditions in which they operate and experience life (Kirkaldy, 2003: 4). Similarly, their culture, customs, tradition, age, gender, class, social, economic and political situation play a significant role in shaping their history. These will hopefully enable the reader to understand the relationship between the landscape and the history of the Ravele community, and how this community reacted and constructed meaning around key elements of the local environment. It is therefore, essential to precede this chapter with a discussion on the environment of the Luvuvhu Valley, where the Ravele community resides (ed) before their forced removal, and how it influenced their lives. In addition, the discussion is on which communities in particular had inhabited the area, their political structure as well as their socio-economic life.

The landscape of an area is very useful in clarifying certain matters concerning the horizontal account of the community which lived in that area. Historical narration can be understood better when related to its intervention with the geographical setting (Kirkaldy, 2003: 4). An adequate knowledge of the geographical conditions of the Luvuvhu Valley and its surrounding areas would help to provide a better understanding of the values and beliefs displayed by the people who lived there during the period under study. These values and beliefs are the basis of the culture of this community.

#### **3.2 The Luvuvhu Valley's Environment and Landscape**

When one reads about the landscape of the Luvuvhu Valley, it becomes clear that some geographic knowledge is(was) essential to understand the historical events within this

area (Flygare, 1899: 5). The landscape of an area can be changed or created and recreated by the people throughout their experience of, and interaction with the natural habitat around them. It helps to understand how the people benefitted from the area around them and how they related to the same area. It raises issues concerning how life is/ was sustained and also explains the future prospects of life (Maluta, 2013: 18). In addition, it deals with the geographic environment of a place or state and shapes (its geographical views), economic and social life as well as the cosmological notion of the surrounding people (Maluta: 2013: 20).

Given the above, the focus of this section of the study on the landscape of Luvuvhu Valley is not to collect a variety of interesting data about this area, but to stress those geographical phenomena which are related to and have influenced the historical events of the community around the Luvuvhu Valley, its history and experience within their environment. The discussion above by Kirkaldy (2003: 205) on the landscape and its importance are very essential in order to understand the life of that community. In addition, it gives a sense of the relationship between a community and the socio-economic and political value of the land to such a community. It is for this reason that the current researcher identified the necessity to engage in a geo-political history of the Luvuvhu Valley and its community (Kirkaldy, 2003: 205). Very little attention has been paid to the geographic discussion of Luvuvhu Valley except in the discussion above which was mainly general and focused on the Soutpansberg Valley (area) of the Limpopo Province.

However, the general discussion of the Soutpansberg Valley (area) has been very valuable to this study. This is/ was because it gave the researcher an eyeful about the place of the environment to the everyday lives of the Luvuvhu Valley people, their condition and their survival, especially during the period before they were forcefully removed from the Luvuvhu Valley. Therefore, this study hopes to show how this area and its people were influenced by the landscape which embraces its topography and natural features that include the surrounding rivers such as Luvuvhu and Lutanandwa Rivers as sources of water and life (Benso, 1979: 13). The Luvuvhu Valley is a stretch of land that is geographically situated on the north-eastern part of Louis Trichardt, in the Makhado Local Municipality of the Limpopo Province. The Luvuvhu Valley lies(lay) along the Punda Maria Road that passes Tshakhuma towards the Kruger National Park. The

region has a generally hot, fairly dry climate, but has high percentage of rainfall during the rainy season. The Luvuvhu River is the main river in the Luvuvhu Valley; and together with other rivers in the Valley, supplies the community of the Luvuvhu Valley with water, fish and other commodities most closely related to man's survival and most frequently used by people (Interview with Adolf Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022). Furthermore, the Luvuvhu Valley forms part of the catchment area of the Luvuvhu River, with a gross annual run-off of 826, 1 million cubic metres. The most important rivers contributing to this run-off are Luvuvhu and Lutanandwa Rivers, with a combined run-off of more than 468, 4 million (four hundred-and sixty-eight comma four) cubic metres. These were above many perennial and seasonal streams, most of them joined these major rivers before they flow into Luvuvhu River (Kirkaldy, 2003: 226). Therefore, these streams are/were the main sources of water for the community of the Luvuvhu Valley.

The demarcation of the Luvuvhu Valley was dominated by physical features of rivers that form part of the Luvuvhu River system. The most important tributaries of the Luvuvhu River system, that serve as natural boundaries are the Nwanedi, Mutale and Luvuvhu Rivers. These are a number of small perennial and seasonal streams that supplied water to the community during summer (Maluta, 2013: 9). The Luvuvhu Valley lies along the Soutpansberg Mountain, on the north-eastern side of the town of Louis Trichardt. Besides serving as a boundary, the Luvuvhu River, also provides many communities with water (Interview with R. Mphidi, 29 April 2022; member of Madzivhandila Royal Council at Tshakhuma).

The environmental conditions of the area, together with factors like landscape, topography, the pattern of climate, fauna and flora had a strong influence on the living conditions and experiences of the people who were living in the area. This influenced their political system, their socio-economic structure and traditional culture of the communities around the area (Maluta, 2013: 9). The Soutpansberg is the catchment area of the Luvuvhu River whereat some of its tributaries originate from various parts of the Range, until it flows into the Vhembe River which then flows into the Indian Ocean through Mozambique. The river also makes a southeast natural boundary with the community of the Vatsonga/ Machangana people. Around early 1900 this community was under the leadership of one George Nkotswi who bore allegiance to an independent 'headman' Makuleke. The Luvuvhu River is positioned in the far eastern corner of the

corridor, and it flows from south to north where it joins Limpopo River (Maluta, 2013: 9). It also forms part of a natural boundary with the Makuleke community. The detail of this explanation will be found later in the chapter when a discussion on the various Luvuvhu communities is provided.

The southern geographic boundary between Luvuvhu Valley and Tshakhuma depends on seasonal streams, fruit trees such as the *mizwilu*, *muhoganyi*, *mutokota* and several hills (Interview with E. Matumba, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2020; grandson of *Gota* Matumba). According to 'Khos' Ramaano Ravele of the Ravele community of Mauluma, the southern boundary of the Luvuvhu River runs from the south-east of the Luvuvhu River, the area is dominated by trees such as *mihuyu* and *mitanzwa* to the northern side of the Elim area up to the west as a source of food (Interview with 'Khos' Ramaano Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). It also runs along the seasonal stream where it forms a boundary with the Elim (in the north), Tshakhuma, Ha-Mutsha and Vuwani communities that are found to the north-east of the town of Thohoyandou in the Thulamela Municipality of the Limpopo Province (Interview with E. Matumba, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2020). These communities had been neighbours in the area before the forced removals. The topography of the Valley played an important role in the socio-economic life of these communities. The Luvuvhu River Valley inversion influenced the settlement patterns of the community of the Luvuvhu Valley, as the polluted warm air gets trapped by cooler air in the valley as the result of these slopes (Interview with Prof. Tshisikhawe, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021).

These slopes influenced the condition of the temperature resulting in suitable climate conditions that supported the cultivation of crops such as *mavhele* (maize), *miomva* (bananas), *thebvu* (Macadamia nuts), *maafukhada* (avocados), thereby influencing good harvest for the surrounding communities. Most of the members of these communities lived on the side of the Valley because it is cooler than the areas away from the Valley (Interview with 'Khos' Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). People in this area chose to have the north-facing homes to protect their buildings against strong winds which blow/blew from the east to the west. Natural vegetation was dense on the warmer north facing slopes. If you were to move up the Valley slopes, you would experience an increase in temperature and an increase in height (Fraser, 2006: 299; (Interview with

Prof. Tshisikhawe, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021). The topography of the Valley supported agricultural farming as the low-lying area was used for cultivation by the community(ies).

The Luvuvhu Valley lies at a height of 380 (three-hundred-and eighty) to 430 (four-hundred-and-thirty) metres above sea level, with high temperature and humidity in summer, and warm and cool temperature during winter. The minimum temperature during winter is generally between 10 (ten) degrees Celsius and the average maximum temperature during hot summer months is 35 (thirty-five) degrees Celsius (Fraser, 2006: 301). The area is very hot (or humidly hot) from September to April and cool during the day season from May to August. The climate is also fairly dry and depends on the annual rainfall such that agricultural production of this community depended. In other words, the hot climate of the area supports(ed) the natural vegetation as there is a stretch of rare virgin gallery of forest which includes riparian sand (Interview with Prof. Tshisikhawe, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021). These are some thorny and succulent plants within the scattered shingle and crumbling bushes. Where the forest and the underbrush have left an opening, the ground is covered with grass, small plants and flowers of widely differing colours and forms which fill the air with that scent and balm (Stayt, 1932: 47). An almost infinite variety of wildflowers can be seen in every corner of the Luvuvhu Valley area.

The Luvuvhu Valley was also enriched with many endangered and rare plant species. The *moduwi* trees (which produces worms that were edible to the communities) were a common vegetation because the main part of the forest of this area was occupied by this species. These trees were famous for inhabiting the nutritious *maduwi* worms (a family of *mashonzha*, Mapani worms, but which do not have the thorny skin) which used to be a delicacy for Vhavenda, amongst them the Ravele community as they were eaten with porridge and were high in protein (Interview with Prof. Tshisikhawe, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021). The *mufula* or maroela trees were widely available and produced *mafula* or maroela fruit which were very essential for making beer called *mukumbi* which was central during traditional celebrations such as harvest season and traditional ceremonies such as traditional rituals, initiation graduations and wedding events. The *mufula* seeds also provide(d) nuts which have a dual role as a delicacy spice for spinach. They were also Acacias (*muunga*), *mutokota* and different types of palm trees, such as *mutshevho*). Some of the trees such as *mufula* and palm provides(ed) the community with a commodity to brew beer and wine of palm (*mutshevho*) as well as a sort of wine which



was made from the buck of *mutshevho* palm (Interview with 'Khos' Ramaano Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). Tshisikhawe (Interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021) asserts that the diversity of the area of Luvuvhu Valley of fauna makes it one of the wildlife wonderlands, a natural haven for a stunning array of mammals, amphibians, reptiles, birds, insects and plants. The area was rich with wild animals, there were many herds of impala (*phala*), quagga (*madumukwa*), black wildebeest (*thavhandalila*), waterbuck (*ngwele*), eiland (*mbavhala*), buffalo (*nari*), antelope (*phulu*), hippopotamus (*mvuvhu*) and crocodile (*ngwena*). Some of these animals provided the community(ies) with some meat to supplement their daily food.

Equally, the Luvuvhu Valley had a lot of bird species with the most glorious plunge ling in the forest and fluttered from tree to tree and woods, resound with the sweet melody of their cheeping, and chirping. Adding to that was the screaming and whistling apes and baboons that complete the forest concert (Interview with Prof. Tshisikhawe, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021) Sugarbird (*luthwethwe*) and vultures (*maanga*), owls (*magwitha*), woodpeckers (*khokhonyamutanda*) and some different kinds of pigeons used the forest as their natural habitat. This added to the natural beauty of the Luvuvhu Valley and together with the sweet melody of various birds attracted white settlers. It supplemented the peaceful atmosphere of the area thereby helping to refresh people's minds when they moved around the vegetation during their excursions (Interview with M.P. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). These birds were also used as sources of food by the community which means another natural benefit of residing in the area.

Kirkaldy (2003: 228) comprehensively captures this picturesque scenery of the landscape when he mentions that the first German missionaries in the area reported that: "bright butterflies danced in the sunlight and settled now and then on one or other of the different kinds of orchids or papillae to breathe in their intoxicating perfume to suck in sweet honey out of their chalices thereby adding to the natural spender of this beautiful area." The same author further paints a nighttime scene of the place thus: "...in the night, the quiet of the bush was broken by the cry and roar of wild animals, the chirrups of crickets, the croaking of the frogs and now and then the melancholy of the giant owl, while multitudinous fireflies floated through the darkness like so many sparks." This author's artistic presentation of the natural beauty of the place is again captured in the words: "...both in vision of day and night really qualifies the uniqueness of the area

of Luvuvhu.” It was no wonder that the communities who used to live in the Luvuvhu Valley reminisce about it with nostalgia. This indicates the sentimental longing for the community of the Luvuvhu Valley for the past. In closing Kirkaldy says: “It is now a longing for or about a return to a finer past, based on the dependence on the natural beauty which also supported their socio-economic life” (Kirkaldy, 2003: 229). This imaginary painting of the scenery by Kirkaldy, Maluta, Tshisikhawe, Fraser, Stayt and others above the captures the imagination of the reader about how naturally endowed the place is with natural resources that make it possible for the communities to socio-economically sustain lives. Flowing from above, the discussion below attempts to place and relate the various communities within the Luvuvhu Valley in this beautiful environment as well as to show their mutual relationship with it.

### **3.3 The Boundaries in the Luvuvhu Valley before the Forced Removal of 1921**

#### **3.3.1 The eastern boundary**

The eastern boundary of old Mauluma went up along Luvhungwe River bordering Tshakhuma, under Madzivhandila, to the boundary line which goes up to Rabumbulu and Lamisevhe (Entabeni).

#### **3.3.2 The southern boundary**

The southern boundary with old Mauluma was from the confluence of Muunga and Tshipene Rivers as well as the old road to Sibasa via Levubu corporative up to the confluence of Luvhungwe and Lutanandwa Rivers. From the confluence of Tshipene and Muunga Rivers, the boundary passes(ed) between Mphagi's settlement (who fled from forced circumcision from Bolobedu and sought refuge at the Raveles as discussed in earlier in the chapter) and Madrid to Stephan kraal, bordering with Vuvha and Magwada community. The headmen who were lived along this boundary were: Mphagi, Stephan Nyathela and Muti, Tshiruma and Marubini Mulaudzi (Matodzi Noria Phale), Lushada, Nedzinwani and Netshidzivhani and Manasi Nkolele (interview with Netshisaulu, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

### **3.3.3 The northern boundary**

The northern boundary started from Lamisevhe to Thumbadulu. From Thumbadulu the boundary joins the line from Muunga River. *Magota* who resided within the northern boundary were Lumadi and others.

### **3.3.4 The western boundary**

The western boundary bordered Ha-Ratombo from the confluence of Tshipene and Muunga rivers to the beacons of the farm Klein Australie No. 13 LT, Lisbon No. 15 LT and the farms Nooitgedacht No. 14 LT and Schoonuitsicht No. 10 LT to Thumbadulu's officer's house and there turns(ed) to the east and to the Forest offices north of the sawmill and then it passes(ed) Tshirongana to Lamisevhe (interview with M.P.Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

## **3.4 The Historical Evidence in Respect of Boundaries between Ravele's Territory and other Territories**

### **3.4.1 The northern boundary between the Ravele and Magwada territory**

The boundary between Ravele and Magwada (at Vuvha) stretched from Luvhungwe River fountain in the east, moving along the mountain ridge to the West, up to the starting point of the Nngweni Valley which ends(ed) into Lutanandwa River. This Valley still forms part of the boundary. The *magota* of Ravele along this northern boundary between Ravele and Magwada from east to West were: Netshivhumbe for Tshivhumbe settlement, Mukhwakhwa for Tshavhalisa, Netshiungani for Tshiungani, Sitholimela represented Tshiungani ward, Bvumbi was from Bvumbi in the west of Tshifhata River, Mugagadeli for Ha-Mugagadeli Ward, also in the west of Tshifhata River, Nembudani for Mbudani on the extreme of Tshifhata River bordering Lutanandwa River on the west (Interview with S.J. Tshikosi, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021). To the Ravele's of Tshifhata and Lutanandwa Rivers on the West is/ was the settlement known as Kutamani. Kutamani was also affected by the first forced removal of 1921, which was in terms of 1913 Native Land Act. In that year, the Ravele community adopted one lamenting poem/ which says "Ngilimane Tshitopeni, Kutamani ya sia mutshinyalo, Tshiungani vha bva nga zwivhana". The literal translation of this lament means that the forestry project which resulted in forced removal and was launched at Swongozwi and Tshitopeni had wreaked havoc at Kutamani ward and left those at Tshiungani running amock. That being said as

from 1921, the government declared Kutamani area was state land (Interview with M. Magwada, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021; community member and farm worker in the royal agricultural plot). *Magota* of Ravele who administered in the area were: Nwa-Mugagadeli of Mugagadeli; Mukhathedzwa of Matanda and Isman Mugagadeli of Tshakhuma. T.N Bvumbi and N.J Bvumbi were responsible of Mauluma. Simon Nembudani resided at Makwarela Location, M.P Nembudani at Mauluma and A Nembudani at Phadzima. Other *magota* under Ravele who were settled along the boundary from the east to west were:

M.P Netshiungani at Tsianda, E. Netshiungani at Mauluma and A. Netshiungani also at Mauluma. G.P Sitholimela was also at Mauluma, so was N.A Sitholimela at Mauluma. A Netshivhumbe was also stationed at Tsianda, L Netshivhumbe at Tshifulanani and Nwa-P.M Tshivhumbe at Ha-Maelula (Interview with S.D. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; Manenzhe, 2021: 18).

### **3.4.2 The north-western boundary of the Ravele territory**

The north-western boundary of the Ravele territory started from a point where the Nngweni Valley meets/ met with the Lutanandwa River. From there the boundary moves(ed) downwards along the Lutanandwa River its confluence with the Dzenda River. From the confluence of the Lutanandwa River and Dzenda River, the boundary moves(ed) upwards along the Dzenda River to the top of the Bele Mountain, wherefrom the boundary proceeded downwards along the Bele Valley and the Tshipota Valley with the Muunga River. The communities who lived on the outside of Ravele territory along this boundary were Magwada of Vuvha and the Ratombo community (Interview with G. Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2021; *City Press*, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2017). The *magota* of Ravele who lived along the western boundary were:

#### **3.4.2.1 *Gota* Nembudani of Ha-Mbudani area which is part of Kutamani**

*Gota* Nembudani lived on the eastern side of the Lutanandwa River. His area started from the confluence of the Dzenda River and stretched up to a point where the Nngweni Valley enters(ed) into Lutanandwa River. This *gota* was also affected by the 1921 forced removal, in terms of 1913 Native Land Act (Interview with T.G. Ravele, 16 March 2021).

### **3.4.2.2 Gota Bele of Ha-Bele**

*Gota* Bele of Ha-Bele was a member of the Ravele royal family. He lived on the mountain between eastern valley (the Bele Valley which ended) into the Tshipota Valley and the Dzenda River). Bele was named after his great-grandfather, Bele-la-Mambo, the first *khosi* of Vuvha and reportedly one of the sons of Ṭhohoyandou who benefited from the decentralization process. Bele's ward was one of those that were affected by the 1921 forced removal after the enactment of the 1913 Native Land Act. The families which had settled at Ha-Bele ward were: Ranzwa, Neluheni, Makananise, and Ramunawa, among others (Interview with M. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

### **3.4.2.3 Mukoma Ṭhonono**

*Mukoma* Ṭhonono lived along the Ṭhonono Valley, together with the following families: the Raidimis, the Lumadi family, the Masidwali family, the Nevhumbanis family and the Munzhelele family. The area in which *Mukoma* Ṭhonono together with the above-mentioned families lived at were part of Matondoni area under *Gota* Mukhathedzwa. One Mutumba Mutheiwana resided on top of Matumba Mountain right in the Matumba domain (Interview with Matumba, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2020). These families were affected by the second forced removal of 1938, which was made effective in terms of the 1936 Natives Trust Land Act. This was the last group of the Ravele community to be forcibly removed on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 1938. This was an indication of how the Land Act of 1913 had affected the Ravele community (Interview with S.J. Tshikosi, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021).

### **3.4.3 The western boundary between the Ravele and Ratombo territories**

The western boundary between the Ravele and Ratombo territories was the Muunga River. The area of the Raveles that borders(ed) with the Muunga River on the west was called Matondoni. The Matondoni area also stretches(ed) up to the Muunga River on the West. *Gota* Mukhathedzwa (a member of Ravele Royal Family) had settled at the Matondoni area long before the first forced Removal of 1921, which forced removal affected the Kutamani area of Nembudani, Mugagadeli and Bvumbi. The *vhakoma* (petty headmen) under Mukhathedzwa in the Matondoni area were: Tshinyavhulungu William from Tshakhuma, Tshanyavhulungu from Nengwani and Ramala Petrus from Mauluma. Mahlaule was at Mapimela, Mahlaule Abram at Mapakophele, Mahlaule Samuel at Thimbadulu and Mahlaule Edward also at Thimbadulu. One Mphakwa was at Maladzhi, Mphakwa Petrus at Ha-Mutsha and Mphakwa Samuel at Ha- Mangilasi.

Nephawe Khorombi Eliazer was at Ha-Mutsha. Mahatlane was responsible for Vari, Nevari William at Ha-Mashau. (Interview with N. Ratombo, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2020; grandson of *Khosi* Ratombo; *Mail and Guardian*, 12-19 May 2018).

The Matondoni area was again affected by the second forced removal of the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 1938, which was in terms of the 1936 Trust Land Act. Up to 1938. During that time *Khosi* Ratombo (Nyahanyaha) was residing on Piet Naude's farm south of the Ratombo Post Offices which was located in the Ratombo territory. Between 1942 and 1943 *Khosi* Ratombo relocated to the Mugodini area on Khovhogo's farm north of the Ratombo Post Offices, still in the Ratombo territory (TAB KLT, vol.2/1/6, Native Locations, Mphephu Location. Report from Native Affairs Commissioner, Soutpansberg District, 12 September 1902). In 1945 *Khosi* Ratombo (Nyahanyaha) then crossed the Muunga River, which was the traditional boundary between the Ravele and Ratombo territories and settled on the eastern portion of one Peter's pineapple farm (Interview with N. Ratombo, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2020; grandson of *Khosi* Ratombo).

Peter's farm straddle) the Muunga River and this means that the Muunga portion of Peter's farm was found in *Khosi* Ratombo's domain and eastern portion across the Muunga River was in Ravele's domain; the Matondoni area which was under *Gota* Mukhathedzwa. *Khosi* Ratombo was buried on the eastern portion of Peter's farm in the Matondoni area. This portion in which *Khosi* Ratombo was buried became the Ratombo family's burial ground (where all the Ratombos are still being laid to rest buried to date) (Interview with T. Maiwashe, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2021).

#### **3.4.4 The south-western boundary between the Ravele and Masakona territories**

The Vumbani Valley, which was found on the south of the Luvuvhu garage and Tshitakani-tsha-Mphagi (the burial ground of the Mphagi family), respectively, leading to the Muunga River, serves(ed) as a boundary between the Ravele and Masakona territories. *Magota* who lived along this boundary from the east to the west were:

##### **3.4.4.1 Mphagi**

Earlier in the study the current researcher mentioned that Mphagi had fled from Bolobedu to Ravele's territory seeking refuge because one Mohale of Bolobedu wanted to circumcise him. Then *Khosi* Vele Ravele allowed him to settle on a hill next to the

Vumbani Valley. The place within the Vumbani Valley which was granted to Mphagi was later called Tshitakani-tsha-Mphagi. However, initially it was established for the purpose of initiating girl in *musevhetho* at Ha-Ravele. The same Mphagi ended up married to Mutsharini (one of the daughters of *Khosi* Vele Ravele. Earlier in the study it was mentioned that he reportedly he paid one elephant tusk and 12 (twelve) heads of cattle as marriage goods (Interview with E. Ratombo, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2020).

### **3.5 Communities who co-existed with the Raveles in the Luvuvhu Valley**

During the time of the borders/ boundaries that were discussed above, the following communities co-existed under the leadership of *Khosi* in the Luvuvhu Valley:

#### **3.5.1 The community at Mauluma**

The preceding discussion(s) on the Ravele community and *vhuhosi* indicates that Ravele were posted at Vuvha by Thohoyandou as one of *mahosi* as an attempt to thwart external attack(s): the result of which was the formation of communities under *mahosi*, of which one of them was the community at Mauluma under *vhuhosi* of the Raveles. In line with this spirit, in 1865 Makhado sent Ravele and his followers to settle at Mauluma mountain on the present farm Barotta 17LT for strategic reasons (TA Gov (Transvaal Government Administration) 1089 PS 50/8/1907. Location Commission 36/06. Report of the Native Commission on the location of Chief Mpefu (sic Mphephu) Pretoria, 08.04.1907): the protection of Makhado's territory from enemy attack. The irony was that the enemy that was being feared was none other than his half- brother, Davhana whom he had defeated in a war of succession. During that period the community at Old Mauluma, which is the subject of this study was later to become victims of two stages of forced removals, in 1921 and 1938. However, the first removal of the community of Ravele was in 1921 from present Barotta No. 17 LT farm, where the Raveles' royal graves are/ were located, because the Raveles' leaders like Denga, Matsheketsheke, Nndwayamiomva, Vele and other members of the royal family were laid to rest in this farm. The area also included Levubu No. 15 LT, Klein Australia No. 13 LT (Entabeni), Lisbon No. 12 LT (Entabeni Forest), Nooitgedaght No. 14 LT and Applefointein No. 35 LT (TA, DLA, Nkatingi Papers, Government Notice No. 176/308, No.2029, 24 November 1922; Nefale, 2000: 9, Interview with Ravele, 16 March 2021).

### **3.5.2 The Tshitungulu community**

The place Tshitungulu lay between the Luvuvhu and Lutanandwa Rivers in the southern and the northern side, respectively. On the western side, the Tshitungulus were bordered by the Tshipetane River. Their neighbours were the Ravele and the Ratombo families. The place Tshitungulu was ruled by eleven of *magota*, under the leadership of one acting-‘*Khos*’ Ratshikhuthuma. According to Mphadzha (1988: 3), Ratshikhuthuma was one of the sons of *Khosi* Rasithu Ramabulana. However, after the death of Ramabulana in 1864, he fled from Tshimbiluni and crossed the Luvuvhu River into Tshitungulu in fear of the succession dispute that was being inflamed by Makhado. Following this Ratshikhuthuma subjected all the inhabitants of Tshitungulu under his rule. After his death, his sons Masakona and Tshinange Ratshikhuthuma succeeded him respectively (TA, DLA, File 2259/9, Letter on the conservation of the of forest to the District Conversation Office, Louis Trichardt, 15 August 1938; Mphadzha, 1988: 26).

### **3.5.3 The community of Ha-Makatu**

Makatu was one of Makhado’s sons, form one of the junior houses. Makhado had installed Makatu as a sub-ruler of Tshivhodza for military and strategic reasons. From that vantage point Makatu was expected to check and monitor the military activities taking place at Albasini which were a threat to Makhado. Ha-Makatu was strategically located because it lies/ lay on eastern side of Ha-Ratombo and on western side of Luonde/ Piesangkop(hoek) (TA, NAD, Minute S3/593/19, from the Secretary of Land; Mphadzha, 1988: 6).

### **3.5.4 The Ha-Mashau community**

The village of Ha-Mashau lie/ lay between Middlefontein in the north and the Luvuvhu River in the south. The territory stretches(ed) as far as Beaufort on the east and bordered Mpheni village under Davhana, near Elim. It has been indicated that, Frank Mukhaswakule Mashau’s ancestors were buried at Driefontein (TA, Bantu Administration and Development (henceforth BAO), 90, 7- 4 - 76, Letter from du Plessis, 20 May 1997).

It was believed that *Khosi* Mashau had occupied Driefontein in the 1700s (seventeen-hundreds). However, *Hosi* Mtshethweni had indicated that Joao Albasini had given the farm Driefontein to one Nwamanungu and his grandfather Mavusana, both Vatsonga/



Machangana leaders, as a gift because they had defeated *Khosi* Magoro, one of Thohoyandou's sub-rulers after the decentralisation process, who most people had failed to defeat. Mtshethweni argues that Mashau had come to request for a place to stay from his grandfather Mavusana (Interview between Harries and Chief Mtswetweni, 13 May 1979). Then, if Van Warmelo's method of periodisation is correct, it might imply that Mashau occupied the area before Mavusana, since Joao Albasini came to the area later (TA, Bantu Administration and Development (henceforth BAD), 90, 7-4-76, Letter from Du Plessis, 20 May 1997; Van Warmelo, 1932: 50).

### **3.5.5 The Ratombo Community**

The Ratombo lineage falls under the Masingo dynasties who ruled the fertile land of Tshidzivhani for many centuries. Tshidzivhani, derives its name from the fact that the land is/ was lavishly nourished by two rivers that lie between Mauluma in the east and Ha-Matidze in the west. Vuvha forms(ed) the northern boundary, while Ha-Mashau makes its southern boundary (Interview with N. Ratombo, 21 November 2021). During the beginning of the fifteen-hundreds when the Venda Kingdom under King Vele-lambeu had splintered after his death, many of his off-spring scattered and formed small independent communities. The Ratombo lineage was one such community that had occupied Tshidzivhani land since the 1800s (eighteen-hundreds) (Interview with N. Ratombo, 21 November 2021). The struggle for land between Portuguese settlers at Sofala in Mozambique which started in the 1400s (fourteen-hundreds) culminated in Joao Albasini's territory merging with the Transvaal Republic in the 1860s (eighteen-sixties). Even if had Makhado had defeated them in the 1860s (eighteen-sixties) the Boer settlers working in conjunction with Joao Albasini visa-vis the British settlers in the cape, dislodged the Venda groups in the 1890's (eighteen-nineties) (De Vaal, 1953: 23).

Thus, at the turn of the 1900 (nineteen-hundreds), several Vhavenda groups that had occupied the area between the town Louis Trichardt along the Zoutpansberg Mountain were forcefully removed from their ancestral lands. Most farms in the far Northern Transvaal were then acquired by white settler farmers through forced removals on the part of African people who were living there (TA, NAD File No. 176/308. Minute to the Native Commissioner, Soupansberg, 24 November 1922; Interview with N. Ratombo, 21 November 2020). They were not acquired through a "willing seller willing buyer

system". In the same vein the Ratombo lineage was one of those who began to experience interference from the Boer settlers who were scrambling for the Ratombo land whose ruler was *Khosi Nyahanyaha Ratombo* (Interview with N. Ratombo, 21 November 2020).

The interference continued until *Khosi Nyahanyaha* passed away in 1950 (nineteen-fifty). His son Jim Gumani Ratombo was enthroned to his position in 1951. However, the Nationalist Party gave more power to the Boer settlers to occupy the farms. In 1960 (nineteen-sixty) one Peter Cohen who had inherited Claremont farm from his father, subtly removed Jim Gumani Ratombo from Tshidzivhani. This allegedly happened in collaboration with *Khosi Patrick Mphephu* who offered him a portion of overpopulated Tshituni, which was ruled by *Gota Netshituni*. Netshituni started to have differences with *Gota Gumani Ratombo* and his community over land usage. The issues here were conflict over resources. The result was that the Tshidzivhani community was hardly allowed any chance of development whatsoever. For example, on one occasion their drums were damaged by the members of Netshituni community while they were conducting initiation schools for the youth. As if that was not enough, they were also stopped from cultivating (interview with N. Ratombo, 21 November 2020; Interview with M.W. Netshisaulu, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

The following are some of the farms that were situated at Tshidzivhani land: Laatsgeronde farm No.74, Applefontein farm No.71, Klip fontein farm No.109, Driefontein farm No.110 Goedverwaching farm No.111, Claremont fruit farm, Noitgedacht farm No.360, Klein Australie farm No. 361 Grootgelugt farm, Ratombo Mondy forest, GM Ratombo farm and Springbok farm (TA, DLA 3148, 1733, vol. 2, Report from Grimbeck to the Control Board, 13 July 1937; Harries Collection, interview between S. Dowling and Mr. Schoeman, Superintendent Of 1960 Levubu Settlers, 12 July 1987) .

Ratombo's lineage is shortly described as follows: *Khosi Ratombo*, *Khosi Malindi Makheda Ratombo*, *Khosi Jack Nyahanyaha Ratombo* and *Khosi Jim Gumani Ratombo*. The following were Tshidzivhani sub-areas: Tshamagota or Thondoni. This area's sub-ruler or *gota* was Ramadi. He was the right-hand man of the *khosi*. This is the area where the Ratombo clan's cemetery is still located. The first farmer who occupied the

place and was known by the Ratombo royal family was one Jack. Mugodini's *gota* was Maboho; Mavhungu Ratombo was *gota* at Ha-Ravhaloi; Phaduli administered at Dzea; Sivhidzho Ratombo at Muhotoni; Ramaremisa at Tshamutomola by Ramaremisa Ratombo and Mavhidi by Bulala Ratombo (Interview with N. Ratombo, 21 November 2021; Harries Collection, interview between S. Dowling and Mr. Schoeman, Superintendent of 1960 Settlers of Levubu, July 1987).

In short, Ratombo was one of Mphephu supporters and had earlier during the latter's time been sent by Mphephu to kill Mutheiwana, since it was alleged that he had killed Makhado. Thereafter, Ratombo had settled in the Luvuvhu area, where later it was called Ha-Ratombo. Meanwhile, Ratombo had been a fugitive who was wanted by the Transvaal Republic for killing 22 (twenty-two) Vatsonga people in an attempt to kill Mutheiwana. Because he was alleged to have killed Makhado, Mphephu did not give *vuhosi*, despite being a warrior, a brother to Ratshikhuthuma and a son to Rasithu. Suffice to say on the western side Ratombo bordered the settlement of Matumba and on the east Mauluma (Nefale, 2000:10, interview with N. Ratombo, 21 November 2021; Interview with Adolf Ravele, 14 May 2022).

### **3.5.6 The Matumba Community**

Vhavenda history shows that many clans had arrived in the Soutpansberg under the leadership of *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Dimbanyika during the 1600s (sixteen-hundreds), with Vhakwevho being one of them. Vhakwevho had also arrived from the north of Limpopo and settled at Dzata. Vhakwevho later went to Thengwe while on a hunting safari the instruction of Thohoyandou, while still staying at Dzata. During Thohoyandou's reign, Vhakwevho were given Luonde as a fortress to surround Dzata's boundary. They occupied the land up to the Luvuvhu River. Above the Luvuvhu River was Ha-Mashau, the land occupied by the Vhafamadi clan. During that period, there was no white man to be seen around. Vhakwevho were under the leadership of *Khosi* Matidze. They, however, broke into two groups, one being pro-Matidze and the other one to being the Matumba people (Interview with E. Matumba, 18 November 2020). The Mulodzi River at Maelula area on the south-east of the Lutanandwa River was part of the Ravele area and the south-west was under the Ratombos. In other words, these rivers formed the main boundaries of the Ravele area (Interview with Mphigalala, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2020; Interview with S. Shirinda, Elim resident, 15 November 2020).

The land was used for cultivation, grazing, burial, rituals and settlement, as discussed earlier. During the Makhado era there were whites; but they were staying far from the Matumba area, and not even near the town of Louis Trichardt (today Makhado).<sup>13</sup> During the war between Mphephu and Sinthumule/ the Boers between in 1898-1902, Sinthumule promised the white people that if they helped him in his battle against his brother, Mphephu, he would eventually give them a land to stay in (History: Makhado (Magato) or Ramapulana tribe: Mpefu, Sintumula (sic Sinthumule) Maemu, Ndabane (sic Davhana). Office of the Native Location Commission, Pretoria, 16 February 1907). The Matumba people were fighting on the side of Sinthumule. Eventually, Mphephu fled to Rhodesia and by that time, the area from Vuvha, that is, Matumba, Matidze and Maelula were ceded under Sinthumule (interview with Nelwalani, 2021).

White settlers only came to this area because they were rewarded for helping in the fight against Mphephu. The white settlers then entered into an agreement with Sinthumule that his subjects would work for them on the farms as labour tenants. Unfortunately, these people were not paid anything, they only worked for a place to stay on the farms. The situation was not conducive in that, a lot of farm labourers ran away from the farms and as a result the *khosi*'s sons were summoned to the white settler farms and instructed to replace the labourers by working on the farms who had ran away (Interview with E. Matumba, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020). A letter to the *khosi* to summon him to the white settler farmers' headquarters was issued to was sent to Sinthumule to discuss why he was no longer sticking to the agreement to allow white settlers into his territory. In addition, he had also been instructed to go and work for his community on the farms (Interview with E. Matumba, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2020). The situation at that time was that men would work for three-months on the farms and the women would work for two days per week. After these three-months, the men would be free to go to Johannesburg or any other place to look for work. However, Sinthumule was still obliged to fulfil his contract for three-months. Unlike in the past, people were only given a chance to cultivate their plots once a year and this was done mostly during the rainy season, while young boys looked after the cattle for the whole year, and they also did some minor duties for the farmers

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<sup>13</sup> The current researcher would like to indicate though that Makhado is not the name of the town after the name change was challenged in Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA) in Bloemfontein and reverted to Louis Trichardt. However, Makhado refers to the Local Municipality wherein the town, Louis Trichardt, is located.

(Interview with E. Matumba, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2020). Thus, the agreement was meant to provide free labour to the white settlers. The current researcher would like to advance that this was an economically strategic move on the part of the white authorities because this means that Sinthumule and his people were enticed to work during the rainy season to the advantage of the white farmers and contribute to agricultural production.

Eventually the subjects of Matumba were recruited to work under the then four months' cheap labour system. The four months' system did not auger well with some of the people and this resulted in many of people fleeing from the white settler farms and looked for a better way in which they could live and support their children. In 1950, the ruler of Matumba was summoned to the headquarters and instructed to work for the white settler farmers and earned very little wages. His name was William Namadzavho Matumba; he passed away in 1979 while working on the farm and he was laid to rest at Maelula (Interview with E. Matumba, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020). The first white farmers who came to Matumba area was known as Khulute (apparently a corruption of Cloete) and the second one was known as Naude. Namadzavho William's successor, Tshavhungwe Klaas Matumba was chased by Naude because his son was not working for him but instead, he was working at the timber yard nearby. Resultantly, the Matumba ruler fled to Johannesburg where he passed away while working there (SA, URU 272 648, Appointment of P.R. Mbulaheni Mpehphu as chief of Bavenda tribe, Louis Trichardt 1950; Interview with E. Matumba, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020).

The Matumba community had occupied Schoonuizicht No. 10 LT in the 1600 (sixteen-hundreds) under the leadership of Dimbanyika. The old Matumba settlement which has now been turn into a farm is found in the Soutpansberg District of the Limpopo Province. It is surrounded by Goegevonden on the West and rest of the area was Entabeni forests where pine and bluegum trees were planted. Presently the farm is privately owned privately by Royal Macadamia Pty. Ltd who bought it in 1997. This farm (the Macadamia farm) was used for forestry. The farm measures 1788246 ha (Interview with E. Matumba, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020; Interview with S. Mulaudzi, member of Ravele Royal Council, 6 May 2022).

While the white settlers had arrived in the area after the South African War (1899-1902), the Matumba community were turned into labour tenants around the 1920's. Before their

relocation, the Matumba community used land for agricultural purposes such as the production of maize, sweet potatoes, groundnuts and other field crops. They also used their land for cattle rearing. They also had places to worship their ancestors which they can identify today. The graves of some of the people are still found there as well as those of their *mahosi* (Interview with R. Mphidi, 29 April 2022). Some of the people were forcibly evicted in 1948 (nineteen-fourty-eight) while others were eventually removed in the 1960s (nineteen-sixties). Resultantly, they scattered moved to different areas like Tshakhuma, Ha-Maelula, Nzhelele, Thohoyandou, Ha-Mutsha and many other parts of the former Venda homeland, where they still reside today. They have also submitted a claim for the restitution of the land on the ground that they were forcibly removed from their place of birth without any valid reasons. Their removal was accompanied by brutality from the white settler farmers and the commissioner of the area at that time (TA, HKN (Bantu Commissioner) 17N12/10, 17N1/12/2 Native Commissioner Louis Trichardt; Interview with J.S. Tshikosi, 21 May 2021).

The Matumba community formerly resided at Maungani (farm No.359, 314 and 420) and Matondoni area before they were forcibly removed from their ancestral land. At present Maungani and Matondoni are well known as part of the following farms: Schoonuitzcht farm No. 359, Lisbon farm No.314, Cadiz farm No.420, Entabeni farm No. 291 and Klein Australie farm No.361. They were best known to establish the best circumcision schools (TA, HKN (Bantu Commissioner) 17N12/10, 17N1/12/2 Native Commissioner Louis Trichardt; Interview with J.S. Tshikosi, 21 May 2021). Matumba had initially founded the place called Ha-Matumba around 1820s, above Piesangkop, under the Ramabulana dynasty, and was encouraged to establish this royal kraal for strategic purpose and benefit of the Ramabulanas who wanted to stop the encroachment of the Portuguese under Albasini and his Vatsonga followers. The Ramabulanas wanted to form a bulwark to prevent their enemies from crossing the Luvuvhu River into their Swongozwi stronghold. Van Ryneveld (1998: 152) supported this point when she noted that Albasini suggested to his people to go and fight for the country and whereafter he “placed people as *mahosi* under him”. Ha-Matumba people argue that Makhado had given Matumba part of Vuvha that included Maungani, which is presently Schoonuitzcht, and Matondoni, presently Klein Australia as his area of jurisdiction. In support of this argument, they indicated that Makhado’s mother was Matumba’s daughter Limani, (Interview with Matumba, 2020) therefore when he assumed the throne, he gave them

Vuvha (TA, DLA, File 31593/2, 1634, Letter from Rooth to the Secretary for Land, 7 September 1936; Interview with E. Matumba, 18 November 2021; Interview with M. Netshisaulu, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2020).

The Eastern side of Ha-Matumba area was bordered by Lutanandwa River, while Tshipane River separated it from Ha-Ratombo on the southern side. They were also separated from the Matidza people, also known as Vhakwevho, who occupied Luonde (Piesangkop) on western side by Mulozwi River, and on the northern side by ploughing fields belonging to Ramabulanas (Report of the Native Location Commission. History of the Makhado (Magato) tribes, 23-3-1907. TA GOV, 1087, PS%0/8/07, History of Ramapulana tribe, Native Location, p. 9). According to the Matumbas the people of Matidza were their brothers and they shared sacred graves at Luonde before they had their own at Maungani. After the death of Makhado in 1895, and after Maemu was deposed by Mphephu, Ha-Matumba area was divided into two. The northern part was given to Makaulule, and the southern part was given to the Mutheiwana, Makaulule who owed allegiance to Mphephu and Mutheiwana to Sinthumule, who at that time wanted to be a *khosi* of the Mphephu dynasty. Mphephu used Makaulule at Vuvha as a buffer zone between him and Sinthumule. However, he still harboured the possibility of the two, Sinthumule and Makaulule joining forces against him at any time (Nefale, 2000: 9, Interview with E. Matumba 2020, 18 November 2020).

### **3.5.7 The Magwada community**

The Magwada community used to stay at the land called Mbulu before they moved to a place which is now called Vuvha. This was long before the year 1900 (nineteen-hundred). It is the land that was owned by the Republic of South Africa (RSA), that is, the Department of Water affairs and Forestry (DWAF). The land is now called Entabeni (Entabeni 251mt). The Magwada community stayed on the land for a long time before the land could be surveyed and be given a new name called Entabeni (Interview with T. Maiwashe, 6th November 2020; Interview with Sumba, Tshakhuma member of community and farm worker at Luvuvhu, 18 November 2020). Before the establishment of plantations, there was no white person who occupied the land because the Magwada community lived in peace on the land under the leadership of *Gota* Magwada. The white settlers then arrived after being warmly welcomed by Magwada and they then asked *magota*, for soil samples for testing NTS, CAD Report, 264 C21/51, Report on the soil

survey of Beaufort No. 75. Levubu River, District Soutpansberg, Transvaal, by M.V.Z. Plessier, March 1948, Interview with E. B. Baloyi, Tshakhuma community member, 19 December 2020). After some weeks, they came back with the results from Pretoria. They told the community that they wanted to start a plantation in the area. They never requested for permission. As it was, the same community was the one which was used to carry the trees to be planted in the same land they used to own and rule (Interview with T. Maiwashe, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020).

As it was the practice with forced removals, the Magwada community were never compensated for the loss of land during the establishment of these plantations and the labour and other services that they rendered for the State plantation at Entabeni (Thavhine). Those white settlers put their placard on the small mountain which was named Bangani. The trees were planted all over the area and the Magwada community was told that their livestock should never trample on those trees. Resultantly, in 1921 the Magwada community was moved to another place far from the plantations and next to the plantations police officers were stationed to guard the trees South African Institute of Race Relations (SARR), Locations AB 843/RJ/C4:2; Rheinaldt Jones Papers, Tribal Land in the Transvaal, p. 65; Interview with M.P. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2020). While this happened, some people were expected to remain in the farms to work as forced cheap black labourers without any form of wages. Thus, during the loss of land they also lost their independence, dignity, means of survival and their self-respect: loss of land meant loss of livestock as well. Like many communities before them, or during the same time but in other areas under similar circumstances, they were forced to move and settle to different areas all over Venda. Other places that were affected but were under Magwada were the Tshifhatani and those under Netshimbani of Thaniwe area. In the process their status as *magota* was disrupted (Interview with S.D. Ravele, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021; Interview with M. Magatshavha, Tshakhuma community member, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020).

The Mbulu village mentioned above was surrounded by the following areas: Vhutshavhelo, Vhulaudzi, Lwamondo, Mauluma, Tshakhuma and Shanzha. The physical boundaries between Mbulu and Vhutshavhelo was the Mutshundudi River; between Mbulu and Vhulaudzi was the Tshitavhani River; between Mbulu and Lwamondo was the Mutshundudi River; between Mbulu and Tshakhuma was the catchment area of the Lutanandwa River; Mbulu and Mauluma shared the Lamisevhe



stream; and Mbulu and Shanzha were surrounded by the Lamugundu Valley (Interview with M. Netshisaulu, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2020; Interview with T. Mudau, Tshakhuma community member, 10 December 2020). As a *gota*, Magwada had allocated vast areas to his community for the sake of cultivation of maize, groundnuts, pumpkins and other crops. In addition, they owned, large herds of cattle, goats, sheep, and donkeys with which they ploughed and used as transport during long journeys. The welfare of these animals was complemented by large grazing fields for the livestock and many fountains of fresh and clean water as well as wild and domestic fruits (Interview with P. Netshifhefhe, Shayandima community member, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2022).

Therefore, the following were some of the rights enjoyed by the Magwada community: grazing, residential area, ploughing and cultivation of fields, religious activities, as well as burial sites/ graves that went hand in hand with ancestral worship which depended on water from rivers and for irrigation, domestic use and for the watering of domestic animals (Interview with M. Netshisaulu, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2020). Maloka (1995: 35) clearly states that “the three principal branches of production in the most pre-colonial southern African societies were pastoralism, cultivation, hunting and food gathering... The basic unity of production was a homestead/ household made up of a male head, his wife/ wives and offspring.” The current researcher would like to opine *vis-à-vis* what has been advanced by some authors at the opening of this chapter about the landscape and its natural splendour and endowment with natural resources, that it is clear that the removal of communities that had been settled in the various areas before colonialism greatly disrupted the peace, tranquility and mode of production of various communities as well as the mode of grazing for their livestock. In addition, given what has been said about Sinthumule in the foregoing section(s) being expected to send his subjects to offer their labour in the plantations for nothing, Maloka (1995: 36) adds that *mahosi* were homestead heads and commanded the labour of women, boys, unmarried men and the tribute labour of all able-bodied men.” However, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that before colonialism this happened for the welfare of the community under a *khosi* or a *gota*. Therefore, Sinthumule and others like him sold their souls to the white authorities, and in the same vein the welfare of their communities when they collaborated with the new arrivals (the whites) against their own, like Sinthumule did against *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Alilali Tshilamulela Mphephu (Mahosi, 2020: 1-3, 48-51). Thus, besides the white authorities using force to expropriate labour from communities,

they also saw the opportunities that were presented by these collaborators to 'divide and rule'.

### **3.6 The Communities of the Luvuvhu Valley and Its Political Structure**

Before a series of forced removals that have been outlined earlier, the Luvuvhu Valley was sparsely populated with various communities that had inhabited the area long before the arrival of Masingo under Dimbanyika. Various sources attest to the fact that these communities were the various sub-groups of Vhangona who are believed to have settled along these shores around the 1300s (Nemudzivhadi, 1985: 13; Van Warmelo, 1935: 117; Möller-Malan, 1957: 220; Stayt, 1968: 11; Dzivhani and Mudau, 1940: 66; Nemudzivhadi, 1977: 5, 8; Neluvhalani, 2018: I, iii, 3, 4, 5, 53, 150). After the arrival of Masingo and when the new arrivals and other communities that had been there before they then formed the core of community who are were generally Vhavenda. According to Adolf Ravele (Interviewed on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021) a people that lives together in an area for a long period of time, in the process develops a common culture in the dynamic process of adaptation to their environment. Ravele further corroborates Prof. Tshisikhawe's statement (Interviewed on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2021) that a community usually develops a sense of identity consisting of the subjective and symbolic or emblematic elements as aspects of their culture in order to differentiate themselves from other groups in a given place and environment. Khapoya (1994: 117) further asserts that the smatter of descent by birth and of kinship are/ were important to a community and involves self-consciousness and a claim of status and recognition as a unique group. In this instance one is left with no wonder how this becomes relevant to the Ravele community and others in the Luvuvhu Valley as the discussion below attempts to show.

The Ravele community and others in the Luvuvhu Valley were characterized by a past history in which their social values such as beliefs, customs, traditions and culture were passed on from one generation to another and these values helped build the community's identity. Cultural values are important in that they influence unity when the community finds itself in an isolated environment where people would be able to acquire a similar culture that enables them to face hostile elements (Stayt, 1968: 45). The Ravele community and others in that area, their cultural identity was visible even in the way they built their houses, their means of transport and agriculture practice (Interview with D.

Magidi, Shayandima community member, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2022). All these were adapted into their natural environment and their variable resources. As such the manner of dressing and 'traditional tattoos', that made it possible to identify them as what Tshisikhawe calls a 'united community' (Interview with Prof. Tshisikhawe, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021). Their socio-economic and cultural affairs were organised in such a way that they fostered unity among them. Their language and beliefs were practiced to mainly serve as decisive identities that served as instruments to distinguish their culture and themselves from other groups (SA K20 E5/38(22). Socio-economic development of Native Areas Commission (Tomlinson Report, pp. 1101-1111. Record of evidence, 1952.06.19, at Pietersburg).

### **3.6.1 The political structure**

Within the Vhavenda political structure, there is/ was *Thovhele Khosikhulu* (king) at top of the rank who is then followed by a *khosikhulu* who is/ was referred to as a principal traditional leader, according to today's language in South Africa. Under him there is *khosi* who is/ was the senior traditional leader. From the *khosi* then there is/ was a *gota* or 'headman' and the last title is that of *mukoma* (pl. *vhakoma*) who is/ was a petty headman. However, within the people of Luvuvhu Valley, the hierarchy starts(ed) with the *khosi* who administers and controls the main territory called *shango* (area), within this territory there are different small territories called *kusi* or *zwisi* (pl.) or villages with each village under *gota*. Each *kusi* is then divided into *muvhundu* or *mivhundu* (location/locations) under leadership of *mukoma* (Dzivhani, 1938: 39-44; SAB NTS 77/55C1, p. 45, Ref. 5, 141/1919: Chiefs and Headmen).

The *khosi* was connected to his area and to a large group of subordinates who resided in a territory that was divided into different *mivhundu* with each under the administration of *mukoma* (Benso, 1979:24-25). The *khosi* was of special importance in the traditional political life of the community as he was considered to be the ultimate leader of his area, the father of his family and the living representative of the forefathers, thereby making the community's life to revolve around him (TA GOV 1087, P550/8/07, History of Ramabulana Tribe, Native Location Commission, p. 9; Interview with Adolf Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022; Maluta, 2013: 24). He commanded the highest legislative authority as he approved all traditional laws, had executive powers and authority, administered and controlled his people and had the judicial authority to act as a judge (Benso, 1979: 24-

25). However, all the laws and decisions could not be binding without consultation with the traditional council which was the decision-making body although no discussions and decisions on law concerning his territory and people could be binding without the *khosi's* consent (Benso, 1979: 24-25; Interview with M. Lalumbe, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021).

Only after their first and second removals, the Raveles lost their status as *mahosi* to find themselves under the authority of *Khosi* George Ramabulana Mphephu when they were demoted to *vhugota* by the apartheid government (Maluta, 2013: 25; Interview with M. Mufamadi, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022). However, the community of *gota* Ravele in the Luvuvhu Valley, like all *Vhavenda* traditional leaders, was assisted and advised by four members of the royal family. These members were *makhadzi*, *khotsimunene*, *vhavenda* and *vhakoma*. *Makhadzi* is the sister of the ruler and the aunt to the heir apparent. She is also the main decision maker concerning who the rightful heir to the throne should be after the death of the traditional leader. *Khotsimunene* is the brother to the ruler whose main duty is to advise the former mainly on the matters concerning the judicial authority for fair decision pertaining to different offences. *Vhakoma*, is the mother to the traditional leader and has a special authority and has to be respected at all times (Maluta, 2013: 25; Interview with N. Nesengani, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022).

When the traditional leader was appointed, his installation was done by the *makhadzi* and *khotsimunene*. At the same time one of the traditional leader's sisters would be appointed as a *khadzi* (junior aunt) and one of his brothers would be appointed as *ndumi* (advisor and would later assume the role of *makhadzi* and *khotsimunene* when the heir apparent assumes power as successor) and then carry on with their royal council duties (Benso, 1979: 25; Dzivhani, 1938: 39-44; Stayt, 1968: 15; Van Warmelo, 1948: 30-36). The *khosi* has powerful economic status as wealth was derived from various sources. His main sources of income were yields from agricultural products, livestock inheritance from his father, fines from the offences committed by his subjects, tributes and gifts (Maluta, 2013: 26; Interviewed with M. Netshifhefhe, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2022). However, he could not use the wealth obtained from his area arbitrarily as there were other subjects he must share with. For example, the royal members receive(d) a portion of the traditional ruler's wealth as well as his family members. The *khosi* was also expected to feed the poor in the village (Maluta, 2013: 26; Interview with R. Mphidi, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022).

### 3.7 The Livelihood of the Ravele Community within the Luvuvhu Valley

The Ravele people engaged in various activities in order to survive. They used many aspects of the environment such as plants, wild animals and clay, and so on to the full. Cattle became of increasing value as it was used for bride wealth, for ploughing and as a source of milk, meat and skin in the years before the bovine epidemic at the turn of the century. But during the 1938/ 39 a severe foot and mouth epidemic swept from Rhodesia into the Transvaal, leading to the destruction of the cattle and goats of Vhavenda (Stayt, 1968: 166; Interview with M. Mufamadi, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022).

The mulala palm tree grew extensively throughout the Valley and was an essential part of the economy. The rachides of the palm leaf were used in the weaving of mats, bags, baskets and beer strainers while a twine, manufactured from the leaves, was used to bind the roofing poles of rondavels/ dwellings. The most vital part was the nutritious liquid drawn from the trunk of the palm trees which produced a ginger-beer like drink when fresh and was a potent wine, when fermented. These products were exchanged with both African and white traders for articles or products lacking within the Ravele community (Stayt, 1968: 166; Interview with M. Mufamadi, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022).

Wild fruit such as *mafula* (marula/ maroela) and sweet figs were also sources of nutritious food. Numerous other wild fruit trees were also exploited in the area, including the baobab fruits. Large amounts of hard wood for building, mortars, pesters, charcoal were supplied by a forest of mahogany trees. Hunting was an important economic activity which was exploited by the Ravele community for survival and protection. In those days hunting was not a sport but an industry. The meat gathered from hunting provided both the white settlers and the Ravele community with protein-laden food (Interview with G. Ndou, Tshivhulani community member, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022). The hides from these wild animals were used for clothing (for example shoes, jackets, belts and pants) and other articles like reins, whips, thogs, candles and soap were all made from animal fat. Ivory, elephant tusks and dried cured skins were exchanged for goods, which were bought by many traders who flocked to Schoemansdal. Communities within the Luvuvhu Valley benefited substantially in the form of increased quantities of goods and money. Traders paid high prices for items like elephant tusks (Stayt, 1968: 184; Interview with S. Mulandu 7<sup>th</sup> May 2022).

The Ravele community also participated in hunting in order to protect themselves against white settlers. In those early days it was only the white settlers who handled guns as the sale of guns to Africans was strictly prohibited by the white trackers and settlers as well as rulers. Ironically, they employed Africans as trackers because of their immense tracking skills and they were familiar with the immediate environment. These trackers were, by necessity, given guns and ammunition so they could hunt elephants. Hence as trackers people in the Luvuvhu Valley including the Ravele community had the opportunity to gain access to guns (TA. GOV 1087, P5 50/8/07, Native Location Commission, History of Ramabulana tribe, undated, p.4; Interview with Adolf Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022).

As time went on the communities around the Luvuvhu Valley felt that the white settlers desired control over their land. To stop that, a strategy was devised to obtain guns to defend themselves. In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> (nineteenth) century, the Vhavenda trackers claimed that there were large herds of elephant behind one of the mountains in the Luvuvhu Valley. The Vhavenda trackers and hunters were given guns in large amounts, so that they could hunt and collect ivory. Once they had obtained them the Ravele hunters would go straight back and handed their *khosi* the guns (Conerly, 1990: 8; Interview with D. Magidi, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2022)). This ploy by the Ravele people strained the relationship between them and the white settlers. The white settlers tried to persuade the community of the Luvuvhu Valley to return the guns. But when they refused the white settlers tried to get their guns back by force. Tension started building up in the area and under cover of darkness, the various Ravele warriors attacked white settler farms, stole cattle, guns and ammunition, burnt down houses and even murdered people, all with the aim of scaring the whites from their area (TA, Native Affairs (henceforth NAD) South African Natives Commission, 1903-1905, p. 11; Interview with M.P. Kutama, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021).

The result was that the white settlers felt unprotected and no longer went on hunting trips, as they were reluctant to leave their families unprotected. Thus, the white traders were also not keen to visit the Luvuvhu Valley, for fear of being attacked and losing all their goods. This was an achievement by the Ravele community; as they had succeeded, for the time being, in scaring white settlers from entering the Luvuvhu Valley (TA, Native Affairs (henceforth NAD) South African Natives Commission, 1903-1905,

p.11; Interview with E. Matumba, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020). This showed that in order to gain skills to protect their land against white settlers and in addition, gain means of survival, the Ravele community decided to send strong leaders, to work on white settler farms, since according to the Raveles, the best form of defence was to know the enemy. While earning an income on these white farms, they learned how to handle a gun to enable themselves to later be recruited to become elephant hunters, where they had a chance of stealing the much-sought-after guns (Mphadzha, 1988: 6; Interview with N. Nesengani 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022).

There were also other means of survival amongst the Ravele community and many other communities within the Luvuvhu Valley. African people melted iron to produce equipment for ploughing on Lisbon farm. The *mafula* fruit was collected in the Valley to produce beer. They also traded in clay for pot making, with the people of Ha-Mashau. They also used special trees like *mutondo* to make wooden dishes (*ndilo*). All of these, they used not only for their survival but for sale of the surpluses to other communities in the Luvuvhu Valley (Mphadzha, 1988: 6; Interview with R. Mathagu, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022).

Most activities in the Valley centred around farming. Apart from a plot in the back yard, a family had a piece of land on the riverbank (*philiphili*) or one on a hillslope (*tshikovha*), and the main or family field. While gifts and business transactions may involve the exchange of land, the main field never exchange hands. It was the property and identity of each family. The main field was also the measure of success and stability for each family. In other words, it was the symbol of life and continuity and therefore the identity for that particular family (Interview with R. Mathagu, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022). Land provided and created a specific identity and continuity as it carried ownership, from one generation to another. This identity was reflected in the way villagers greeted a foreigner. A Luvuvhu residents' greeting was never complete until the person inquired about the rain as well as the state of crops in the area one was coming from. This was an indication of the importance of land and agriculture in the Luvuvhu Valley, and how familiar they were with each other to understand all these nitty-gritties of communal and local life (HKN 1/1/49 16N1/1/2. October 1946. The Secretary for Native Affairs. Dzunde Lands: Sibasa and Memorandum Dzunde Lands amongst the Venda peoples, Soutpansberg. Report by N.J. van Warmelo, 1946) Gottschling, 1905: 376; Interview R. Mathagu, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022).

Furthermore, the Ravele community and others in the Luvuvhu Valley, cultivated their crops and used them mainly for consumption and survival. The Ravele community and others in the Valley, planted millet, groundnuts (*phonda*), traditional sugar cane, sweet potato, pumpkin, fruit trees such as oranges, lemons, bananas and pawpaw trees. There were three kinds of fields: around the homesteads, these were fields for *mahosi* and *magota*, which were meant to feed the poor and whole community during times of hunger. This was followed by the fields for ordinary people. In all these fields, the same kind of crops were planted as the quality of the soil was the same. Fruit trees were planted around the homestead, as a resting place and protection against heavy storms. The last portion of land was divided into different usage portions, such as a portion for grazing fields and another as ploughing fields (Gottshling, 1905: 376; Interview R. Mathagu, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022). A great deal of labour was needed to protect the crops from monkeys, baboons and birds. During harvest period, rewards of beer celebration drew labour from local kin as well as from other cultural groups in the Luvuvhu Valley (Van Warmelo, 1932: xxi; Interview with Prof. Tshisikhawe, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021).

The Luvuvhu Valley also had specific trees that were used to make tools and medicine. For example, *tshikhopha* (aloe) was used to cure cuts or wounds. The community also depended on wild fruit for survival, for example *mavhungo* (wild granadilla). Houses were made from mud and branches from trees. Roofs were made of grass which was easily available on each field and were used mainly for roofing. The Ravele community took part in all these activities in order to protect themselves and also for survival (Interview with M.P. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; Sibasa/ Makwarela Archives, The Vhavenda united into a homogenous nation, proud of their culture and language: "Shumela Venda", Office of the State President, Republic of Venda, 1980).

### **3.7.1 Other sources of staple food consumed by the Ravele community in the Luvuvhu Valley**

The staple food of Vhavenda is porridge (*vhuswa*) which is produced from maize-meal. It is generally accompanied by a supplementary dish (*tshisevho*), made from meat of the spinach family, or some other delicacy, which was served on a special dish and always contains salt. Maize, for the daily porridge, was prepared by the women at the expense of much time and labour. The grain is/ was slightly moistened and then stamped with wooden stampers in a hallowed of the wood sunk in the kitchen yard. In the kitchen of



the *khosi* there may be special huts with several of these stamping-blocks, often two women stamp together in one block, sitting on the floor in their customary position and brushing the meal into the hole with small grass brushes; they thumb alternately in the wooden block with great force and energy. The grain was then winnowed in the large flat basket lids, being tossed up and down repeatedly, so that the fine grain separates from the coarse. The husk is then removed from the stamped maize and the grain sorted and the stamping and winnowing repeated, the whole process taking several hours. The maize was then placed on the roof of the hut to dry and bleach; the finished product would be cleaner and finer than the meal of any of the neighbouring communities, being quite as fine as flour and pure white. The meal was cooked by stirring it into the pot of boiling water and simmering it until it was of the consistency of thick porridge, it was then shaped into thick oval cakes, piled on to large wooden platters, and left to cool (Stayt, 1988: 76; Interview with N. Nelwalani, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). When cool, the cakes were easily separated from each other and eaten with a hand. A whole or crushed maize was also boiled for food and the green mealies was very popular in the season. The *tshisevho* may be prepared from any food-stuff other than cereals.

Monkey-nuts were ground up and baked into hard cakes; beans and all sorts of green food, including stinging-nettles, black-jacks, figs, berries and wild apples were boiled or sometimes eaten in raw; other delicacies were wild caterpillars (*mashonzha*), locust, crickets, and ants. The favourite caterpillars were a flat hairy variety, *mashonzha*, which was prepared by squeezing out the inside and burning off the prickles, the rest being dried and boiled as required; during the season, when the grub was plentiful, parties would go out collecting the caterpillars, leaving patches of charcoal dotted over the bush, where they have been removing the prickles (Interview with Adolf Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022). Locust and flying ants (*nthwamakhura* or *nemeneme*) were also collected in large quantities when procurable, and after the wings have been removed and boiled and dried and then used as source of food. Crickets and small insects were eaten by the children, either raw or slightly roasted; they irritate the creatures by pricking at their holes with small pieces of grass, and pounce on them as soon as they emerge (interview with Mphigalala, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; Stayt, 1988: 76). Other nutritious sources of food were:

- When sour milk (*mafhi*) makes a popular *tshisevho*, with goat milk being preferred to that of cows. cow milk was transferred from the wooden vessel into which it

was milked into a clay pot, to which more was added every day, until it was quite sour. Sometimes the pot was supported on a stand and a small hole made in the bottom to allow the water to run off, leaving the solid curd. Goat milk was warmed in a small clay pot, into which it was milked, and then left for a week to sour (interview with Mphigalala, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

- Meat (*nama*) was consumed in enormous quantities in almost any degree of decomposition. The community of Ravele travelled for miles with the hope of obtaining a piece of meat or some blood. The fact that an animal died of disease in no way deterred them. It was cooked by roasting on a stick, and only boiled when it is desired to extract the fat. Where game was plentiful a man would obtain a wild buck or birds fairly frequently. They were particularly fond of cane-rats and ant-bears. Every part of an animal may be eaten except the valves of the heart, which were always cut out and thrown away (Stayt, 1988: 77; Interview with R. Mphidi, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022). The following animals were never eaten; the lion, leopard, cheetah, lynx and all animals of the cat species, the dog, hyena, jackal, mongoose, crocodile, and all snakes. Certain birds were also taboo, for example, the vultures, eagles, hawk, owl, crow, stork, the hammerhead, kingfisher, secretary bird, heron and bats. The intestines of an ant-bear and porcupine were not considered fit for consumption at all, as the one was very earthy and the other very bitter. The intestine of the pig was seldom eaten, as the pig's anatomy was considered to be similar to that of the human being (interview with M. Mphigalala, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; Van Warmelo, 1935: 101).
- Fish (*khovhe*) was not popular and probably used to be entirely taboo; the older people still regard it as a type of snake and never touch it. Today a woman would not have it brought near the house and never eat it, although it was often caught and eaten by young boys (interview with N. Nelwalani, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).
- Traditional beer (*mahafhe* produced from sorghum) was consumed in enormous quantities in times of plenty, doing services as both food and drink to the average Muvenda. It was an essential factor in their diet, and to the question, 'What was your favourite food?' every Muvenda would return the same invariable reply, 'halwa (*mahafhe*)' The whole social system of the Ravele people was inextricably linked to this popular beverage, which was the first essential in all festivities, the one incentive to labour, the first thought in dispensing hospitality, the favourite

tribute of the subject to their *khosi* and almost the only motive offering dedicated to their spirits (Interview with M.W. Netshisaulu, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

Every host prepares *mahafhe* for his guest as a token of friendship and goodwill. If an unexpected visitor, whether a friend or a stranger, calls upon him and he has no *mahafhe* ready to offer his guest, his first words would be profuse apologies for being obliged to give his visitor such an inhospitable reception.

At reaping or harvesting time large quantities of *mahafhe* were prepared for drinking, and no one who would be rumoured to have prepared *mahafhe* need fear any shortage of labour in his land. Everybody who was able hastened to his assistance and willingly does a share of the work, in joyful anticipation of the *mahafhe*-drink to follow (Interview with M.W. Netshisaulu, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

A favourite song after emptying the *mahafhe*-pots runs: 'joyful! The world full of pleasure'. The men's *mahafhe*, *muthetshelo*, was served in a special large pot brought to them by the youngest wives of the host; the bearer tastes it, to guarantee its quality and that it has not been poisoned, and hands it to her husband who has long drink before passing it on to his most important guest or relative. It was passed round the assembly, more or less in order of seniority and status, each man taking a long draught before passing it on to his neighbour (Interview with T. Siala, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021).

Only very old and highly respected women were permitted to drink with the men from their pot. The women's beer, *musindelo*, was brewed separately and served in special calabashes and never drunk by men. When they collected together to drink at sowing and reaping ceremonies, it was considered a gross breach of etiquette for men to intrude on a women's beer-drink, and vice versa. On all festive occasions at least five pots and calabashes of *musindelo* were provided, a pot for the *gota* and his senior councilor or relative or honoured guest, a pot for the old men, a pot for the young men, a calabash for the old women, and a calabash for the young women; at very large gatherings a pot and calabash was provided for each age-set. The *mahafhe* was often ladled out in long-handled cup-shaped calabashes which were used as cups, but this was a modern innovation. There seemed to be no limit to the capacity of Vhavenda for drinking *mahafhe*, pot after pot and calabash after calabash would be consumed as long as any

*mahafhe* was available. The effect was exhilarating and exciting, making the drinkers quarrelsome and argumentative rather than intoxicated (Interview with T. Siala, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021).

Excessive *mahafhe* beer-drinking parties may account for accounts of the lazy, slothful character of the average Muvenda and for the heavy dropsical frame of the typical middle-aged *khosi*. *Mahafhe* could be made from the most grains, the fruits of the *mufula* tree, the leaves of the prickly pear, or the sap of the fan palm. *Mufhoho* (eleusine) beer was the most popular, and when there was no more *mufhoho*, maize or other grains may be used for the foundation and little *mufhoho* added for fermentation (Stayt, 1988: 78). This type of *mahafhe* was produced the following way: *Tahe* heads of corn were beaten on a clean smeared place and the corn carefully winnowed to remove all the dust. It was then soaked for two days in covered pots of water and put into baskets until it began to germinate, when it was spread out in the sun and stamped; this part of the process was called *u tomba*. The following day it would be mixed with water and boiled for the most part of the day when left to cool (Interview with N. Nelwalani, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; Stayt 1988: 78; Interview with R. Madzivhandila, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022).

- *Mafula* beer (marula/ maroela) was made by chopping up the fruits open and putting them into small pots of water, and squeezing all the fruits up inside the water; all the pips were removed and the concoction left for the day; the white scum was then taken off, and the beer put into large pots, which are/ were covered with leaves and sealed with cow-dung; after four or five days the pots were opened and a little earth made by white ants was added to give its strength; it was then ready to drink (Interview with N. Nelwalani, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; Stayt 1988: 80).
- Tobacco (Snuff) (*Fola*) has been grown by the Vhavenda for ages, but until quite recently was only used for the manufacture of snuff which was never smoked. Snuff was used freely by everybody after puberty, and it was either inhaled up the nose or put between the lower lip and the front teeth. It was prepared in special clay pots, with rough incisions on the inside, giving it a rough surface (Interview with M. Mphigalala, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; Interview with N. Neluvhalani, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022). Dry tobacco leaves were put into the pot and ground up with a

stick, the ribs of the leaves were removed and the rest ground very fine, and then mixed with charcoal obtained from a special tree, (*tshitavhamisisi*), and the mixture again up together, resulting in a strong black concoction which was dried by heating, damped and then put away to dry finally. Many different receptacles were used for holding snuff, the most popular being the hard, egg-shaped fruit of the *matusa* tree (Interview with M. Mphigalala, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; Smoking: Hemp was smoked, but not very extensively. The Vhavenda pipe consists of an ox-horn partly filled with water, into the mouth of which was placed a hollow reed attached to clay or stone pipe-bowl. It was unlike the usual one of the type which the reed and bowl were actually attached to the bonus of the horns toward the pointed end. The smoker inhales by placing both hands over the opening and around the reed and drawing through the aperture made by slightly parting the hands. The smoke passes through the water at the bottom of the horn. It was taken in huge breaths, and exhales with great coughing and spluttering. Usually about half a dozen of these mighty draws were sufficient to produce the desire somnolence (Interview with M. Mphigalala, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; Van Warmelo, 1935: 87).

### **3.8 Conclusion**

The foregoing discussion represents a concise discussion of the historical background of the area where the Ravele community of Mauluma, the Ratombo community and the Magwada community were living before the forced removal by the white settlers. It also discussed the areas that they occupied as well as *mahosi* and *magota* who were in administration during those days. It also discussed the livestock they kept and which they kept during their stay in the areas mentioned above. It alluded to the boundaries between the areas that were occupied by these communities, which were mainly rivers. The history of Matumba community was also included in the discussion because this community stayed together with the Ravele community in the Luvuvhu Valley. Therefore, the current researcher intended to show that one cannot speak of the Ravele community, Ratombo community, and Magwada community without mentioning the Matuma community as they shared borders and that most of the members of this community were staying within the Luvuvhu Valley. The discussion showed that the forced removals of these communities were not a pleasant experience for the communities of the Luvuvhu Valley, particularly with Raveles. In the process, many

people lost their lives and properties were damaged and/ or lost. Their livestock also got lost while others died or were captured. Many people in the Luvuvhu valley lost their lands. In the process many of their able-bodies young men, unmarried men, women and young boys were forced into cheap black labour or even worked for nothing.

The next chapter deals with land dispossession in the Luvuvhu Valley and how it affected the Luvuvhu Valley community, in particular, the Ravele community.

## Chapter 4

### Land Dispossession in the Luvuvhu Valley

#### 4.1 Introduction

At the turn of the second half of the 1930s, the settlement of the Luvuvhu Valley accommodated a large percentage of new arrivals who were classified as 'poor whites'. Despite the fact that the majority of them were poor, they co-existed alongside a small proportion of wealthy white landowners who rented out land to Vhavenda. While Vhavenda, amongst them the Ravele community, lost their ability to live off the land over time, and were condemned to lives of miserable poverty, the 'poor whites' were given chance to start afresh through the sympathetic support of the apartheid government. This chapter attempts to show that while on the one hand the Luvuvhu Settlement Scheme had accommodated 'poor whites' within the Luvuvhu Valley, on the other hand it also resulted in the displacement of Vhavenda, amongst them the Ravele community and other communities who were found in the area. This is what Delius et al (1986: 13) call "accumulation and dispossession". The origins of the relocation plan within the Luvuvhu Valley, who and what problems faced the 'poor whites', and the type of assistance that the State offered to alleviate their poverty was looked at. The displacement of Vhavenda amongst them the Raveles, was due to the machination of the white settler farmers. The major feature of this relocation was the growth of racism as a code that cemented bonds of ethnic solidarity as well as separation on the one hand while and it promoted white racial superiority and unity.

#### 4.2 The Arrival of the White Settlers in the Soutpansberg Area

The first white settlement in the northern part of what we know today as the Limpopo Province, was at Schoemansdal, the ruins of which lie some 20 (twenty kilometers) west of Louis Trichardt in the Makhado Local Municipality. This first significant episode of white conquest in the area revolved not around the land for agriculture and ivory. Still, it makes for an interesting – if ambiguous – parable on the relationships between the different people in the area the environment, technology and power.

However, it was several decades before white settlers penetrated into the far northern part of South Africa, then known as the Transvaal Province. The process was led - initially quite tentatively – by a series of government interventions. In the decade following the retreat of the jagtergemeenskap, the Transvaal Boer Republic or the South African Republic (ZAR) maintained a few officials in the fortress at Goedewensch, near the site of the future white settlement of Louis Trichardt. The republic went through the motions demarcating land and allocating ‘farms’. But in reality, the government had a few willing candidates to take advantage of this, and of these most were towards the south of the district close to the Pietersburg end of the Soutpansberg District (which at that time extended further south and was larger (Mulaudzi 2000: 38). Most of these allocated ‘farms’ were neither occupied nor farmed by whites but were effectively still within the control of African rulers. As it was in 1885, the ZAR began the process of surveying the land and allocating African reserves; but seemingly on a loose basis with virtually no genuine attempt to enforce settlement patterns as much:

*Locally, Africans experienced state power more in the form of occasional tax raids and the expropriation of livestock, rather than as a modern bureaucracy. The power of the state to remake the rural area without resorting to the commando and military was severely limited. Even when it scored military victories, the Transvaal Republic still lacked the means to transform African chiefdoms into reserve-dwelling servants or farm labourers (NTS, Central Archives Depot, 264, C21/51. Report on the soil survey of Beaufort No. 75, Levubu River, District Soutpansberg, Transvaal, by M.V.Z, Pellisier, March 1948; Mulaudzi, 2000: 41).*

In 1886, the ZAR introduced ‘occupation farms,’ whereby white individuals were given land in return for a promise to render military service. A key condition of these arrangement was that the settler promised to occupy his land for the majority of the year; without this condition they were neither present to ensure the territorial integrity of their particular piece of land, nor were they available to provide military service at short notice so as to promote the integrity of the territory more broadly. While there appears to have been a reasonably strong response among those taking advantage of what was effectively free land (though under ambiguous tenure), many or most of these either did not abide by the occupation requirement or did not bother to go through the formalities



of registering their ownership; in fact, many sold 'their land' to speculators (Aliber et.al., 2013: 32).

Ironically, these speculators, among whom were both individuals and companies, emerged as the largest non-state landowners, and they were not keen on evicting Africans. This is because they wished to collect rent from them, thus defeating the whole rationale for the occupation farm approach. Larger white landowners and the rural elite similarly had little real interest in ensuring the enforcement of the 1887 Squatter Law, which limited to five the number of African families allowed to live on a farm. This was intended to ensure that white farmers on smaller properties who were genuinely attempting to farm could access sufficient labour. Africans preferred to be rent tenants on larger farms held by absentee landlords, where the demands were far less onerous and the disturbance to their lifestyle relatively minimal (Aliber et.al., 2013: 32-33).

Exasperated by this unimpressive string of half-measures, the ZAR launched a series of military campaigns from 1890-1898. In the course of these the major African communities were defeated and fractured, and their leaders killed, imprisoned or forced into exile. Significantly, this included the most powerful of the Venda polities, like the one under Mphephu (one of Makhado's sons), which controlled the western part of the Soutpansberg mountain range as well as the fertile land below. Upon Mphephu's defeat, the town of Louis Trichardt was established. The South African (Anglo-Boer) War of 1899-1902 briefly created a power vacuum during which some of the chiefdoms reasserted their territorial control. But soon after the War the colonial government of the victorious British pushed ahead by subjugating African inhabitants and more aggressively opening up the territory for the expansion of white settler farming (SAA, Director-General of Demobilisation (DGD) 413/10/22, 1243 Field of Employment. Levubu Land Settlement, Northern Province). This included specific efforts to promote farmers of British descent, as well as the conversion of occupation tenure to freehold. It also included the introduction of various subsidy schemes and investment in infrastructure, especially the railroad, which reached Louis Trichardt by the end of the 19th century. Still, even after having subjugated the African polities, the process was slow and halting. Full white occupation of Soutpansberg took another 30-40 (thirty to forty) years SA LDE 202 1082/17 Secretary to the Native Locations Commission, 1906.01.12; Interview with Adolf Rvele, 14 April 2022).

### 4.3 The Expropriation of Land from Africans in the Soutpansberg

No one said it better than Lord Hawley when describing the importance of land to African people: “it is not easy for those who know only the industrialization of the country of the western world to realize the significance of the position occupied by the land in the eyes of most people of Africa. Anthropologists have described the mystic bond which unite the Africans to the home of ancestral spirits who continue, as he believes, to play an active part in his daily life. Jurists point out that the tribal chief derives his authority largely from the fact that he is in war. The traditional defender of the lands of the tribe and in peace the orbiter of the difference which arise regarding their use” (Khapoya, 1994: 119). Among Vhavenda, land was communally owned. People exercised the right to use it and not to own it or dispose of it as they saw fit. It was this custom of communal ownership of land and the belief that the land was not a commodity, or simply an economic factor of production that could be bought and sold, which made Africans extremely sensitive to what the white settlers did when they gained control. What white settlers did was to determine the choicest land available and take it. The rationalisation for taking the land was often based on the western juridical idea that government has the right to take any land it wishes in the public interest (Interview with R. Mathagu, 5th May 2022). “The government was not representative of the Africans and had not been setup by them, the colonial government simply took it upon itself that it was acting in the best interest of the “African”, whether the Africans knew it or not” (Interview with R. Mathagu, 4th May 2022; Khapoya, 1994: 119).

Another reason given for taking African land was that the Africans had given it away through agreements or treaties. The interpretation of such treaties was the prerogatives of the colonial government, regardless of what the African mahosi thought. In most of these cases the *khosi* thought he was granting the newcomers the right to use the land not to own it or dispose of it. The other reason for grabbing African land was because it was stated that it belonged to no one. This should be understood within the context that when white settlers arrived, no one was occupying it at the time. This interpretation was clearly unacceptable to Africans, who, in most cases, may have used the land before and simply moved to another location to give the land time to renew itself. Whatever the official reason given might have been, white settlers’ appropriation of African land was

ultimately based on the climate and quality of soil and on future prospects for farming in the area (Interview with M. Nesthifhefhe, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2022; Khapoya, 1994: 120).

In the Luvuvhu Valley, for example, where the climate was more pleasant, the soil more fertile and the environment suitable for white settlement, the government encouraged white settlers to acquire farms in the area. Because the area was infested with malaria, incentives were provided in the form of 50 (fifty) years leases and low interest loans, land acquired by white settlers ranged from a few hundred hectares to hundreds of thousands of hectares. Africans who occupied those lands before the arrival of white settlers were no longer allowed to hunt or fish in those lands, even if they were being worked at the time. Trespassing laws were strictly enforced, ironically against the previous owners of the same land: the Africans (TA, NAD, File No. 176/308, No. 2029. Minute to the Native Commissioner, Soutpansberg. Place meant for white settlement, 24 November 1922). Complaints sent to the government by affected Africans were ignored. As calls for African freedom increased, the loss of the land became the most serious grievance of the Luvuvhu Valley community against the government (Manenzhe, et al, 2015: 103).

Forced removals and land dispossession have been central dimensions of oppression in the Luvuvhu Valley since the first white settlers landed in the far Northern Transvaal. It is/ was quite interesting for one to note that, when the question is/ was asked among the Ravele community, as to why people were removed from the Luvuvhu Valley, their ancestral land where they had stayed in for so long, their answers varied considerably from place to place and person to person (TA, NAD, file No, 176/308, No. 2029, minute to the Native Commissioner, Soutpansberg, 24 November 1922). This vividly illustrates how many different reasons the authority advanced for removing people who were forced out of their land and highlights what a complicated issue relocation was (Interview with R. Mufamadi, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022; Phophi, 1987: 15).

In the late 1930s the United Party (UP) government became very cautious about uprooting people for fear of criticism from within as well as from abroad. But this was not the case in the 1920s and early 1930s. Very little or no publicity was given to the forced removals. Neither the newspapers nor other media platforms, such as radio, had any interest in those early forced removals (Interview with L. Madzivhandila, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022).

To understand the relocation of the Ravele community, one has to look into the effects of different Acts passed, such as the Land Settlement Act, 1912, Forestry Act, 1913, Land Act, 1913 and 1936. Other aspects, such as, the poor white problem also played a role (SAA LD 31593/129, 1735, Levubu Irrigation Schemes; Conerly, 1990: 30).

#### **4.4 The Impact of the Land Settlement Act of 1912, the Forestry Act of 1913, the Land Act of 1913 and the Natives Trust and Land Act of 1936**

This part of the chapter focuses on the different legislation that were enacted with the aim of dispossessing land occupied by Africans. These Acts also affected the Ravele community and other Africans within the Luvuvhu Valley. The other intention is to show how these acts changed land possession over time in order to accommodate the needs of white settlers (Conerly, 1990: 30). As it happened, at the turn of the second half of the 1930s, the Luvuvhu Valley settlement accommodated a large percentage of new arrivals who were classified as 'poor whites'. Although the majority of them were poor, they ironically co-existed alongside a small proportion of wealthy white landowners who by then had been renting out land to Vhavenda. Ironically, in the past before the dawn of colonialism the land in question used to belong to Vhavenda as it was discussed in the previous chapter. While Vhavenda, amongst them the Raveles lost their ability to live off the land over time, and were condemned to lives of miserable poverty, the so called 'poor whites' were given chance to start afresh through the support of the apartheid government. It is as a result of these developments that this chapter attempts to show that the placement of 'poor whites' within the Luvuvhu Valley involved the displacement of Vhavenda (SAA LD 3/593/129, 1735, Levubu Irrigation Schemes).

According to Delius et al (1986: 13) this was called "accumulation and dispossession" because the origins of the relocation of 'poor whites' in the Luvuvhu Valley, and the type of assistance that the State offered to alleviate their poverty led to the displacement of Vhavenda from their ancestral land and the placement of the same 'poor whites' on the same land; which land was later referred to as settler land under the Luvuvhu Valley Settlement Scheme as will be seen later in the chapter. The major feature of this relocation was the growth of racism as a code that cemented white solidarity and unity, while at the same time it promoted segregation and accelerated bonds of ethnic solidarity and racial superiority (Mahosi, 2020: 184-189).

#### 4.4.1 The dispossession of farms in the Luvuvhu Valley

In terms of the Land Act, 1913 (Act No. 27 of 1913) and subsequently, section 2 of the Natives Development Trust and Land Act, 1936 (Act No. 18 of 1936), the area of the Luvuvhu Valley not scheduled as a black area. This was regardless of the fact that the land in question had been occupied by African, and the Ravele community for years on end. But was included in Released area No. 26 (TA, NAD, file No, 176/308, No. 2029, minute to the Native Commissioner, Soutpansberg, 24 November 1922). In the Soutpansberg District of the Transvaal Province, Mauluma in the Luvuvhu Valley was divided into different farms and given different colonial names by the white settlers who came after the arrival of the Raveles under Mphephu. These farms were Barotta No. 17LT2 and 3(63), a portion of Levubu No. 15LT, a portion of Klein Australia No. 13LT (Entabeni), a portion of Lisbon No. 12LT (Entabeni Forest), the northern portion of Levubu No. 15LT, the eastern portion of Nooitgedaght No. 14LT and the eastern portion of Appelsfontein No. 35LT (TA, NAD, 1922; Interview with Adolf Ravele, 14 May 2022). As Keegan (1988: 65) has observed, a key objective of the 1913 Land Act, was the eradication of black farmers, who depended on subsistence economy for their survival. In the same vein, the government intended to remove the Ravele community from the Luvuvhu Valley for settlement by white farmers. The government's intentions were supported by the 1913 Land Act, which prohibited land purchase by Africans outside of scheduled reserve areas, making the reserves the only places where Africans could occupy land. The Act thus effectively ensured that Africans would have to seek wage employment in order to secure their economic survival, provide cheap labour to white employers in the farms and pay several taxes (SAA, Director-General of Demobilisation (DGD) 413/10/22, 1243 Field of employment. Levubu Land Settlement; Interview with D.E. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

Accompanying the 1913 Land Act were the Forestry Act of 1913 and the Land Settlement Act of 1912 both which also led to the taking over of the farm Lisbon in 1921. The farm was bought by *Khosi* Mphephu, under whom the Raveles were when they were living on the farm around 1910. There were different views concerning the taking over of the farm Lisbon from *Khosi* Mphephu. According to land affairs officials *Khosi* Mphephu had trouble in repaying the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association the sum of £2 700, which they had advanced to assist in the purchase of an undivided half portion of the farm Lisbon 12LT in 1910. Mphephu insisted that he had repaid the amount in full.

In order to solve the matter, it was decided that a collection be made from the tribe (TA, NAD, file No, 176/308, No. 2029, minute to the Native Commissioner, Soutpansberg, 24 November 1922; Interview with Adolf Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022). It should be remembered that the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association was a vehicle through which the government used *mahosi* to enlist cheap black labour for the mines in particular. Be that as it may, a meeting of *magota* and *mahosi* who represented the tribe fully, was held and a statement to this effect was signed by them. One could imagine that that were signing such an agreement under duress, as it had become a norm during that time. According to Nemudzivhadi (1990:15) and Native Land Commission (References to and extract of the Land Settlement Act 1912), there was no clue as to whether Mphephu did or did not pay his debts. The current researcher would like to advance that whether the same proof of payment appeared in the 'References' or not did not necessarily imply that Mphephu did not meet his obligation of paying, but a ploy to make him feel the heat. As it was, the Native Commissioner in Louis Trichardt, stated that, the outstanding debt was never paid in full, and as expected the Mphephu royal kraal denied the Native Commissioner's report and claimed it was blatant stealing of their land (Nemudzivhadi, 1990: 25).

Although *Khosi* Mphephu reiterated his previous statements that he had fully paid for the farm, his assertions fell on deaf ears. According to Nemudzivhadi (1990: 25) Mphephu believed that the farm was being taken away from him for no reason at all, except that, he was African and deserved no ownership of property, let alone land. Resultantly, to show its authority, the state sold the farm in 1921 before even amicably resolving the matter with *Khosi* Mphephu; more proof that this was a ploy to take the land away from him. As it was the farm was sold to a white settler, a Mr. Gilbertson. Following, this *Khosi* Mphephu gave his followers the right to decide whether they would work on Gilbertson's farm or not; further proof of how the government *vis-à-vis* the Labour Association operated. Those who had the desire to leave the farm were given the options to do so, without compensation. After some discussion, those Vhavenda who were present acceded greed to Gilbertson's new conditions without a single dissentient. This meant that Vhavenda who were on the farm, including those belonging to the Ravele community had agreed to work as farm labourers for Gilbertson on farm Oorlogsfontein, district of Potgietersrus and on Lisbon 12LT itself (Nemudzivhadi, 1990: 25; Interview with S.D. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; Interview with R. Mathagu, 4<sup>th</sup> May

2022). Even though Gilbertson had removed them from Lisbon 12LT, he showed some kindness by allowing the Ravele community and other African communities to remain on Lisbon 12LT, for three months, within which period to reap their crops before calling them to work (SAA LD 3/593/ 129, 1735 Levubu Irrigation Schemes; SAA, Director-General of Demobilisation (DGD), 413/10/22, 1243. Fields of employment, Levubu Land Settlement, Northern Transvaal). This again shows that the 'kindness' in question was actually cloaked in the later benefit of having the rendering their services in kind on his farm(s).

Unsurprisingly, and as the last statement of the last paragraph shows, the remaining members of the Ravele community and other Africans on Lisbon 12LT decided to become farm labourers for Gilbertson because, ironically, they saw their presence in the farm as offering them some sort of social security. In the same vein it should be understood that by giving the right to decide to whether they would like to work on the farm, the blight would be on him because they would end up being victims of evictions. In other words, Mphephu feared that should his subjects refuse to work on the farm they would be driven-off and end up being replaced by other, notably followers of his brother, the collaborative *Khosi* Sinthumule and, especially, those under *Gota* Mutheiwana would be placed on the farm. In essence the two individuals, Sinthumule and Mphephu were in competition for land and power in the Luvuvhu Valley. According to Nefale (1998: 64), the Sinthumules were at that moment under notice to quit an adjoining farm and were waiting to see whether there was any chance of them being allowed to settle on Lisbon 12LT. As a result of the competition for land between the two *mahosi*, it was easy for white settlers to obtain labour (TA, NAD, File No. 211/308, Minute from the Assistant Director of Native Agriculture, 30 July 1926; Interview with M. Netshifhefhe, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2022).

The Ravele community and others stayed on the farm Lisbon under as labour tenants in 1921, during which time Gilbertson and other white settlers went to the *khosi* and ordered the people to move out as they wanted to plant trees. When the Raveles refused to move out Gilbertson responded by planting trees around their homestead after which they further instructed to see to it that their livestock did not eat any of the trees. Life had indeed become difficult for the Ravele community (TA, NAD File No. 176/308, No. 2029, Minute to the Native Commissioner, Soutpansberg. A place meant for white settlement,

24 November 1922; Interview with M.A. Mafukata, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021). Some were arrested because naturally their cattle and goats ended up eating the trees. Following this brute force was then used to remove them when trees in front of their homesteads were cut down, so that access to their homesteads would be difficult (Phophi, 1987: 3). Hence, the proverb “Ngilimane Tshitopeni Kutamani yo sia Mutshinyalo” meaning, “the pick and shovel of destruction that took place has happened.” The above measures led to the destruction of the Raveles properties and their forced removal from Lisbon (TA, NAD, File No. 211/308, Minute from the Assistant Director of Native Agriculture, 30 July 1926; Interview with unnamed Land Claims Commissioner, 15 March 2021).

The communities around the Valley started to complain about the size of allotments and regulations forbidding the cutting of trees and the gathering of fallen branches for fencing and fuel (for which heavy fines of five pounds could be imposed) if they infringed on these laws. In response these communities started to oppose the annual grazing fee of 38s (payable in advance). In addition, they complained about being abused by agricultural officers, who were hellbent on making life unbearable for these communities and the Raveles (Hirson, 1990: 127) and to put more pressure on them. Even cultural practices were forbidden since Gilbertson forbade the *tshikona* dance to be performed on the farm because of its ‘noise’. This was arguably one of the Raveles important cultural activity that was associated with annual ritual practices (Interview with E. Matumba, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020).

#### **4.4.2 The establishment of forestry plantations and the irrigation scheme**

The establishment of the irrigation scheme and forestry plantation also led to the dispossession of the Luvuvhu Valley from the resident communities. Ironically, (Delius et. al., 1996: 10; SAA LD 3/593/129, 1735 Levubu Irrigation Schemes) claims that he does not know the views expressed by the Ravele community regarding the establishment of irrigation scheme and forestry plantation in the Valley. This could mean that the feeling and views of the Raveles were never sought regarding the matter, more so because the land had already been taken away from them and they had no say on whatever would follow. Therefore, for the author to say that he/ she did not know about the views of the Raveles on the matter borders on hypocrisy. Added to this, it is surprising that this situation led historians such as Delius et. al. to consider the irrigation scheme and the forestry plantation as something tied up with ideas about state control



over the reserves without extracting the views of the affected community(ies). The research shows that, far from being a social upliftment programme, the irrigation scheme was part of the broader measures aimed at alienating Africans from the land. Delius, 1996:10) points out that the widespread resistance to the new measures was an indication that the forestry plantation *vis-à-vis* the irrigation scheme was ill-conceived as an upliftment programme (Nemudzivhadi, 1990: 15; Conerly, 1990: 49), because it was not necessarily intended for the benefit of the affected communities but for the agricultural production of the white settler communities.

However, as a result of its unproductivity, Gilbertson decided to sell Lisbon 12LT to the Department of Lands in 1922, for forestry purposes. Nemudzivhadi (1990, 49) is of the view that the Ravele community viewed this latest move, also as a long term strategy by the government to take the Ravele's land away. In order to entice labour tenants to remain in Lisbon, the government introduced incentives. It was reported on 4 July 1923 that "In view of the fact that the District Forest Officer had all the African tenants residing on the farm Lisbon 12LT, District Zoutpansberg, put on a farm labour contract, no taxes would be required from them." The 1912 Settlement Act and 1913 Forestry Act also affected the Ravele community in Lisbon, and those residing at Klein Australia. It led to the plantation of Bluegum and pine trees in Klein Australia. However, this forestry plantation led to the removal of the Ravele community out of Klein Australia in 1925. This was another indication that the government viewed African lives as unimportant as compared to forestry plantation (TA, NAD, Memorandum dated 23 July 1937. Water Affairs Department (henceforth DWA, File L350/65, Minute from Conservator of Forests to the District Forest Officer, Louis Trichardt, April 1938; Nemudzivhadi, 1990: 49). Part of the Ravele community was living on the farm Welgevonden and the surrounding farms. After the report was received in respect of farms Lisbon and Klein Australia, Welgevonden was also acquired, according to the Forestry Act of 1913 and Land Settlement Act of 1912. This further reduced the Ravele community to a state of dependency and subordination as fertile spots were taken by the government for forestry purposes and others given to white settlers. However, theirs was not a complete removal because, the intention was also to make labour available under specific conditions (TA, NAD: File 288/337: Minute from Secretary for Lands to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 29 April 1926; Interview with M. Mphigalala, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

The Secretaries for Lands and for Native Affairs had conflicting ideas about the position of labour tenants in the Luvuvhu Valley. The Secretary for Lands informed the Department of Native Affairs on 30 August 1923 that “this Department would welcome as many as possible Africans on the farm Welgevoden, District of Zoutpansberg, being put on farm labour contracts, in view of irrigation works which were at present in the course of construction on the farm.” It was not the intention to disturb any of the Africans, pending the allotment of the farm to white settlers. Those being put on farm labour contract, therefore did not have to vacate the farm. After the farm had been allotted to settlers, Africans would be able to come to some kind of an agreement with the white settlers (TA, NAD: File 288/337: Minute from Secretary for Lands to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 29 April 1926).

Regardless of this the Secretary for Native Affairs was informed on 19 December 1924, by the Secretary for Lands that steps were taken to invite applications for allotment of certain irrigable holdings on the above farm under the Land Settlement Act, 1912. A statutory notice to the Africans concerned was issued, to advise them that on allotment they were occupying they may be required to vacate the above land, hence they should start making plans for such an eventuality. Some of the Africans were taken on as farm labourers by the white settlers. But those who were not employed vacated the farm on request and moved to places of their own choice (Interview with L. Madzivhandila, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2022; Nemutanzhela, 1939-1944: 3). The Secretary of Native Affairs had this to say: “The Department has been informed that the natives are cultivating portions of the grazing area. The natives should be given to understand that further farming operations must cease. I shall be glad if you will advise me of the action taken as the result of this minute. It is understood that the natives are entitled to three months’ notice, but perhaps you will confirm.” The Native Commissioner of Soutpansberg confirmed on 29 December 1924 that, he had acted accordingly. Thereafter, Raveles’ stay on the farm was apparently terminated in 1925 (TA, NAD, File 288/337. Minute from Secretary for Land to the Secretary Native Affairs, 29 April 1926). The irrigation scheme *vis-à-vis* the forestry plantation made the Ravele community dependent on white settler farmers for survival as their sole means of production was taken away from them. In essence, the agricultural officers did not only prevent people from ploughing, but they also put stringent control on other natural resources. Under these circumstances, the authority

of the *khosi*, which was based on an ability to grant these resources to people, was seriously undermined (interview with Matumba, 2020; Mphadzha, 1988: 2).

An extract from the 1936 Natives Economic Commission Report, echoes this scenario: "Irrigation scheme and forestry plantation meant different things to different people in the Luvuvhu Valley. Generally, many Africans indicated how irrigation scheme and forestry plantation through agricultural officers, reduced their arable land in the Luvuvhu Valley" (TA, Department of Land Affairs (henceforth DLA), File 31593/21,1634, Letter from Rooth to the secretary for Lands, 7 September 1936). In contrast, State officials believed that the policy would help to boost agricultural production in the Luvuvhu Valley and create jobs. However, it made the living conditions among the communities in the Luvuvhu Valley worse. These new methods effectively alienated the predominantly subsistence farming community from the land they desperately needed. Hence, the agricultural officers did not understand the symbolic meaning of ploughing the field to the Ravele community and other affected communities. While they saw their actions as noble, they ran into conflict with local communities in the Luvuvhu Valley (TA, DLA, M. Nkatingi papers, 199/97, Letter from Secretary for Lands to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 16 June 1937).

#### **4.4.3 The Luvuvhu Valley Whites Settlement Scheme**

As early as 1935 the settlers north of the Soutpansberg Mountain Range wrote to the magistrate in Louis Trichardt complaining about the continued drought which had started in 1933. A Mr. Harvey Wright, a farmer and storekeeper in the area wrote, "...owing to the continued drought, cattle are dying in large numbers, the people who live almost entirely from cattle had for long no income and many of them are practically destitute, poverty is increasing and the store keepers are no longer able to supply their needs on credit and there is no other alternative than for the government to come and rescue those who are unable to help themselves with food and clothing" (TA, NAD, Memorandum dated 23 July 1937. Water Affairs Department (henceforth DWA), File L350/65, Minute from Conservator of Forests to the District Forest Officer, Louis Trichardt, 8 April 1938; Black Mountain, 1935: 63-70). One Veterinary Officer also indicated that, "...one could not gather a bag full of grass on a whole farm and moving stock to other farms proved to be futile as most of them in the area were suffering from foot and mouth disease" (LD, 31418, 1733, Vol. I, Letter from Veterinary officer to

resident magistrate, 18 January 1935). The magistrate on the other hand, informed the Lands Department that the situation had become desperate and that if the farmers were not assisted the whole land settlement scheme would be doomed. It is clear from these statements that the desperate owners of the cattle and the farmers referred to, were the white settlers and not the dispossessed communities.

It is also clear by the statement raised by the magistrate that the settlers in the north were placed in the area of the Luvuvhu Valley by the government as a way of solving the poor white problem. However, what was not clear was where these poor whites came from and whether they were moved from the urban areas because of adverse conditions. According to the letter, the white settlers north of the mountain were placed there under the Land Settlement Act and most of them had been assisted by the state to purchase cattle that were now dying (LD, 31418, 1733, Vol. I, Letter from resident magistrate to Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, 18/01/1935). It was recorded that from December 1934 to 17 June 1935, 400 (four hundred) cattle had died, including 200 (two hundred) government-owned cattle. Some 300 (three hundred) sheep belonging to Dorstig and Keith farms had also been lost. Besides the drought, one Mr. Grimbeeck of the Transvaal Land Board, who had investigated the conditions of white settler farmers in the north, reported that locusts, *mashonzha* (mopani worms), overstocking and overgrazing had also exacerbated the conditions. According to him, the previous 20 (twenty) years the area had been one of the richest in stock farming and that it had attracted a significant number of stock farmers such that farms had become smaller and smaller as most farmers wanted a plot (LD, 31418, 1733, Vol. I, Grimbeeck report to the minister, 14 October 1935; LD, 31418, 1733, vol. 1, Letter from Resident Magistrate to Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, 18/04/1935).

As a solution Grimbeeck had recommended that the government should supply white settler farmers with maize rations and cattle fodder. Furthermore, he said that the government should create jobs in public works such as roads for married men who were not prepared to move out of the district, and that white settler farmers should be allowed to graze stock on government land. Furthermore, according to him most white settler farmers in the area had indicated that they would be willing to move to other districts on condition that irrigable ground was made available (LD, 31418, 1733, Vol. I, Grimbeeck report to the minister, 14 October 1935). Calling the government for help indicated that

the white settler farmers in the north were unable to depend on themselves, as they were poor. The result was that this gave rise to a dependency syndrome which led to underdevelopment, because each time they experienced a problem, they expected help from outside sources (the government) rather than solving their own problems. Important to note is that while the focus was on white settlers only, it does not mean that black communities in the area, like the Raveles, were not feeling the impact of the drought and other such natural disasters. The same report is not making any mention of them, either is communities mor as labourers in the farms affected by these negative conditions

It was reported on the 14th of October 1935 that an investigation to determine the general opinion on the purchase of several farms in the Luvuvhu Valley, Lutanandwa and other rivers in the area had been conducted with a view to create a settlement scheme. The settlement scheme that was being proposed was going to include farms such as, Laatsgevonden 74 belonging to Gaymans, Barrota 65, which belonged to one Coetzee, Klein Australia belonged to one Venter, Welgevonden 120 which belonged to Adendorff, Madrid which belonged to Menne and Morgenzon under the ownership of one Louw. It was argued that the first three farms fell in an area demarcated as government plantation forests, and that no one could claim to own the streams, provided that the whole of Barrota and Klein Australia had been bought by the state (LD, 31418,1733, Vol. I, Grimbeeck report to the minister, 14 October 1935). The quality of the soil and the fact that the land could be brought under irrigation cheaply without the construction of huge dams, compelled the Land Board to recommend the government to proclaim the area as fit for an irrigation scheme as required by the Irrigation Act No. 8 of 1912 as amended (SAA LD 3/593/129, 1735, Levubu Irrigation Schemes; LD, 31418,1733, Vol. I, Grimbeeck report to the minister, 14 October 1935). Therefore, the Act gave the Governor-General extra- ordinary powers since it stipulated that, "if at any time he requires or deems it to be expedient in the public interest to take or use any land or stream for the purpose of irrigating any land or constructing thereon any reservoir or other irrigation work, he is not entitled by law to take or use the land so required without the consent of the owner." Therefore, it remained to be seen if such steps would be taken by the Governor-General should such a need arise.

The argument is that at its initial stages the proposed scheme would affect the people of Ravele, Matumba, Rasikhuthuma who were settled at Barrota and Klein Australia and their neighbours who were settled at Laatsgevonden under *Gota Dombo* of Tshakhuma. The same Act stated that no irrigation project could take place unless the consent of the white settler owner was obtained. In reality, it meant the white settler owners who were having title deeds to such areas, which the Africans were denied (SAA LD 3/593/129, 1735 Levubu Irrigation Schemes). As it can be seen by this time African land had been snatched and title deeds given to the white settlers. Therefore, the interests of the public the Act was referring to were those of white settlers and not the previous *bonafides*, the Africans, since the scheme was for the benefit of whites in the exclusion of Africans. The result was that on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 1935 it was reported that the government had acquired irrigable, fertile land in the north, between Louis Trichardt and Sibasa. According to *The Star*, one Mr. E A Rooth, a Member of Parliament (MP), supported by local white settler farmers was "largely responsible for this new settlement scheme, which would provide for many of the white settler farmers who for years have fought a losing battle at the back of the Soutpansberg Mountain against arid conditions". In addition, reference was made to the financial success of the settlement known as Welgevonden. Welgevonden was situated on the adjoining farms of the proposed settlement scheme, on the side of Maelula settlement, an area which was indeed fertile and productive (DLA, Nkatingi papers, *The Star*, 22 December 1935).

Before the enactment and implementation of the 1936 Native Trust and Land Act, the Secretary for Native Affairs was informed by the Secretary for Lands that the Department of Lands had purchased the farms in question for the proposed irrigation scheme. He was also informed to take steps to remove all the Africans who had occupied the farms (LD, 3148, 1733, letter from Secretary for Lands to Secretary for Native Affairs, 29 May 1936). In terms of the 1913 Native land Act the farms that were purchased were not scheduled as African areas, but were included in released area No. 26, Districts of Soutpansberg, Letaba and Pietersburg. Such lands could be purchased by the Trust for African settlement. Nevertheless, this did not include any land, which had been reserved for public purposes, or had been declared forest under the Forest Act No.16 of 1913 before the commencement of the Act on 31 August 1936. Land purchased for any government irrigation settlement prior to the commencement of the 1936 Native Trust Land Act would not be used for African settlement because the Minister of Lands had

certified that it was required for allotment to white settler farmers (TA NAD, File No. 176/308, No. 2029, Minute to the Native Commissioner, Soutpansberg 9A, Place meant for White Settlement, 24 November 1922).

The impact of purchasing land in the Luvuvhu Valley before the enactment of the Natives Trust and Land Act of 1936 by the government was intended to manipulate farmers in the area. This implied that the land in the Luvuvhu Valley would be sold at high prices by white settler farmers. This is because white settler farmers were made to believe that the soil was more fertile than it actually was. On the other hand, it also made it impossible for individuals to reject claims for excision for the purposes of the settlement scheme. Before the irrigation construction was completed towards the end of 1936, it was reported that the "present rain might have benefited white settler farmers behind the mountain to an extent that they would be reluctant to move" (LD, 3148,1733, Letter to Mr. Burgers, 20 November 1936). However, the survey carried out by Grimbeeck in 1937 involving 215 (two-hundred-and-fifteen) holdings, revealed that the overwhelming majority of white settler farmers were no longer willing to move. Only 5 (five) people assured that they were ready to take up holdings in the Luvuvhu Valley, whilst 181 (one-hundred-and-eighty-one) persons had indicated that they were not willing to go to the Luvuvhu Valley. The remaining 29 (twenty-nine) individuals were not available at the time of the survey. But it was assumed that they were against moving to the Luvuvhu Valley. This contradicted what was reported by government officials while the settlement scheme was still in its infancy (LD, 3148,1733, Vol. 2, Report from Grimbeeck to the Central Land Board 13 July 1937; HT, Interview between S. Dowling and Mr. Schoeman, Superintendent of 1960 Settlers, Levubu, July 1987).

Be that as it may, most of the settlers refused to move to the Luvuvhu Valley because they were not prepared to change from stock farming to arable farming. They were too old to start from scratch with arable farming. Arable farming required more time in terms of investigating whether the soil was suitable for the type of crops they wanted to plant, and the use of insecticides and payment of water for irrigation which they feared given their poverty. Others did not want to move because they were employed in the Messina mine, some travelled daily or even weekly to their farms. This group did not want to move because they were near to their workplaces as compared to the Luvuvhu Valley. Some were businessmen owning outlets such as butcheries and shops in Messina (D,

3148,1733, Vo1. 2, Report from Grimbeeck to the Central Land Board, 13 July 1937). They preferred to move their stock to other districts until conditions improved. However, moving to a place far away from their business would affect them adversely because they would have to pay daily travelling expenses that would eat into their profits (Interview with Adolf ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022; Conerly, 1990: 23).

#### **4.4.4 The incentives attached to the Luvuvhu Valley Settlement Scheme for whites**

The rain that started towards the end of 1936 brought some relief to the drought-stricken area north of the Soutpansberg Mountain. This led some of the white settler farmers to refuse to move to the Luvuvhu Valley. Although, it was already indicated that a number of them had already been transferred to the Luvuvhu Valley, such a number was not enough to serve the purpose of enlarging plots in the north and make them economically viable (LD, 31418, 1733, Letter to the Irrigation Commission, 10 October 1939). In order to encourage the movement of the settlers to the new scheme, it was indicated that those who "refused to take advantage of the holdings offered, should be made to realise that they would have had to depend upon themselves in the future" (LD, 3148,1733, Vol. 2, Telegram from Lands Department to Cape Town). This indicated that, since the settlement scheme in the north was started, the apartheid government had been channelled more funds into the scheme because white settler farmers were unable to sustain themselves. As a result of white settler farmers in the north refusing to move to the Luvuvhu Valley, this made it difficult for the government to carry out its plan of enlarging plots in the north. Resultantly, the government threatened to cut assistance to white settler farmers in the north. The threat was aimed at forcing the settlers to eventually move to the Luvuvhu Valley, where they would continue to receive assistance from the state. Consequently, taking up a settlement in the Luvuvhu Valley was made as attractive as possible so that people could without being forced. The result was that when these holdings were eventually advertized they were described as varying from 65 (sixty-five) to 100 (hundred) Morgen in extent, with water available for irrigating about 15 (fifteen) Morgen on each holding. It was said that the balance of the land could be used for dry farming and grazing (LD, 3159311 29, 1735, Government Notice No. 1403, 15 September 1939. pp.2-3; TA, NAD, Memorandum dated 23 July 1937. Water Affairs Department (henceforth DWA) File L350/65, Minute from the Conservator of Forests to the District Forest Officer, Louis Trichardt, 18 April 1938).



The Department of Lands further constructed fenced and mosquito-proof dwelling houses consisting of three bedrooms, a dining room, a kitchen, a pantry, a bathroom and a veranda. The cost of the house was included in the purchase price of the holding. The terms and conditions of taking up a holding in the Luvuvhu Valley was done through the Land Settlement Act of 1912 as amended in 1925. The Act provided that the rentals on such dwellings were payable as follows: no rental was paid for the first and second years of lease, only 2% (two per cent) on the purchase price was paid for the third year of lease and only 3,5 % (three comma five per cent) was payable during the fourth and fifth years (SAA LD 3/593, 1634, Care and Improvement, anti-malaria precautions. Levubu Settlements, Soutpansberg). In addition, an option of purchase was also included which was payable through 65 (sixty-five) annual instalments, including capital and interest at 3,5% (three comma five per cent) (LD, 3159311 29, 1735, Government Notice No. 1403, 15 September 1939, pp.2-3). Low interest rates indicate that the white settlers were poor and therefore, could not afford high interest rates. However, this was a generous incentive and indicates the efforts that the government was making of giving failed white settler farmers another opportunity of starting afresh by giving them seeds, implements and credit (Harries Collection: Interview between Dowling and Schoeman, 1987); hence keeping them on his side.

According to the Secretary for Lands, the position concerning the leases of settlers who were opting to be transferred to the Luvuvhu Valley were as follows: If the Land Board determined that the holding could not, owing to soil conditions or other cause, afford a reasonable subsistence, the white settlers would be transferred to them and their present lease terminated in terms of the provisions of section 17 of Act 26 of 1925. Subject to a recommendation of the board, arrear rentals and interest would be written off in terms of sub-section 4 of section 17 Act 26 of 1925. In addition, as part of the incentive they were promised that compensation would be paid for any improvements effected on the holdings. But should such improvements have been effected by means of advances granted by the department, compensation would be paid for any value, at the time of transfer, over and above the amount advanced (LD, 3148, Vol. 2, Letter from the secretary for lands, 05 July 1938, p.2. 144). From such a compensation, the deduction on the capital amount of any outstanding advances would be made in terms of Section 44 of the Land Settlement Act. It was also stated that should no stock or equipment be in existence any longer, easy terms would be given for repayment of any

balance owing after deductions of the compensation for improvements from the capital amounts of advances outstanding. They were further promised that should they still be in possession of stock or equipment by means of section 44 advances, they would be allowed to take with them what was necessary for the development of the new holding and to dispose of the balance and pay the proceeds of such sale in reduction of the advance capital (D, 3148, Vo1.2, Letter from the Secretary for Lands, 05 July 1938, p.3). Through this term, the government was willing to assist all white settlers who wanted to move to the Luvuvhu Valley.

#### **4.5 The Impact of the Natives Trust and Land Act of 1936**

It should be clear at this point that the area of the Luvuvhu Valley, which originally belonged to the Ravele community and its neighbours had been removed as being specifically scheduled for the settlement of black South Africans since its nefarious dispossession from its rightful owners. Ironically, it was included as Released Area No. 26, Districts of the Transvaal in terms of section 2 of the Development Trust and Land Act, 1936 (Act No. 18 of 1936), although this had happened without consultation, agreement and/ or it being paid for to the rightful owners by the government (TA, NAD, File No. 176/308: Minute to the Native Commissioner, Zoutpansberg, 24 November 1922; UG (Union of South Africa) 7-19: Land Act of 1913: Report of the Natives Land Commission, vol. 11). Such land could be purchased by the South African Development Trust (SADT) for African settlement or by an African in terms of section 10 and 11 of the 1936 Act) (TA, NAD, File No. 176/308: Minute to the Native Commissioner, Zoutpansberg, 24 November 1922). This however did not include any land which had been reserved or area declared for forestry under the Forestry Act of 1913 (Act No. 16 of 1913) and land for irrigation settlement under the Land Settlement Act, 1912 (Act No 12 of 1912 as amended).

As already discussed above the Luvuvhu Valley was demarcated as land dedicated for forestry under the inspection of the Louis Trichardt Commissioner (TA, NAD, Memoranda on File 2111/308 of the farms Beaconsfield 212MT, Baobab 211 MT and Mapela 209 MT; TA, DLA, File 2259/9, Letter from the Conservator of Forests to District Forest Officer, Louis Trichardt, 15 August 1938). In order to achieve this, during the 1930s the office of the Secretary for Native Affairs was informed by the Secretary for Lands on April 1936 as follows: "I have to inform you that, this department has recently

purchased part of the Luvuvhu Valley in respect of the irrigation scheme and as the government desires to proceed with the layout of the scheme with as little delay as possible" (TA, NAD, File 288/337, Letter from Secretary for Lands to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 29 April 1936). Following this a committee of the Native Affairs commission visited Louis Trichardt during August 1936 and reported inter alia as follows: (Haffajee, 1992: 10). "The government wanted steps to be taken, in order to remove the Raveles and other blacks, together with their stocks on farms to be excised. The first application for excision concerned the farms from Released Areas, 26" (where the Raveles and other blacks were staying) (Haffajee, 1992: 10). The department also had an option to purchase the remaining extent of the farm Barotta, but no definite decision was taken regarding the purchase of this property. The purchase would have necessitated that the Ravele community be removed from there. As it was, they were given up to the end of July 1936 in order to harvest their crops (TA, NAD, File 288/337: Letter from secretary for Lands to the secretary for Native Affairs, 29 April 1936.). The philosophy about land and conservation (combating soil erosion, protecting nature and so on) led to the removal of this section of the Ravele community and other neighbouring them (Interview with Adolf Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022).

The matter concerning the removal of the Ravele community and others in Luvuvhu Valley was then referred to the Chief Native Commissioner, Northern Areas. In order to finalise their removal, the Commissioner replied that, it was impossible to make the necessary arrangements for the removal of the people from the farms. He referred to minutes received from the additional Native Commissioner, Louis Trichardt, who commented as follows: "I have the honour to bring to your notice that, this matter, which has been sprung upon me and the natives without previous warning, will entail the removal of no less than 2300 (two-thousand-three-hundred) souls- this is a very conservative estimate- with some 1300 (one-thousand-three-hundred) head of small stock. The locality of the farms in question is very congested and as it is composed entirely of privately - owned farms, I anticipate that only an infinitesimal number of the blacks will be able to find accommodation in my area" (TA, DLA, File 31418, 1733, Vol 1, Grimbeeck report to the Minister, 14 October 1935).

An official of the Department of Native Affairs, a Mr. D.L. Smit, who discussed the proposed application of Chapter IV of the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936 with

Additional Native Commissioner at Sibasa and the Native Commissioner and Additional Native Commissioner at Louis Trichardt during July 1937, set out the gist of their discussion as follows: “Additional Native Commissioner, Biddell thought that some of these tenants would be kept on as labourers when the irrigable plots were ready. In addition, the privately owned portions of Laasgevonden, Barotta and Driefontein could absorb large numbers (TA, DLA, 3148, 1733, Letter from Secretary for Lands to Secretary for Native Affairs, 29 May 1936). This was an indication that the humanness and humanity of African was not valued at all because this was being planned implemented without consulting them. In essence their value was only encompassed in cheap black labour because it was proposed that Driefontein should develop into a citrus farm which would need lots of labour. Although they were 13 000 (thirteen thousand) it did not mean all would be moved. It would be fair to assume that only one half would have to move (TA, NAD, File 288/337, Memorandum, 27 July 1937). In other words, the half meant that this would have no effect on the familyhood and communal essence of these people which was founded on African cultural values. However, one W.A. Biddel found in him the human decency to opine that until they had developed the relocation areas, it would be quite impossible to apply Chapter IV of the Act in respect of surplus people. In addition, the mission lands were already overcrowded and could not absorb any more Africans and that for some, arrangements were made to be relocated on to crown farms. Ironically the same mission lands were also previously part of where Africans were removed from (TA, NAD, File No. 176/308. No. 2029, minute to the Native Commissioner, Southpansberg.9A place meant for white settlement), 24 November 1922). In other words, this further shows that the forced removals and land dispossession that accompanied knew no religious conscience or boundaries.

#### **4.5.1 The efforts to acquire alternative land for the Ravele community**

Flowing from the statement above by Biddel it is clear enough that regardless of this one-sided process of land dispossession, alternative land had to be provided for the people to be remove, and in this case the Raveles. This was not an easy task for the Native Commissioners such that the Ravele community, together with others, were allowed to stay in the Luvuvhu Valley until such time land was made available to move them. This caused uncertainty and anxiety on the part of the Raveles because they could not cultivate anything because they were waiting to be relocated at any time. As a result, they depended on the white settlers for survival (TA, GOV, 1087, p550/8/07,

History of Ramabulana tribe, undated, pp. 1-2.). Following this, meetings took place in Louis Trichardt on 9th September 1936 with the purpose of looking for alternative land for the Ravele community. According to information received by one Bresler (who was an exceptional agricultural officer), there were good farms, with few exceptions. But the great majority was already densely populated with Africans. These farms lay to the south-east and north-east of Louis Trichardt (TA, GOV, 1087, p550/8/07, History of Ramabulana tribes, Native Location Commissioner, undated, p.9.). The report stated that one farm, Paradise-Baobab, was not much good as it was stoney but with good grazing. Meanwhile the farms on the Nwanedi River were very dry as they were in the low rainfall area. In this regard, Bresler had this to say: "The Nwanedi River is a perennial stream and you could settle some natives along the river but it would not support many unless you develop irrigation" (TA, NAD, 288/337: Memorandum, 9 September 1936). In other words, Bresler, wanted the Ravele community and other Africans to be removed to a place where they would be able to depend upon themselves for survival if they acquired good land. Bresler also intended to avoid any form of resistance from the Luvuvhu community. However, Bresler's suggestions were over-ruled by the government because they value that Africans were supposed to be given land suitable for agriculture; their arguments were: "where are they going to get labourers for white settler's farms"? (Interview with 'Khos' Ramaano Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

Thereafter, in order to make removal possible government promised compensation for the land to be excised in the Luvuvhu Valley, whereafter it offered two farms, Grootplasts and Groenkloof, adjoining Molima's location. However, one Emmett's (an agricultural officer) thought that if a number of people would go to that area the rest who remained would not object (Harries, 1982:103). Another agricultural officer, one Currie, suggested consultation with the Soutpansberg Farmers' Union (SAU) before any removal was implementation, while another suggestion was to buy the adjoining Mphephu and Musekwa locations on the line Zwartfontein to Amanda and if necessary on to Bali. In addition, the farms to the south from Parkfield to Beaconsfield were mountainous and of no value to white settler farmers (Phophi, 1987: 3). In other words, the fact that they were mountainous and not fit for white settler agriculture meant that they would be suitable for African settlement because they saw no value in agriculture in their existence and survival. But Hirson (1990: 45) has this to say about the land to be purchased by the Trust: "The land was overpopulated, the terrain was hilly, and through the early

thirties there have been droughts everywhere. In addition, the proposed land was already densely populated, rocky and infertile, generally a piece of land which white settlers would not want.”

Another suggested alternative was that the taxpayers be promised two morgens of land and non-taxpayers, that is old men, widows and unmarried women, be offered one and half morgens each. It would be correct to compare this to the generous morgens that were being offered to white settlers on the land that was originally that of Africans. Be that as it may, unhappy about these removals, farmers demanded the application of chapter 4 of the 1936 Act to the area-presumably under the mistaken impression that, all the rent-paying Africans in the area would immediately convert themselves into labour tenants (which was the state of affairs throughout the country). For example, the land along the Soutpansberg, set aside for African population was in the same category. On the contrary, according to (Van Onselen, 1996: 25) evidence received everywhere, was that the rent paying tenants rarely became labour tenants and that the Raveles who were not cattle enthusiasts would be less likely to stay than others.

#### **4.6 The ‘Poor Whites’ Problem in South Africa and its Impact on the Luvuvhu Valley**

As indicated earlier in the study, in the 1930s, the Luvuvhu Valley settlement accommodated a large percentage of new arrivals who were classified as ‘poor whites’. Despite the fact that the majority of them were relatively poor, they co-existed alongside a small proportion of wealthy white landowners who rented out land to Vhavenda (including the Raveles) and Vatsonga/ Machangana. While Vhavenda and Vatsonga/ Machangana had lost their ability to live off the land over time, and were condemned to lives of miserable poverty, the ‘poor whites’, were given a chance to start afresh with the sympathetic support of the government (Interview with L. Madzivhandila, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022). The major feature of this settlement was the growth of racism as a mode of life that cemented both ethnic solidarity on the one side of black South Africans, and racial superiority and unity on the other side of white. Delius et al. (2000: 86) referred to this mode of living as “accumulation and dispossession”

Given this apparent socio-economic condition of the so-called 'poor whites', early in the 1900s onwards, the state had already started to make made efforts to raise agricultural productivity with measures that included the Land Settlement Act of 1912 which aimed at encouraging the 'poor white' farmers to produce surplus and thus pull themselves out of their poverty (Grosskopf, 2000: 17). Through this Act the state earmarked settlements in the countryside and channelled funds to them as this was considered the best solution to the 'poor white' problem. However, to implement such a scheme required that the rural areas be freed from African occupation thereby creating space for white settlement. As a result, a number of white settlers were stationed north of the Soutpansberg, in the Luvuvhu Valley in order to solve the problem of poverty among the 'poor whites' (Morrell, 1992:17; Interview with L. Madzivhandila, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022).

The period leading to the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 1935 a report was released regarding the investigation to determine the general opinion of white settlers on the purchase of several farms around the Luvuvhu Valley, which had been occupied by Africans for many years since the arrival of Masingo in Venda. Therefore, the report dealt with the plans to create a settlement scheme for these 'poor whites'. The proposed scheme included farms such as, Laatsgevonden 74 belonging to Gaymans, Barotta 65 belonging to Coetzee, Klein Australia belonging to Venter, Welgevonden 120 belonging to Andendoff, Madrid belonging to Menne and Morgenzon belonging to Louw (Morrell, 1992: 17; Interview with T Siala, 15 September 2021), around the Luvuvhu Valley. The first three farms, it was argued, fell in an area demarcated as government forest plantation, and no-one therefore could claim to own the streams, provided that the whole of Barotta and Klein Australia had been bought by the state. This was part of the land that had already been dispossessed the Ravele community in the 1920s (Groskopf, 1987: 18) The quality of the soil and the fact that the land could be bought cheaply without the construction of huge dams, compelled the Land Board to recommend to the government to proclaim the area as part of a grand plan for an irrigation scheme as required by Irrigation Act No. 8 of 1912 as amended (Morrell,1992: 17; Interview with T. Siala, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021).

However, the argument had already been advanced that at its initial stage, the proposed scheme would affect the people of Ravele at Barotta and Klein Australia and others who were settled at Laatsgevonden (Morrell,1992: 2). In other words, the one side of the coin

was that the Raveles were an integral part of the Valley; the other side of the same coin meant that the white owners had unjustly, due to land dispossession, been granted title deeds to such areas; which title deeds the Raveles were denied. Furthermore, “the interest of the public” referred to were those of whites and not Africans, since the scheme was to the benefit of whites and not blacks (TA, DLA, 31418, 1733, Vol. 1, Letter from Harvey Wright to Louis Trichardt resident Magistrate, 18 January 1935). The result was that on 22 December 1935, it was reported that the government had acquired irrigable, fertile land. One E.A. Rooth, a Member of Parliament, supported by local farmers was largely responsible for this new settlement scheme, which would provide irrigation for many of the farmers who for years had fought a losing battle at the back of the Soutpansberg Mountain against arid conditions. In addition, reference was made to the productivity of the adjoining settlement known as Welgevonden, a success achieved through government assistance. This was meant to show that, the area was indeed fertile and productive and that the Ravele community who were part of the Africans, occupied the farm were supposed to vacate the land (TA, DLA, 31418, 1733, Vol.1, Letter from Louis Trichardt Veterinary Officer to resident Magistrate, 18 January 1935).

The effect of by the government of purchasing land in the Luvuvhu Valley before the passing of the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936 was intended to manipulate white farmers in the area, so that land in the Luvuvhu Valley would be sold at high prices to the farmers, because the latter were made to believe that the soil was more fertile than it actually was. On the other hand, it also made it impossible for individuals such as the Ravele community and other black South Africans to reject claims for excision for the purpose of the settlement scheme, because the plans were imposed on them (TA, DLA, 3148, 1733, Letter from Secretary for Lands to Secretary for Native Affairs, 29 May 1936).

As a result, towards the end of 1936, before the construction of the irrigation scheme began, Grimbeeck ascertained that an overwhelming majority of white settlers behind the mountain were no longer willing to move (TA, DLA, 3148, 1733, Vol.2, Report from Grimbeeck to the Central Land Board, 13 July 1937). Out of 215 holdings, only five people assured the authorities that they were ready to take up holdings in the fertile spots of the valley, 181 indicated that they were not willing to go to the Luvuvhu valley and the remaining 29 were not available at that time of the survey, but it was assumed



that they were also against the move to the Luvuvhu valley. This contradicted what was reported while the settlement was at its initial stage. The government on the other hand, adopted a neutral position as far as the relocations were concerned, arguing that white settlers were not being pressurised to move but had to do so voluntarily. White settlers, such as, Le Roux, Cloete, Mulder, Badenhorst and Vogels were the first to take advantage of the scheme (TA, DLA, 3148, 1733, Vol.2, Report from Grimbeeck to the Central Land Board, 13 July 1937).

Essentially, the government had not developed Luvuvhu Valley into a white settlement before 1936, because it was malarious and substantial funds were needed in the health sector, for the prevention of malaria (TA, NAD, Native Land Committee, Vol.2, 1916, p.375). Given that scenario, in the 1930's, the area was deemed open to white settlement. It was not recorded whether the settlers from the north were reluctant to move to the Luvuvhu Valley because of malaria. However, before they moved in, one Dr Annecke of Tzaneen, was sent to make recommendations about housing and the prevention of malaria in the Luvuvhu Valley (TA, DLA, 31593/21,1634, Letter from Rooth to the Secretary for Lands, 7 September 1936; SAA LD 3/593, 1634. Care and Improvement, anti-malaria precautions. Levubu Settlement, Soutpansberg). The recommendations were that every precaution had to be taken so that people would stay as healthy as possible, to prevent an outbreak of an epidemic. According to Dr Annecke all houses should be adequately gazed, and reliable insecticides such as Pyagra should be used daily. Bed nets, repellent smears such as citronella oil should also be used. Houses should also be mosquito proof. Annecke also recommended that the housing that was constructed for the irrigation engineer should be demolished as it was not up to standard and that he should be involved at each and every step of development of the settlement (TA, DLA, 31593/21,1634, Letter from Rooth to the Secretary for Lands, 7 September 1936).

In addition, the Department of Health also embarked on a large-scale training and educating programme and distributed pamphlets to white farmers in the Luvuvhu Valley. This was done to raise the level of awareness against the disease; and to teach them how to use dangerous insecticides. A resident nurse was also stationed at the settlement (TA, DLA, 31593/21,1634, Letter from Rooth to the Secretary for Lands, 7 September 1936). The irony was that while the government was channeling the funds to make

settlers as healthy as possible, it was reported on the other hand that, Africans in the Transvaal were dying like flies due to malaria. This was because the government did not extend its programme of malaria prevention to Africans. This indicates that Africans were not valued; hence they discriminated against even in matters of life and death. In conclusion one can say that the arrival of white settlers and the improvements that were made in the Luvuvhu Valley were mainly intended for white settlement at the expense of the removal and relocation of the Ravele community (TA, DLA, Nkatingi papers, Government Notice No. 176/308, No. 2029, 24 November 1922).

#### **4.7 The Forced Removal of the Ravele Community between 1921 and 1940**

The sections above were intended for the reader to realise that although the 'poor white' problem was initiated during the late 1920s and the mid-1930s, the plans were already underway to forcibly remove Africans, the Ravele community in particular from the Luvuvhu Valley to make way for white settlement. The same may be confirmed by the various legislation that were enacted and implemented in this regard: the Land Settlement Act of 1912, Land Act of 1913, the Forestry Act of 1913 and the Natives Trust and Land Act of 1936, among others. As shown above, the interests of white settlers took precedence of the interests of all humanity. The issue of the malaria epidemic above is the last straw in this regard. The sections below intend to discuss the series of forced removals of the Raveles and their community(ies) from their ancestral land.

##### **4.7.1 The first removal of the Ravele Community, 1921-1925**

The 1921 removal of the Raveles from the Luvuvhu Valley was mainly for agricultural purposes since the government wanted to establish a forestry plantation. The steps that were taken were accordance with the Forestry Act, 1913, Land Settlement Act, 1912 and 1913 Land Act. The first relocation from the Luvuvhu Valley took place during the reign of *Khosi Vele Ravele*, who later passed away in 1924. In this instance, the Ravele community was moved from one farm to another within the same Luvuvhu Valley (Interview with R. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). As a result of political pressure, *Khosi Ravele* moved from one part of the farm at Tshiungani to Klein Australie (Solomela/Sudimela) (TA, NAD, File No. 176/308, No 2029, Report, 24 November 1922.). The other *mahosi* were moved to other areas, like the Sibasa and Ha-Mashau. Within this episode no government assistance was given to these African communities during

removal and relocation to different locations, because it had so unbearable to live on the white settler farms. Some of the remaining African people were forced to become labourers on the respective farms, while others were forced to engage in forestry work on the bluegum and pine forestry plantations (Mphadzha, 1998: 6; Interview with 'Khos' Ramaano Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). Some were unfortunately later evicted Klein Australie portion in 1921 (Nash, 1990: 21). During these removals and relocations, most of these people were moved from the northern part of the farm to the homestead of one *Gota* Mukhathedzwa.

#### **4.7.2 The second removal of Ravele Community, 1936-1940**

In 1936, the Lands Department purchased more farms in the Luvuvhu Valley area, with the purpose of forming a European Irrigation Settlement. This latest removal brought about the total removal of the Ravele community, together with other African communities in the Luvuvhu Valley. They were destined for different areas chosen for them by the government. Therefore, the Luvuvhu Valley became a white settlement after this final removal (TA, NAD, File 288/337, Letter from the Secretary for Lands to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 29 April 1936). Though a certificate had been furnished by the Minister of Lands, as required by the Act, to show that this vast expanse of land was crown land and was necessary for white settlement, other land of equal agricultural value had still to be found. The committee responsible for white settlement regarded "New Mauluma' or Beaconsfield in the Nzhelele Valley as land of equal agricultural value to the Luvuvhu Valley. The Raveles and other Africans from the area of Luvuvhu Valley which had been taken by the government were supposed to move to this new settlement, where the Raveles were eventually also resettled (Interview with M.W. Netshisaulu, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). However, some members of the Ravele community felt that such a move was a betrayal because they wanted to pressurize the government to be included in its irrigation scheme. They wanted to be treated the same way as white settlers, such that had the interests of the community(ies) within the Luvuvhu Valley had been respected, they should have been permitted to stay and be part of the irrigation scheme. However, the issue of race played a very important role, in determining who should remain or be removed (Conerly, 1990: 52; Interview with D.E. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

According to a letter to Rooth, a Member of Parliament, the Luvuvhu Valley Settlement Scheme was ready for occupation by the new settlers in July 1937 (Unterhalter, 1987: 18). Thus, the removal of the Raveles from the Luvuvhu Valley was fixed to take place at the end of August 1937 (Moller-Malan, 1953: 35). The Assistant Native Commissioner at Sibasa, Biddel indicated that some of these Africans would be used as labourers when irrigable plots were ready and some would be accommodated in his district, Soutpansberg (TA, NAD, 1936). Most of them could be absorbed as labourers, especially at Driefontein, which was developing citrus plantations (TA, NAD, Minute S31593/19 from the Secretary for Lands, 16 September 1936). In the meantime, (September 1937), the Department of Lands decided not to press for the immediate eviction of the African occupants in the Luvuvhu valley. Those who were on the land were permitted to remain there until further notice. For their stay, the government demanded that they pay rent to the Department of Lands, as well as grazing fee for their stock and also give service as labourers on the white settler farms. This was done by the government, to solve some of the labour problems on the white settler farms. The rent was determined at the rate of the ordinary crown rent payable in that area. This meant the little they had was taken away leading to more frustration in the Ravele community (TA, NAD, Minute S31593/19 from the Secretary for Lands, 16 September 1936).

It was determined that there were approximately 800 (eight hundred) African taxpayers who were liable for the payment of rent and grazing fees on the Luvuvhu irrigation settlement amounting to an estimated amount of, £1500 to £1800. The Additional Native Commissioner, Louis Trichardt, was requested to undertake the collections and it was reported that an amount of £285 was collected during an administrative visit to the farm Madrid during February 1937. This system drained the Ravele community and other Africans in the Luvuvhu valley economically. Many were forced to curb and to sell their animals in order to pay the rent. Other Africans decided to become labourers in nearby white settler farms. A certain portion of the community decided to leave the Luvuvhu valley, in protest against the introduced rent (TA, NAD, Minute 15/11 from additional Native Commissioner, Louis Trichardt, 26 February 1937).

It was estimated that some 13 000 (thirteen thousand) souls, who possessed 1348 (one thousand-three hundred-and-thirty-eight) of small stock and 1840 (one thousand eight

hundred and forty) heads of large stock would be affected. There were also six of *magota* on the properties who would be affected. But it was reported that, it was not yet possible to find suitable accommodation for these African people (TA, NAD, Minute ACCS 31593/19 from the Secretary for Lands, 12 January 1937). By March 1938 it was estimated that, provision elsewhere for some 800 (eight hundred) families had to be made (TA, NAD, Minute 16/2/2 From the Chief Native Commissioner, Northern Areas (CNC), 26 February 1937.). These were 300 (three hundred) Vhavenda families falling under *Gota Ravele* (one of *magota* under *Khosi Mphephu*) and 500 (five hundred) Vatsonga/ Machangana families falling under four of *magota*, namely Shigalo, with about 150 (one hundred and fifty) families, Masakona, with about 250 (two hundred and fifty) families and Ngwandhla and Nwangkoti, each with about 50 (fifty) families (TA, NAD, Minute 16/2/2 From the CNC, 1 June 1937). It was thought that the number of Ravele's subjects would possibly be reduced as other morgen of the settlement area was to be taken over by the Forestry Department which was anxious to retain as many African families as possible on the grounds for the purpose of labour (TA, NAD, Minute S31593/19, From the Secretary for Lands, 5 July 1937). However, the number of families to be removed was high, because only a few African families were willing to work as labour tenants on white settler farms. This indicated one form of resistance that Ravele could make, as there were no other means to show their dissatisfaction. It also indicated that they regarded themselves as a community; hence their refusal to be subordinates to white settlers, although later conditions forced them to oblige (TA, NAD, Minute 288/337, From the Secretary for Native Affairs, 10 July 1937).

Sometimes when various reasons failed to lure African people to their designated place, silent means were used. For an example, on 22 August 1938 it was reported that the removal of Vhavenda (including the Ravele) from the Luvuvhu Valley was already in progress (Water Affairs Department (henceforth WAD), File L350/65, Minute from conservator of Forests to the District Forest Officer, Louis Trichardt, 8 April 1938.). The Forestry Department absorbed some of the Ravele's community members, while others were moved to the dry and stoney Beaconsfield and Cliffside locations. The remaining Africans would be moved to Diepkloof as soon as this farm had been purchased and taken over by the Trust (TA, DLA, File 2250/9, Letter from the conservator of Forests to District Forest Office, Louis Trichardt, 15 August 1938).

On 6 September 1938, *Induna* Shigalo and *Gota* Masakona, who were also living in the Luvuvhu Valley, together with the Ravele community, were informed that, Magoro, Caledon and Wagondrift cannot be made available for their settlement. They were moved out of the fertile Luvuvhu Valley to a barren land in the Pietersburg District: Nieuwland No. 81, Koedoesfontein No. 46, Soetfontein No. 153 and only if necessary Bandoliersfontein No. 154 in the Duiwelskloof area. The Ravele community was re-settled in the other direction without any Basotho or Vatsonga/ Machangana near/ among them. This means that these people were moved to places allocated along language and cultural lines resulting; this which resulted ethnic divisions as intended by the government (TA, DLA, Minute 16/2/2, dated 25 March 1938), meaning that they were moved in groups. During Tshivhase's reign, on 12 September 1938, one group of the Ravele community was forcibly removed and dumped on the barren Beaconsfield group of farms. They occupied Beaconsfield 212 MT, Diepkloof 211MT, Chiffside 225MT, Baobab 210MT, Mapela 205MT and Setoni. In this place, the Mauluma ward was re-established as part of *Khosi* Mphephu's territory. They now again, for the first time since 1898, had political and administrative control over land (even though barren) (TA, DLA, Minute 16/2/2, dated 25 March 1938).

On 17 October 1938, another group of 39 (thirty-nine) Ravele families was settled on the farm Beaconsfield and 14 (fourteen) families on Cliffside and Baobab. Those who had been placed on to Beaconsfield owned 104 (hundred-and-four) head of large stock and small stock. Those on Cliffside and Baobab owned 47 (forty-seven) large and 48 (forty-eight) small stock. Hut poles had been provided for huts building. The above families were part of the Luvuvhu Valley inhabitants who were affected by the irrigation scheme. Once the settlement had been accomplished the next question was whether their stock, which played an essential part of their livelihood, would survive in their relocated areas. However, the government had not taken that into consideration (TA, NAD, Minute S31593/19 from the Secretary for Lands, 5 July 1937). Ironically, one Phillips, an executive member of the Farmers' Union, claimed that the Native Affairs Department had provided good houses for the dispossessed Africans from Madrid and Barotta. As a member of the Farmers' Union, Phillips might have exaggerated the claims to convince politicians like Rheinalt Jones that the displaced Africans had been taken good care of. However, Philips did not mention in his letter the pertinent issues, such as the conditions of soil and water. He might have been afraid that Rheinalt Jones would

fight for those basic necessities and, if those were acquired by the Africans, it might have restricted the flow of labour to white settler farmers. In 1939 Entabeni and Barotta No. 65 were declared government plantation areas in compliance with section 5 of the Forest Act of 1913 as amended. This meant that the people of Ha-Matidza, Ha-Makatu, Ha-Ravele and Ha-Ratombo would be moved. This was aggravated by the application of Chapter 4 of the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936, which was firmly implemented in April 1939. The application of Chapter 4 could have led to an exodus of Africans from Luvuvhu Valley farms like it happened in the Lydenburg District (where 180 days of labour was required as rent). The farmers in the Luvuvhu Valley decided that tenants should perform 90 (ninety) days labour as rent tenants (TA, NAD, File 288/337, Memorandum 10 July 1937. DLA, Minute 1/10/22 from the Chief Native Commissioner, undated).

Not all of the families of the Ravele community, were re-settled in 1938. The Department of Forestry absorbed some as wage labourers, labour tenants and rent paying tenants to the new owners or white settler farmers. The ruling Ravele family also did not move. Acting *Gota* Tshivhase (called Jack Godane in the correspondence), tribal *makhadzi* (the late Ravele's sister), Tshivhase's mother, two wives, another *makhadzi*, two widows of the deceased *Gota* Nanga Ravele, Nanga's mother, Frank Nndwakhulu Ravele (the son and heir apparent of the late *Gota* Nanga Ravele, who passed away in 1937), stayed in the village (TA, DLA, File L.350/1: Minutes from District Forest Officer, Louis Trichardt, to Conservator of Forest (Pretoria), 29 June 1936). The village was situated on the forestry portion, of the farm Barotta 17LT. At that time, the officials understood that the members of the ruling family would only stay until the body of the deceased Nanga had decomposed, so that they could take his skeletal remains with them to Beaconsfield 212MT. They were even allowed to stay, near the graves, to tend them and perform the annual propitiatory rites there (TA, DLA, Minute 1/10/22 from the Chief Native Commissioner, undated, 23 November 1925; TA NAD 17/12/2 vol. 11/49, Memo Tribal burial ground, Ravele family). The Ravele royal family were therefore, granted permission to stay with effect from 23 November 1938 for a five-year period, which they could extend on a year-to-year basis, until the custodians were able to leave. They were allowed to have small ploughing fields around their huts though frustratingly they were not allowed to start fires and cut trees (SAIRR, JD Rheinalt Jones Papers, AD 843, RJ/5B3.138 Letter to Jones from Phillips, 26 January 1939). Although deforestation is/

was harmful to the environment, the fact that they were not allowed to make fire(s) is another evidence of the indifference of the government *vis-à-vis* the white community when it came to socio-economic issues that affected Africans, let alone the political.

It was only in the late 1930s, when the portion of the farm where the village was situated, was to be afforested. During that time, the officials learned that it was not in keeping with the Ravele's custom to remove the remains of a deceased. They were in fact, guarding the graveyard (SAIRR, JD Rheinalt Jones, AD843/RJ/SB3.138, Memorandum of evidence given before the district committee on chapter 4, 12 May 1939). The Department of Forestry, then gave assurances that, the graves would be left undisturbed, as the land the graves occupied would not be required for afforestation (TA, DLA, File 2250/9, Letter from the Conservator of Forests to District Forest Office, Louis Trichardt, 15 August 1938). Dommise then arranged for the members of the Ravele royal family to be moved to the adjacent farm Klein Australie 13LT and to continue as custodians of the graves. This was the only land available in the vicinity of these graves for the Ravele royal family which would not be required for afforestation purposes. They were then later removed out of the farm to Beaconsfield (TA, DLA, File 2250/9, Letter from the Conservator of Forests to District Forest Office, Louis Trichardt, 15 August 1938).

#### **4.7.3 The impact of the 'poor whites' problem on the Luvuvhu Valley**

The word poor white was first "used in the United States in the slavery days" and then transferred to South Africa (Grosskopf, 1932: 17). In other words, such a concept can be applicable under conditions where different races, especially white and black, are part of the political equation and/or one race has the socio-economic and political advantage over the other only, with South Africa and any other former colony fitting the description. Slavery involved relations between masters and servants and in that case, the servants were generally, Africans who were poor, rightless and discriminated against by the "superior white race". But, when these Africans were emancipated, they gradually uplifted themselves from their poverty whilst competing with their "masters" to an extent that some of their former masters became impoverished. However, the term indicated that poverty among whites was felt to be something exceptional, being associated more "naturally" with African labouring masses. Therefore, this term has "a derogatory ring to



it" (Morrell, 1992:1). The wealthy white settlers viewed them as a disgrace and in a way; they felt that the 'poor white' had let the white race down.

'Poor whites' can be distinguished between rural poor and urban poor. According to this distinction, urban poor were destitute, without visible means of production, and they were involved in petty commodity production like brickmaking previously done by African servants. On the other hand, the rural poor whites still maintained ties with the land, but their agriculture was unproductive and unprofitable. They were unable to raise capital to adopt to new technology and techniques and were often in debt (Morrell, 1992: 2). It is difficult to come up with a clear definition of this term because it includes moral, material, and economic factors. According to the Carnegie Commission "a 'poor white' is a person who has become dependent to such an extent, whether from mental, moral, economic or physical causes, that he/ she would be unfit, without help from others, to find proper means of livelihood for himself or to procure it directly or indirectly for his children" (Groskopf, 1932: 18). The "proper means of livelihood" might imply being independent economically or might have meant having a couple of black servants at their disposal.

However, in South Africa, from the early 1900s onwards, the state made efforts to raise agricultural productivity with measures that included the Land Settlement Act of 1912 which aimed to encourage the poor white farmers to produce more and thus pull themselves out of their poverty. Through the Act the state earmarked settlement in the rural areas and channelled funds to them as this was considered the best solution to the 'poor white' problem (Morrel, 1992: 2). To implement such a scheme required that the rural areas be freed from African occupation hence creating a space for white settlement. The state's interest in eradicating the 'poor white' problem can be traced to several factors. The 'poor whites' enjoyed the advantage of being associated with those who had political power based on the colour of their skin (Le Roux, 1986: 6). For example, they had the right to vote, which had been denied Africans. In order to deal with this potential "political threat" posed by 'poor whites', the government offered 'failed' white settler farmers new opportunities. This was intended to convert "dangerous" class members into conformist class members (Morrell, 1992: 2). They also feared that many might join forces with Africans against the government as this was demonstrated by 'poor whites' renting land to African people. Such relations were despised because they

might have led to miscegenation, which would have 'stained' the superior white settler blood and worsened the socio-political situation.

#### **4.7.4 The Second World War (1939-1945) and its aftermath**

Despite the fact that the Luvuvhu Valley settlement was initially intended to absorb white settler farmers in the north, the focus of the project changed towards the end of the first half of the 1940s. The settlement scheme was also opened to discharged white soldiers of the Union, those who had served in the Second World War, irrespective of where they came from. Lieutenant O'Fleaherty was the first soldier to get a holding in the Luvuvhu Valley. Holdings that were advertised as from 1945 attracted and marked the beginning of the occupation of the Luvuvhu Valley by demobilised soldiers (LD, 315931129, 1735, Government Notice No.1718, 14/811945.) This marked the involvement of the office of the Director-General of Demobilisation in issues of Land allocation. This office indicated that returned white soldiers should be given priority in the allocation of government farms and that, "in the case of farms already earmarked by a person other than a returned white soldier, the office of the Director-General needed assurance from the Lands department that priority would be given to returned white soldiers" (SAA Director-General of Demobilisation (DGD) 413/10/22, 1243. Field of employment, Levubu Land Settlement, Northern Transvaal). Morrell (1992: 17) points out that "evidence on poor whites is to be found in the history of war" which dates back to the 1870s wherein those who participated in the war be it Africans or Whites were given land after the war (Unterhalter, 1987: 11). This had evolved into a tradition that was carried on into the 1940s, when the services of the 'poor whites' were 'purchased' in the form of giving them land and other advances to help them establish themselves. Those who applied for holdings in the Luvuvhu Valley fell into this category because they were entitled to a 250 (two hundred-and-fifty) pounds demobilisation grant. Moreover, this group received strong recommendation from the Demobilisation Committee so that they would be given plots, but they generally lacked experience in farming. One therefore, may argue that experience in military activities, being a prisoner-of-war for a long time, and also living on a farm with parents whose farming needs were catered for by the labour of the Africans does not make one a better farmer. This was part of the reason why white settler farmers in the area continually relied on the support of the apartheid government, because they were not productive since they had little knowledge of farming (LD,

3/593/129, 1735, Government Notice No. 1718, 14/8/1945; Interview with Adolf Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022).

When comparing this group of returned white soldiers with those white settler farmers who were accommodated in Luvuvhu Valley from the north, a significant distinction was noted in respect to their economic status. A report on the position of white settler farmers in the north indicated that white settler farmers were unable to make a livelihood out of farming only. In most cases, they depended on work outside farming such as working on the mines, and they also depended on their relatives who were employed elsewhere to supplement their living standards; whilst others rented out their land to shop owners and police stations. They were also reported to be "unable to feed and clothe their children and to afford staple food like pap" (LD3148, Vol. 1, Report on the magistrate to the Secretary for Justice, 29 June 1935, pp. 1-6.). Pap has largely been regarded as food for the lower classes and mostly associated with being consumed by Africans. By comparison, the group that came in 1944 arrived with their own capital which included cash of between 105 (one hundred-and-five) to 300 (three hundred) pounds, oxen, cows, implements, motor cars plus 250 (two hundred-and-fifty) pounds they got from the Directorate of the Mobilization (LD 31593/129, various letters from the director of demobilization to secretary for lands, undated.). Although this group of white ex-soldiers came with their own capital, and they were treated in the same way as those who had nothing, however, they were also entitled to advances under the 1912 Land Settlement Act.

Although before the Luvuvhu Valley was earmarked for white settlement in 1921 and 1936, it was reported in 1917 that the area was not suitable for white settlement because it was malarious. In order to make this area suitable, it was argued, it would be very costly for the health sector to tackle the of malaria epidemic (Report of the Native Land Committee, Vol.2, 1916, p.375). Irrespective of the recommendation of the Natives land committee that it would be expensive to open the area for white settlement, the apartheid government opened the area for white settlers and white soldiers. It was, however, not recorded whether white settlers from the north were reluctant to move into the Luvuvhu Valley because of fear of being infected by malaria because, according to the map on which the malarial areas in the Union were indicated, the Luvuvhu Valley was one area where the disease occurred continually (Report of the Native Land Committee, Vol.2,

1916, p.375; SAA LD 3/593, 1634, Care and Improvement, anti-malaria precautions. Levubu Settlement, Soutpansberg). As such, it was recommended that one Dr. Annecke of Tzaneen should be sent to make recommendations about housing and prevention of malaria in the Luvuvhu Valley (LD 3/593/21,1634, Letter from Rooth to the Secretary for lands 7 September 193). The doctor found that the incidence of malaria appeared to be very low when compared to the intense malaria found at Pongola settlement, "but just because malaria is of low prevalence here the individual is apt to become careless and any epidemic would produce the same decimating effect" (LD3/593/21, 1634, Report from Medical Inspector Annecke the Secretary for public health, 24 October 1936). The implication was that every precaution had to be taken so that white settlers and white soldiers had to stay as healthy as possible, to prevent the outbreak of an epidemic which could have been prevented. According to this recommendation all houses had to be adequately gazed, and reliable insecticides such as Pyagra used daily, bed nets, repellent smears such as citronella oil also made available. In short, the houses in the Valley had to be made mosquito proof. Annecke also recommended that the housing that had been constructed for the irrigation Engineer had to be demolished as it was not up to standard and that he, the good doctor had to be involved at each and every step of development of the settlement scheme (LD31593|21, 1634, Report from Medical Inspector Annecke the Secretary for public health, 24 October 1936).

The involvement of the Health Department in the settlement means that the construction of houses had to meet the requirements of the department of health. It was the recommendation of this department that forced the department of lands to construct houses for the white settlers, since they lacked funds to build houses that would meet the requirement of the health department. Nevertheless, these measures were not going to prevent malaria. Consequently, it was reported that many white settlers had died because of malaria despite the construction of houses that were up to the standard of the Department of Health (Letter from the Secretary for Land to the Secretary for Public Health, 14 August 1939; Harries Collection: Interview between Dowling and Mulder, 1989). Therefore, one may argue that this was a government scheme of giving houses at cheap prices of about 6000 (six thousand) pounds to white settlers in the guise of preventing malaria (Letter from the Secretary for Land to the Secretary for Public Health, 14 August 1939; Harries Collection: Interview between Dowling and Mulder, 1989). Furthermore, the inability of such well-armed houses against malaria indicated the

failure of man to control nature. Although it was indicated that the settlers would have to buy insecticides for themselves, it was also noted that there were those who were very poor to afford buying such bare necessities for the prevention of malaria, even though the prices were reduced considerably.

For example, one gallon of insecticide cost 6 (six) shillings. Those who could not afford to purchase insecticides could obtain free issues from the nearest magistrate or police post. It was not indicated whether these white settlers in the Luvuvhu Valley who had bought the insecticides or not but, what was evident was that the government had ordered large quantities of insecticides in the 1940s, of which it was not indicated whether the white settlers were given free or not (SAA, LD 31593/2,1 634, list of insecticides ordered, 30 September 1937.). One can only assume that they freely made available to the white settler farmers, since they were unable to depend on themselves. These white settler farmers were also unable to paint their houses to make them as light as possible, since it was argued that darkness attracted mosquitoes. This was a plea from the Superintendent of Health to urge the government to paint the houses (LD 31593/2, 1634, letter from the superintendent to the secretary for lands, 02 October 1940 Public Health, 14 August 1939; Letter from the Secretary for Land to the Secretary for).

The Department of Health also embarked on a large-scale training, educating and distributing pamphlets to white settler farmers in the Luvuvhu Valley. This was done to raise the level of awareness against the disease, and to teach them how to use dangerous insecticides. In addition, it was felt that Elim Hospital was too far to provide the settlement with health services, and therefore it was recommended that a resident nurse should be stationed at the settlement (LD 31593/2, 1634, letter from the superintendent to the secretary for lands, 02 October 1940, and Letter from the secretary for lands to the secretary for public health, 14 August 1940). While the government was channelling funds to make settlers as healthy as possible, it was reported on the other hand that, Africans in the Transvaal were dying like flies due to malaria (SAIRR, JD Rheinallt Jones, AD 843! RJ/S63.65 (file1) Senatorial Correspondence). This was because the Department of health did not extend its programme of malaria prevention to Africans. This was another indication that the government did not attach any value to the life of an African, let alone in the Luvuvhu Valley.

#### **4.8 The Displacement of the Luvuvhu Valley Community and the Restructuring of Agriculture**

At the end of the Second World War, South African agriculture developed along commercial lines in order to meet the demands placed on it by urban dwellers. This adversely affected the numbers of African farm workers, as well as their living and working conditions. This restructuring, according to the Surplus People Project, was shaped by the capitalisation of agriculture; and the concentration of land in the few hands which also led to a situation in which the majority of white settler farmers supported the state in its drive to eliminate labour and cash tenancy in the rural areas (The SPP Report, 1983: 42).

An exposition of the economic status of white settlers from the north and those who came after the War indicates that not one of them possessed machinery (such as tractors) which was necessary for large scale production (LD 3148, Report from the magistrate to the secretary for justice, 29 June 1935, pp. 1-6. See also LD315931129, letters from the director of demobilisation to secretary for lands, undated). At first they used oxen and mules to plough their fields, with maize as their main produce. The result was that large numbers of the Ravele community and Vatsona/ Machangana who were hired as labour tenants did more work. But as from 1959 onwards farming in the Luvuvhu Valley was gradually becoming profitable (Nefale, 2000: 41; Interview with M.P. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). Consequently, Standard Bank and Barclays Bank started to offer loans to farmers with a view to increasing productivity. Farmers such as Messrs. Mulder, Badenhorst and Hartman were among the first to secure loans from these financial institutions to purchase tractors.

#### **4.9 Conclusion**

This chapter attempted to show how as a white settlement the area around the Luvuvhu Valley came about and, in the process, exposed the type of assistance that the apartheid government made towards the white settlers at the expense of the original inhabitants of the place: the Africans. In essence, white settlement in the area meant that the Africans who had been living in the Luvuvhu Valley had to be removed and resettled in

arid and mountainous areas without assistance at all. In these areas communities like the Raveles suffered impoverishment. In the next chapter attention will be given to those relocated, and how they made a living under conditions of extreme hardship. With the purchase of 7,25 million (seven comma two five) morgen still to be incorporated in terms of the 1936 Natives Trust and Land Act, the homeland would have been able to support 22 (twenty-two) million Africans (Horrell, 1953:7). This purchase of land was never done because white settlers voted against it on the ground that it would be expensive for white government to engage in such a project. Although the Tomlinson Commission had also recommended for the addition of Land for Africans, the implication was that they did not want to utilise public money, whereas this money came from the taxes and fines that were contributed to by Africans (Saunders, 1982: 380). This shows how powerless Africans were, and how those with the franchise determined their fate.

It was only during the Homeland period that the Trust acquired some portions of portions of Welgevonden in 1980, portions of Driefontein (Sapekoe) in 1982 and portions of Wolferoode in 1985 (DLA, Nkatingi papers, 199/7, deeds history, pp.18-33). These farms were then transferred to the Venda homeland. However, such farms were not opened for white settlement but were utilised by the Venda Development Corporation (VDC) and were later taken over by Agricultura Corporation of Venda (Agriven), which was responsible for agricultural development in Venda. The result was that the farms were utilised by the apartheid government rather than being transferred to Africans who were trapped in the homeland and had been victims of the forced removals from the Luvuvhu Valley and elsewhere. One therefore, may agree with assertions made by Letsoalo (1987: 41) that since the Africans had occupied less than 13 % (thirteen percent) of the land in South Africa.

The next chapter concerns itself with results of land dispossession in the Luvuvhu Valley.

## Chapter 5

### The Consequences of the Establishment of the Luvuvhu Valley Settlement

#### 5.1 Introduction

The establishment of Luvuvhu Valley settlement for whites had a profound impetus on removal of the various communities that had been enjoying their God-given natural resources without any hindrance. As things turned out, while the white beneficiaries of resettlement continued to flock into the Valley, African communities continued to bear the brunt of this experiment. This chapter looks at the victims of the relocation process and their struggle to keep heart and soul together in the various areas they were relocated to. In this regard poverty became the central issue in this chapter because it was a by-product of forced removals from the Valley. Platzky (1984: 6) suggests this by writing that "forced removal impoverishes the communities and people who are removed", but that such poverty "has many dimensions". The same author further opines that "It is not limited only to economic poverty but permeates all spheres of life including a person's self-respect, the harshness of living, a feeling of powerlessness and hopelessness." In this regard the current researcher also examined how these questions on impoverishment fit into the system of maintaining political and economic power in the hands of a white minority group, and how successful they became in the Luvuvhu Valley. According to Marks (1987: 2) "something of a differentiated meaning of the complex South African social order can be seen, a tapestry in which race, gender and class are densely interwoven". The current researcher therefore examines the effects of the removals of the Ravele community from the Luvuvhu Valley.

#### 5.2 Exploitation of Labour

Throughout the discussion of this study, especially in the preceding chapter, it soon became clear that the white settlers did not have adequate manpower to work the land and would have to decide on measures to generate the needed labour. In the same vein, some within the Ravele community as well their neighbours realized that they could not benefit from the increasing numbers of white settlers by renting out their land anymore, signed up to be labourers for the white settler farmers (Wolpe, 1972: 442). Others moved



into the burgeoning towns and trading centers to look for other type of work, while yet others migrated elsewhere. In each case they increasingly realised that in contrast to how they used to eke out a living within their natural surroundings around the Valley in the past before they were dispossessed of the land, the working conditions were generally horrendous. Khapoya (1994: 72) notes that it was accepted “as a matter of course that farmers, planters and estate managers would on occasion inflict corporal punishment, usually with wispy made by rhino hide... for insolence, theft, dereliction, laziness, breakages or what not” The author continues to opine that “it was not uncommon for white settler farmers to guard their workers with rifles, firing in the air occasionally or at the workers’ feet to terrorise them into working harder.”

Given the accounts of the previous chapter that detailed how these communities were enticed into cheap black labour and/ or underhanded tactics to have them work for these white settlers under strange contracts before they could be released, it is no wonder how they found themselves under such inhumane conditions. The same author also advances how extremely low and insufficient the wages were that they received such that they did not make much difference in the lives of the desperate Africans (Khapoya, 1994: 72). This author further shows that besides the fact that they were nefariously enticed into being farm labourers, or that their *mahosi* were forced to let them loose to the wolves, they were at the mercy of the farmers since the government did not care about their socio-economic welfare. Unsurprisingly, their wages were determined by the farmers, later by the government which was dominated by white settlers themselves and were based on the amount of work done. In addition, farm work often took a male worker, his wife and children to complete the day’s allotment of work (Interview with R. Mufamadi, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022). However, only the male workers got paid; the payment which was partly in cash and food ratio as human beings (Khapoya, 1994: 72). In essence this means that the other members of the family worked for nothing, this which also meant that they were not valued for their efforts and energy as humans. In short this made farm work and/ or any work under a white man unattractive which also caused a persistence of shortage of workers. This turn of events gave the government an excuse to look for a way to keep the supply of labour consistent by coming up a labour policy that was specifically crafted for black South Africans (Khapoya, 1994: 73). As one of the measures, the government introduced the ‘Hut and Poll’ taxes for black South Africans in order to dragoon them into employment.

### **5.2.1 Hut and Poll tax**

Hut and Poll taxes were introduced in the African areas. These were meant to raise revenue to pay for the cost of running a government as well as for rudimentary services for the small white settler communities. The other reason was to force the Africans to work on the farms; this which they had grown to abhor as discussed in the previous chapter. Even though the government argued that the imposition of taxes had nothing to do with trying to exploit African labour, further that it was only to raise revenue, and that Africans had ample opportunity to refuse to work, the relationship between tax and the demands for labour cannot be denied in this regard (Interview with L. Madzivhandila, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022). The tax had to be paid in European currency, and the only way one could obtain the currency was by working on the farms. These taxes inflicted hardship on Africans and were disruptive to their traditional way of life (Khapoya, 1994: 72-73). There were instances where taxes were paid in kind, meaning that livestock could be exchanged in this regard. The eventuality was that the livestock of Africans rapidly became depleted and in turn forced them into the very same cheap and/ or free labour that they so much abhorred.

### **5.3 Conditions in Neighbouring Settlements**

The relocation policy of the government adversely affected the Ravele community. As suggested by Platzky (1984: 4), almost twenty years ago "both the way in which people were moved and the condition they find in the new place vary according to who they are". In this instance, Indians and coloureds got better facilities than Africans, urban more than rural, the employed more than the unemployed, industrial more than agricultural workers did (Interview with L. Madzivhandila, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022; Interview with Netshivhumbe, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022). Therefore, the Raveles fell within the category of being Africans, who happened to find themselves doing agricultural work in a rural area declared white. As such in the Luvuvhu Valley, these people were self-employed, involved in agricultural work for subsistence purposes, with surpluses exchanged with other members of the community. To show that they were self-sufficient they commented that:

*Everyone ploughed the field depending on the manpower he has, it was not demarcated how much land one can plough, his abilities and manpower to cultivate prevented him.*

*We had good cattle.* (Interview with E. Matumba, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020; Interview with N. Ratombo, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2020). Related to this, Nefale (2000: 43) contends that: *We worked for three months for the farmer, we ploughed our fields as much as we liked, we never bought mugayo (mielie meal or maize, the staple food of Vhavenda and Vatsonga/ Machangana), beans, ground nuts, a variety of vegetables and water.*

The above illustrations were just a myriad of other reasons given by informants in the areas wherefrom they forcibly removed, which in a way symbolises the contrasts between where they are now and the areas they occupied before. They indicated that people produced enough to eat, and poverty was unknown to them though some were working for nothing, as noted by Lacy (1981: 1) as they were working for "boroko" (a place to sleep). In pursuit of its policy of supplying farmers in the Transvaal and the Soutpansberg area with labour, the government moved these people and dumped them settlements closer to work such as at Beaconsfield, Boabab, Cliffside, Mphambo, Nkuzana and other areas that were divided along ethnic lines.

According to Platzky (1984: 4) closer settlements were usually designed to accommodate tenants from black spots and those removed or evicted from farms. A report by the South African Council of Churches (SACC) (1984: 11) on forced removals indicated that closer settlements were meant for African people. These were generally located in the reserves or Trust land and were established for residential purposes only as no agricultural land was allotted. According to the report these facilities usually experienced poorer conditions than those in townships with a communal or non-existent water supply. That being said this means that people who were accustomed to ploughing and cultivation would suffer, as there were neither ploughing nor grazing fields. Therefore, it would be difficult for people to survive in such places. The purpose of the government of dumping those removed in closer settlements was to eliminate them as producers who, in capitalist terms, may be seen as competitors with white settlers. The object was also to deliberately impoverish them so that they can help to build the wealth of Afrikaners in the Luvuvhu Valley by joining the cheap and/ or free labour force, not because of their own free will, but because they had no choice. This was what the SACC called the "ideology of unrestricted capitalism" which views all forms of wealth accumulation as good, no matter what effect they have on other people" (South African Council of Churches Report, 1984: 16). Unsurprisingly, the conditions of closer

settlement in different areas occupied by Vhavenda and Vatsonga/ Machangana were reported as follows:

*When we arrived at Mphambo, we found all stands numbered with a hut. We have no fields to plough from 1972 up to today (1989), we plough nothing, and all our cattle died because of the drought. We are just seated because we have nothing but when we came from Driefontein; a truck carried my belongings six times (Nefale, 2000: 44).*

and

*We stay and farm in a 30 square meter stand. Our cattle graze along the roads. You see at Tshakhuma you can say that people like ploughing on top of mountains, we do not like it (Interview with E. Matumba, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020).*

In the same fashion the Ravele community indicated that "we have been removed from our fertile soil and resettled at this barren and rocky place where we cannot live off the land" (TA, NAD, Memorandum, File 2/1111/ 308 of the Farm Beaconsfield 212 MT, Baobab 211MT, Beaconsfield, 212 MT and Mapela 209MT; Mirror, 1997). The above quotations indicate the extreme shortage of land in the areas where people were relocated to, among them the Raveles, or in areas they voluntarily chose for themselves since they were afraid of the "wilderness". The effect of the forced removals on agriculture was to reduce the affected people's stock holdings, while others lost all their livestock. It also reduced their access to land, thereby reducing the extent and scale of agricultural activity and paving the way for a precarious subsistence (Department of Water Affairs, Forestry and Fisheries, 2009; Interview with T. Maiwashe, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2021).

Flowing from above, how these people managed to survive conditions of extreme land shortage and poverty is an interesting story. T.B. Ravele (Interviewed on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021) indicated that "they resorted to ploughing on top of the mountains", as there was no other fertile place. Consequently, these people even developed some skills on the usage of their hoes in cultivating on the mountains since, it is impossible for tractors or draught animals to do this daunting task. One can only imagine how difficult it was for

one to adapt from being accustomed to cultivating in flat areas to mountainous areas. As result these people were said to be producing mealies that could not be consumed for a month or two (Interview with T.B. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). Hirson (1990: 127) who commented that "he did not know whether the government intended to turn all African people into monkeys" also observed how African people had adopted and/ or adapted to ploughing on mountainous areas. This would make it impossible for the ordinary person to work the land. Moreover, one land surveyor asserted that "when comparing a native land map with a contour map, native land was either mountainous, too rocky and too high for farming and settlement " (SAIRR, JD Jones papers, AD843/RJ/C3.9, Report to Mr Molteno, 8 July 1940: 2).

As if that was not enough, those who still owned livestock also faced an uncertain future since they expected that at any point they might be told that their cattle were dead. Most of these cattle did not die of natural causes but mainly because of road accidents and in the process killed innocent travelers. If one drove along the Nzhelele main road, where most of the Ravele resided, to Thohoyandou, the only visible road signs warning motorists that livestock might cross the roads at any time, and as such they had to be alert. This proved to be difficult, as the area would be too dark most of the time, since electricity supplies were still far from reaching such areas. Therefore, it proved difficult for drivers to see clearly at night, resulting in accidents. Because of this, in 1991 the farmers in the Luvuvhu Valley issued a strong warning to the *Thovhele Khosikhulu* and *mahosi* in their vicinity to warn their subjects to keep livestock away from the roads as many accidents were taking place (Sachikonye, 2005: 37-38; Thohoyandou, 1991). In the current researcher's opinion, white settlers were not justified to say that people were not taking care of their livestock. This was because there was no other place where they could find pasture. The only pasture that was available was along the roads, thus causing cattle to stray into the path of traffic. The downturn was that this forced most members of the Ravele community to sell their livestock since they ended up being punished for not looking after them to avoid loss of human life (Sachikonye, 2005: 37-38).

In addition, such cattle proved to be a liability rather than an asset to the Ravele community, since they had to pay a 20c (twenty cent) tax per head for dipping in order to prevent cattle from dying of diseases (Harries Collection: Interview between Dowling

and Tambane, 1984). That was reasonable because medicine needed to be purchased, but many could not afford the cost thereof. What was unfair about this practice was paying for pasture since this had never been part of their culture. This system of taxation also impoverished the people because the taxes were levied on people who did not work, who because of forced removal, land dispossession and relocation had been rendered poor. This gave them no option but to sell their stock, which others referred to as their "bank", because they did not keep their money in banks (Nefale, 2000: 46). These when coupled with bad living conditions and a R2 (two Rand) tax known as *chibalo* (tax paid by every married man per year), forced male members of the community to sell all their livestock. When all the livestock had been sold, they were left with no other source of income but to seek for employment in urban areas and farms as migrant labourers in order to avoid being arrested for non-payment of tax.

#### **5.4 The Impact of the Migrant Labour System on Relocated Families**

“Migrant workers were the ones who could help us, they sent us money because they have families at New Mauluma” (Interview with D.E. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2020).

From the above comment it was clear that those who went to towns were the only hope in which those left in closer settlements depended on for survival. They usually worked for the South African Railways, in the mines, industries, shops, building constructions and road works (Nefale, 2000: 47). The labour bureaux established in 1952 was responsible for their recruitment. These labour bureaux were regulated by the Bantu Labour Act no 67 of 1964, which made provision for district, regional and local labour bureaux. With the establishment of the homelands, this system of labour bureaux saw its extension and four district labour bureaux were established in Gazankulu (Bureau for Economic Research and Bantu Development (Benso), 1976: 50). Vendaland was reported to have three labour bureaux, with 26 (twenty-six) tribal bureaux (Benso, 1979: 49; Interview with Prof. Ralushai, “Ndevhe Tshini”, Phalaphala FM, 2005). Though these labour bureaux were situated within the homelands they were largely responsible for employing even people who were relocated from the Luvuvhu Valley as there was nothing to eat in the relocated areas. These bureaux were designed to further the interests of capitalists, to provide them with labour, which could be manipulated in the form of giving them starvation wages. Despite the fact that most of those who went to

town provided relief to their starving families in the closer settlements, more harm was done to the families that were left behind.

As it was the heads of families were frequently absent from home and this contributed to the destruction of marriages in the rural areas since most men who went to work in the urban areas ended up getting married to a second wife. They sometimes neither went back home nor send money to those left behind (Nefale, 2000: 47). The expectations which members of the family had developed such as looking after each other for support, healing and growth disappeared. Those left at home lacked the energy to cope with forming new identities as the situation demands(ed). This contributed to the destruction of their self-esteem. Poverty was likely to hit hard families without males, as females were left to assume duties once performed by males at the home. They had to fend for themselves on their own. On the other hand, children grew up in unhealthy conditions. This contributed to their emotional and mental instability due to lack of family care and adequate food needed for growth and development (Nefale, 2000: 48). It was not because these families were not aware of the possibilities of a bright future if one was educated, but it was because they were unable to provide for the education of their kids. For them education was no longer an asset or investment but a liability since it would drain the little they had which was meant for survival. However, complaints by other communities that schools promised were not built, or that their children were forced to travel long distances, also had an adverse effect since most of the kids stayed away from school. This was because they were not accustomed to travelling long distances (Nefale, 2000: 48) the result was that closer settlements experienced a high rate of illiteracy. Consequently, such poverty stimulated criminal activities such as thieving which the white settlers around the Luvuvhu Valley complained about. This on the other hand, ensured that a pool of cheap labour was always available which was prepared to work under brutal conditions for white settlers at the Valley (Interview with R. Mathagu, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2020).

### **5.5 The Impact of Mundende (Social Grant for the Aged)**

The Ravele community, among others, survived on the payment of both migrants' remittances and the payment of old age pensions because it seems that most of the people depended on them, since societies in such destitute areas were composed of

the aged. Those who were away in the urban areas were mostly those between the ages of 16 years to 64 years. Mare (1980: 75) puts it clearly that "as soon as they become, for some reason or the other, no longer fit for work in the labour market, they were expected to return to their country of origin or territory of their national unit. Age also caused these people to be classified as unfit. Nevertheless, these people were old, unproductive and therefore could not fend for their families (Interview with R. Mufamadi, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022). They needed to spend their last years resting. This was another side of unrestricted capitalism under the apartheid government, wherein if one was unproductive or disabled because of the work he did for years, one was thrown out of the system with little provisions and/ or no reward for having worked on the particular farm. These statements are just more evidence of the unjust system as well as the injustices that were inflicted on these poor souls. These old men received old age pension every two months, but the amount they received was not enough, since out of those meagre wages they were forced to pay taxes to the *khosi*, school fees, water and dip tax (Nefale, 2000: 49; Interview with S. Mulaudzi, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2022). On the other hand, the Raveles were also reported to be earning a living from old age money (Republic of Venda, 1985;). Though they received the money, it was extremely reduced to an extent that it was difficult to survive on it alone, whilst those families with no people who received old age pension money faced extreme hardships. In essence, to some *mundende* was their only source of income to help them live their life(ves).

## 5.6 The Decline of Culture and Tradition

Ellis (1984: 1) asserts that under the dimension of poverty communities suffered severe deprivation of the means that enabled them to carry out their usual cultural activities, which the author has labelled "cultural poverty". In this instance one is inclined to remind the reader about the significance of the Luvuvhu Valley, the land that the Raveles and their community as well as those neighbouring them, once lived in. The picturesque scenario of this land, its natural beauty, splendour and its natural bountifulness is fed to the imagination of the reader in chapter three on the geo-political discussion. It was on this land that these communities engaged in their various cultural activities: *thevhula*, initiation schools, joyful celebrations during the inauguration of a *khosi* and during which the *tshikona* dance was the cherry on top, sorrowful occasions when communities would be mourning the death of a *khosi*, and access to burial sites, among others. All these



cultural practices and traditions were very close to the hearts and minds of these communities and were disrupted by and during the period of forced removals and dispossession.

Although it could be argued that wherever they were relocated to after the forced removals and dispossession, they still continued with such cultural practices, the truth of the matter is that the sentimental connection that they felt within their ancestral land along the Luvuvhu Valley could not have been matched by the new settlement as it lacked that significance, all they could do would be to reminisce with nostalgia. It is the informed opinion of the current researcher that no matter what cultural practices they would continue with at the new settlement, would not help retard the diminishing memories of the significance of the Luvuvhu Valley in their lives (TA, NAD 17/12/2, vol.1/149/Memo Tribal Burial ground Ravele family, 23 November 1925). This demise of cultural values could not be divorced from the fact that Africans experienced severe land shortage due to relocation. The survival of any culture depends on the resources garnered from the land. The structure of *vhuhosi*, known to Vhavenda suffered as a result of land dispossession.

It has argued that "we are continuing to install *mahosi* in our area, despite the fact that we have no land" (Interview with E. Matumba, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020; Interview with N. Ratombo, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2020). However, it is important to jog the mind to the sad reality that the forced removal and dispossession impacted on the status of *vhuhosi* of the Raveles because they were downgraded to *vhugota* status. This means that although since 2012 they have been inaugurating their rulers as *mahosi*, an occasion that they have been holding on the Valley following the loss of their leaders in quick succession, the process of inauguration remains only in name. Earlier in the chapter mention was made of the fact that the Raveles pleaded to remain on the land until the remains of their leader, Nanga Ravele, had decomposed rather than being forced to live far from their royal gravesite, or even far from the commoners' gravesite bordered on disrespect. While they vacated the land because it was earmarked for white settlement, it should be remembered that it was customary and traditional to Vhavenda that the *tshiendeulu* should not be located very far from the *Thondo* (royal head-kraal).

*Mahosi* also depended on tribute and *dzunde*, an annual traditional practice during which households would voluntarily join forces in ploughing and cultivating the royal field and even be involved in the same manner during harvest time (Lands- Sibasa and Memorandum Dzunde Lands amongst the Venda people, Soutpansberg, Report by N.J. van Warmelo 1946; Mahosi, 2020: 78-81). In essence the forced removals and dispossession, which later forced families into labour, whether in the farms or in the urban areas, reduced the foundation base of *tribute* for the *khosi* and *dzunde*. Whereas the *dzunde* practice was voluntary and for free when families were dragooned to work on the farms, farm-work was not voluntary but forceful (TA Department of Land Affairs (henceforth DLA) File 31593/21, 1634, Letter from Rooth to the Secretary for Lands, 7 September 1936). This greatly impacted on the traditional way of life of communalism which united communities behind socio-economic purpose. Although on the one hand, the Ravele community was lucky to be given a place in Beaconsfield, Boabab and Cliffside, but as a result of their newfound demotion to *vhugota* at these new places, *tributes* were diminished.

The Raveles have always had a strong cultural attachment to their ancestors through the graves in which they were buried in various areas in the Luvuvhu Valley. They relied on these graves for their spiritual fulfilment. The establishment of farms meant that they were denied access to these graves by the white settlers, though some like Ravele and Masakona were allowed to visit them but were later denied access to them and were labelled trespassers (NTS, 17112/2, 1946, Nefale, 2000: 51). To Vhavenda, this meant that they experienced what Ellis calls "cultural poverty", "psychological poverty" or "spiritual poverty" because they were denied access to go and worship their ancestors which was performed in the royal graves in the form of *thevhula* (Ellis, 1984: 3).

Therefore, in order to compensate for their spiritual needs, since it had become impossible to perform traditional ancestral rituals, some people turned to Christianity while others stuck to their cultural and traditional life (Interview with E. Matumba, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020). Essentially those who remained in their religious realm felt that Christianity suppressed their culture and tradition and forbade traditional ways of worshipping. However, those who turned to Christianity saw the advantages it offered them in the form of education and an opportunity to be accepted in the white man's world (Mathivha, 1985: 86-88; Ndou, 2000: 3, 40; Halala, 2011: 4, 17-22; Mahosi, 2020: 86-

87). An opportunity to get educated served the purposes of making the Raveles look down upon their culture and tradition and controlled them for the benefit of capitalism but on the other hand they saw in it a chance to prepare them for a better future. The implication was that they were made to believe and to measure their standard of living through the Whiteman's eye, which was not necessarily the right instrument. Shortly, what is good for the goose may not be good for the gander (Best, 1990: 77). In simple terms although Christianity looked attractive to the white settlers and to some among those who were affected by the forced removals, it did not necessarily mean that is good for everyone.

*Mahosi* were also denied the right to perform *murundu* (traditional initiation school for boys and/ or young men which was intended for circumcision) in the Luvuvhu Valley like they used to in the past, because suitable sites for such activities were then enclosed in the farms. In the same vein the New Mauluma made it impossible for them to perform circumcision due to lack of dense forests that offered secrecy and water. Significantly, *murundu* is a cultural and traditional practice which almost all Vhavenda youth and boys have to go through. Children born on the farms and in closer settlements grew up not knowing about the value and benefits of *murundu* which is an "experience and the right of passage to manhood which many were forced to miss" when they accepted Christianity as their religion (Nefale, 1998: 37). Having said that from 1943 onwards permission was required from the Native Affairs Commission to conduct such schools in the Luvuvhu Valley in terms of Proclamation No: 53 of that same year (TA, HKN, 17NII12/10, Vol. 111/50, various applications to the Native Commissioner 1943-1953). The application for permission laid down certain conditions that made it difficult for applications to succeed. It marked the involvement of white settlers in traditional matters, as they became the ones who recommended the person to perform the operation. Therefore, the powers of *mahosi* to run these schools according to Venda culture were usurped by the office of Native Affairs Commissioner. The diminishing effect and status of these schools could be attributed to the involvement of white settlers and the white government in cultural practices they knew nothing about. The high death rate that followed years later in these schools could be attributed to people who had been appointed to perform operations without adequate cultural and traditional knowledge and experience of *murundu* (TA Bantu Administration and Development (BAO) 90, 74-76, Driefontein, Mashaukop).

Since the Ravele community was relocated to settlements that resembled desert conditions, it implied that all traditional skills of making household articles disappeared. People were unable to make sleeping traditional mats such as "*thovho*" made from reeds found in the rivers. Since it was difficult to find rivers in such areas, clay, a valuable material for the making of cooking pots was unavailable for the community. The result was that they were forced to buy these articles from shops, which also proved difficult for communities with no source of income as they were expensive (Van Warmelo, 1932: 106).

### **5.7 The Effects of the Luvuvhu Valley Settlement Scheme on Farm Workers**

Farm work was another alternative for families affected by poverty, especially whose husbands were not sending money home from the urban areas and those who were headed by widows. It needs to be stressed that such economic pressures forced families to work on the farms (Interview with M. Netshifhefhe, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2022). White settlers and farm workers were tied together by a dialectical relationship, which means the survival of the two depended on each other. It is always difficult to deal with one while ignoring the other. That being said the Luvuvhu Valley was edged in most parts by Venda and Gazankulu. The implication was that the farmers could afford daily transportation of workers by ferrying them to and from home daily or on Fridays and Sundays, hence maximising production and reducing costs, a fundamental feature inherent in the capitalist economy (Thohoyandou, 23/10/1992. SACC, Relocation: The churches report on forced removals: 16).<sup>14</sup> Though costs were reduced, labourers reaped the bitter harvest of travelling in open trucks in winter and summer. In a different context, it was noted that "in 1979, two teenagers froze to death on the back of the lorry which was driving through a blizzard in the Orange Free State (Davis, 1988: 24). The current researcher would like to comment that this situation and experience exposes(ed) the farm workers to a number of diseases and social ills, which went against the African values on which their lives revolved.

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<sup>14</sup> Such a traditional capitalist example is found in the ZZ2 Tomatoes Company, which transports its farmworkers to town(s) at the end of every month for the purpose of monthly shopping.

However, other workers were allowed the decency to take residence with their entire families at their masters' farms, especially domestic workers and gardeners (Harries Collection: Interview between S. Dowling and Hartman, 1987). For example, one Mr. Badenhorst had seven families on his farm, and 60% (sixty percent) of the 800 (eight hundred) labourers at the Sapekoe Tea Estate stayed in the compounds (Harries Collection: Interview between Dowling, Badenhorst, and Mr. Elliot, 1987). These compounds were mostly built on a piece of unwanted land, especially near rivulets of dams, and were a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Keeping labourers on the farm gave the white settler farmers the upper hand. This meant, for instance, that workers would start work early and knock off late hence again maximising productivity. Though schooling facilities were provided at Sapekoe and Tshitungulu for instance, they seldom went beyond primary level. Such schools were meant for the children of farm workers to learn how to communicate in the language of the employer. These schools were meant to give some form of elementary education with the hope that their education would improve productivity on farms, unlike "raw natives" who damaged farm implements. The little education the youth received made them realize that there was life beyond the farm, and this often led to conflict between heads of families and white landowners when children deserted the farm. For many families born and bred on the farm, it became automatic for some white settler farmers to claim labour of children. In a different context, which equally applied) to the Luvuvhu Valley, (Keegan,1988: 52) makes a point that contracts under the Masters' and Servants Act 1841, amended in 1856, were broad to enable landowners to call the service of minors whenever required This left farm workers with no right to order their children to school. However, in most cases, farm workers' families were not in a position to send the children to school because of poverty. Such children were often recruited to work on the farms for the rest of their lives.

Having said that, labourers toiled from dusk to dawn, nearly 12 (twelve) hours a day and 72 (seventy-two) hours per week, with salaries ranging from R80 (eighty rand) to R180 (one hundred-and-eighty rand) per month in 1992. It was also reported that a "breadwinner was earning R120 (one hundred-and-twenty rand) a month after 10 (ten) years of service", though at times such wages were supplemented by a bag of mealie meal and some fruit (Thohoyandou, 23 October 1992). A Mrs. Mulder, one of those who settled in the Luvuvhu Valley around 1937, reported that "Bantu labour in those days was worth R2, and R100-R140 in 1987." However, the wages varied from farm to farm

and according to gender and age. Child labour was common on these farms (interview between Dowling, Mrs. Mulder and Mr. Fogwell, 1987; Nefale, 2000: 52). Farmers often exploited them as they were regarded as "cheap" and could be treated according to the wishes of the white settler farmers. Such women and children were unable to resist the bad treatment handed out by the white settler farmers. To make matters worse, some of them usually got their dues 5 (five) days after the salary calendar month had ended and there was no provision for one to question the employer as one might face expulsion, which might lead to loss of accommodation, and the little that families were depending on. "Some employers were reported as having a tendency of beating up their workers during month end so that they could forsake their work without having received their wages such that he would keep on hiring new faces" (Thohoyandou, 1992). Bradford's (1988: 54) observation of a similar situation elsewhere in the country was equally valid for the Luvuvhu Valley. Equally "in an economy in which black labour power came cheap, black bodies were the site on which farmers exercised their bloodstained power" (Delius, 1996: 433). The current researcher would like to opine that this therefore meant that the workers' rights were violated, and that they were forced into marginal existence, with poverty affecting every facet of their lives.

## **5.8 The Luvuvhu Valley as an Economic Hub of South Africa**

Farming constitutes an essential component in the production of food for the nation and its people. As it was Levubu farms specialise(d) in particular fruits such as mangoes, macadamia nuts, litchis, oranges and, predominantly, avocados and bananas (Harries Collection: Interview between S. Dowling and Mrs. Mulder, 1987). On the other hand, vegetables such as cabbages, tomatoes and maize, though still produced, are/ were less dominant than fruits. Such produce has done well both locally and internationally, hence earning valuable foreign exchange. For instance, in 1978, a 4kg box of avocados cost R1, 94 (one rand ninety-four cents) locally but for export in that same year it sold for R2, 09 (two rand-nine cents). However, in 1982 the cost of the same box cost R2, 95 (two rand-ninety-five cents) locally and R3, 84 (three rand eighty-four cents) for export (*Die Noord Transvaal*, 20 August 1989). Though the current researcher has not obtained more recent figures, such figures can help one to at least set the present price in line with the increased standard of living, coupled with the high demand for such

produce (Interview with Mr. Rams (pseudonym), Official from Land Claims Commission, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021).

Essentially, from the inception of the Luvuvhu Valley settlement, efforts were made to link this farming area with important markets in South Africa. This was done to ensure an efficient marketing of produce (LD, 31593/21, 1634, Transport arrangement, Letter to Mr Grossert, irrigation engineer, 7 July 1938). Fruits produced were transported from the Luvuvhu Valley on "railway" buses, which moved daily to and from Sibasa to Louis Trichardt. Such goods were then transported to Johannesburg by train (Harries Collection: Interview between Dowling and Mr. Fogwell, 1987). Before, 1994 Landman Vervoer, a transportation company situated at Beaufort has been responsible for the transportation of fruits and vegetable from the Valley to Johannesburg. Therefore, the white seller farmers had a choice of either using the railway transportation or Landman; or he/ she could transport produce to market in his/ her own transportation.

Locally, the produce provided an opportunity for communities to escape from poverty. Street vendors from all over Venda would flock (as they still do) to the Luvuvhu Valley for goods to sell to the local communities, and to tourists on their way to and from the Kruger National Park or those who occasionally visit the Venda area during weekend for reasons such as funerals, weddings or any such occasions (Nefale, 1998: 3; Interview with M. Netshifhe, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2022). This also provided an opportunity for communities to avoid exploitation on the settler white farms. But that did not guarantee their safety, since they were constantly harassed, searched by the police and required to carry slips or invoices as proof of purchase since, it was alleged that theft on the white settlers was widespread. Ironically, such white settler farmers never gave such people proof of purchase (Thohoyandou, 28 July 1991). This meant that white settler farmers' actions could be justified before the law for crimes committed against Africans in the area. These may account for the brutal reputation that the people in the area went through which usually bordered on assaults or murders of African people. That being said dogs reigned supreme in this conservative white farming area and several cases were reported to have been opened in the neighbouring Levubu Police Station, and in all instances no white farmer was prosecuted for violating the rights of an African or for murder (Nefale, 2000: 53). Those alleged to be thieves were always guilty before taken to court, since both the police force and the court system in the Luvuvhu Valley was dominated by

Afrikaners, who strongly supported the oppressive system (Nefale, 2000: 53). To date, after twenty-eight years of democracy in South Africa real transformation within the Luvuvhu Police force is yet to take place in the true sense of the word, regardless of the station being manned by the majority of African police personnel.

## **5.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has attempted to show how a shortage of land impoverished the Ravele community, among other community who were previously settled within the Luvuvhu Valley. It also discussed the entirety of people who were subsequently relocated from the Luvuvhu Valley to elsewhere and how they managed to survive under conditions of extreme hardship. The alternatives that communities relied on, like migrant labour and farmwork, had far-reaching effects on their families, culture and tradition because they were designed to serve the capitalists' interests. The farmworkers could be easily manipulated and disposed of if they were no longer fit to serve the system. The success of the settlement scheme was captured in the comments by one Mrs. Mulder who stated in 1987 that "when we came here, we were not rich, we were poor," and presently, electric fences dominate the landscape of the Luvuvhu Valley settlement (Harries Collection: Interview between S. Dowling and Mrs. Mulder, 1987). On the other hand, Nefale (2000: 54) commented that "in the beginning they could have been poor white settlers but because of subsidy from the government they became successful and filthy rich, to not only offer jobs but to export food as well". The implication is that through the Luvuvhu Valley Settlement Scheme the local 'poor white' problem has been eradicated but at the cost of creating a poor Africans problem and community. It is, of course, unacceptable in any society to solve one socio-economic problem by creating another problem. Racial violence against Africans near the settlement and those working on neighbouring farms had taken the form of evictions, low wages, sjamboking, and general harassment which borders(ed) on murders. Therefore, the rural area which is the subject of this study, remains a terrain wherein racism still manifests itself. Its survival is a threat to the new South African democratic government and the quest for social cohesion as well as nation building.

Therefore, the attention of the following chapter will be given to conditions of farm workers in South Africa and the Luvuvhu Valley in particular.



## Chapter 6

### Conditions of Farm Workers in the Luvuvhu Valley

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the conditions of farm workers in South Africa, with special reference to the Luvuvhu Valley (Old Mauluma) where the Ravele community resided before their removal to Beaconsfield (New Mauluma). Just as in various other industries, especially during the period under study, when and where the socio-economic and political welfare of Africans were regarded as an afterthought, the working conditions on the farms that were owned by white settler farmers were extremely horrendous. Just as it was mentioned in the preceding chapter, some farm workers were killed, disappeared and those responsible were never brought to book. These forms of injustices and/ or acts of criminality within the farming industry were enabled by the inhuman and brutal white minority rule of South Africa. Inasmuch as these dire conditions were rife around the Luvuvhu Valley and other farms in the rural areas, they hardly received the adequate attention of scholars and the media. Hence, the knowledge industry and the media was previously owned, controlled and managed by whites and their African collaborators. As such, they easily interfered with academic and editorial freedom in order to contain the coverage about the atrocities committed in the farms and to advance a particular biased pro-white narrative of the farmers.

#### 6.2 Conditions of Farm Workers in South Africa, with Special Reference to the Luvuvhu Valley

Compared to the other sectors of the working class, like the manufacturing industries, shops and administrative offices the situation of farm workers was critically bad (Hempe, 1987: 79). That being said, the Levubu Valley has been known for being economically self-sufficient as it exports substantial quantities of its surplus which then earn valuable foreign exchange. However, such a production has been won at considerable cost because this happened at the expense of African farmworkers (Nefale 1998: 32) opines that “farm work is the primary source of income for most people, be they rural or urban people.” The same author further asserts that in South Africa, as elsewhere, the

proximate cause of much poverty lies in the fact that the wages earned by men and women for the work they do are insufficient to cover basic needs for themselves and their dependents” (Nefale, 1998: 32; Atkinson, 2007: 2009).

As it stands farm workers were the most oppressed and exploited Africans in the Transvaal Province of South Africa, presently known as the Limpopo Province, and that a network of harsh mechanism of control inhabits their resistance. These included the master and servant’s laws, withholding of wages, seizures of stock, debt, eviction and not the least sjambok (Wisborg, et al, 2013: 53; Hall, 2001: 98-100; Interview with L. Madzivhandila, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022). In the context of working conditions harsh methods of control and an all-pervasive racism, black South Africans in the Luvuvhu Valley fear the Boers or farmers. Maybe this was because the Northern Transvaal, as the area in the Far North of South Africa around the Soutpansberg District was called, is renowned for conservative white farmers who responded to the threat of black majority rule by lashing out at workers, evicting them, using abusive language and letting the dogs bite their workers. These were the most common methods used by the white settler farmers in the Luvuvhu Valley, although they differ from farm to farm. Workers on the other hand, link their low pay and poor working condition to the legacy of racism, that black South Africans and whites are two distinct people and that the former had to serve their superior who is white. Therefore, there have been many complaints of racist attitudes of the Boers in the area (Nefale, 1998: 23; Interview with M. Magwada, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022). The farms under investigation were Entabeni Staatboss 251MT, Barotta 17LT, Klein Australie 13LT, Wolweroode 38LT, Welgevonden 36LT, Levubu 15LT and Beaufort 32LT. Those farming areas produces(ed) fruit, vegetables, stock and forestry.

During the apartheid period, the relationship between the police and the white settler farmers was complex and it appears that many police supported farmers in their struggle against farm workers. Cases laid against white farmers were always withdrawn and farm workers would be left at the mercy of the white settler farmers to discipline them (Nefale, 1998: 23). An example of such treatment was that of one Mbulaheni Maswazi, a farm worker in Waterpoort near Louis Trichardt who argued that: “... indeed things have changed in our country. In the past, I would not have been able to lay a charge against a white settler farmer. The police would have dismissed me and called the farmers to discipline me as a bad influence on other workers” (Sowetan, 1997: 13). This argument

epitomizes both the suffering faced by farm labourers during the heyday of apartheid as well as the fruits of the new democratic order.

Although the current researcher is obliged to agree with Maswazi about the changes that have taken place since the dawn of democracy in South Africa, Boer attitudes in the Luvuvhu Valley in the 1990s had still not changed much. White settler farmers continue to display authoritarian control over their African labour force, because there still have been too many attacks against black farm workers at night. According to Nefale (1998: 25) most cases reported by farm workers were racist in nature, wherein workers were attacked for no reason, just because they were African. It has been very disheartening to see how these Boers in the Luvuvhu Valley are behaving. After attacking African workers, these Boers would call the police, more especially if they victims were badly hurt so that the police may take them to hospital to be treated free of charge after completing the J88 forms, which deal with attack with the intention to do grievous bodily harm. One may argue that the white settler farmers realize the fact that African farm workers were an important aspect of their farm in the form of labour. The above evidence was also supported by a farmer from Delmas by the name of Charles Rossouw who indicated that “we own the land but without workers we cannot do anything” (Mail and Guardian, 1994: 10). In other words, this means that they realised that if such people were not treated by doctors, they might lose their labourers to death. Therefore, having them treated was a way of preventing death. This was one reason why Africans in the Luvuvhu Valley fear the white settler farmers (Wisborg, et al, 2013: 53; Derman et.al. 2010: 306; Interview with T. Samba, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022).

In addition, the justice system in the Luvuvhu Valley has always favoured the whites by sentencing and carrying out of unlawful arrests against black farmworkers. At the Luvuvhu Police Station there was evidence that such arrests had been carried out to the benefit of the white settler farmers. Most of such cases centred around leaving the job for a more decent one which offered more benefits, the white settler farmers would go to the police station and open a case of his worker having damaged his machine or having stolen something from him. The result was that the farm worker would be arrested and sentenced for crimes they did not commit. After serving the sentence the worker was ordered to return to work on the same farm. In essence this means that they were arrested and sentenced just because they were hard workers and because master

did not want to lose such a hardworking servant (Wolpe, 1972: 425). Van Onselen (1996: 6-7) further reveals that cases reported by farm labourers against farm owners against sjamboking and letting the dogs loose to bite the worker, were evaded by the justice system with no proper investigation. He further indicated that farm owners were not sentenced during the apartheid era because there were no prison terms for them for such horrendous crimes; in fact, they just paid fines, regardless of the seriousness of the crime he/ she had committed. Van Onselen (1996: 6-7) opened up about having served at the Luvuvhu Police Station for about twenty years and that during that period he remembers no white settler farmer who was imprisoned for committing crimes against black farm labourers. Therefore, the legacy of master and servants continues to entrench such racist attitudes amongst white settler farmers.

This means that the legacy of Master and Servants Act has continued to wield power and influence, which they inherited from the past (Wolpe, 1972: 432-433). It was also important to note that the Boers were afraid of the new democratic government of South Africa, especially because of the new constitution which fights against discrimination but promotes equality before the law for both Africans and whites. The result has been that since the dawn of democracy the farm owners are obliged by the laws of the country to treat their workers as human beings since the latter have been accorded rights in terms of the labour laws of the new government. This has been evident in the decrease in the number of cases reported at the Luvuvhu Police Station as from 1994 relating to racism and acts of brutality that were usually meted against farm workers before the dawn of democracy (Bozzoli, 1984: 121). The current researcher would like to advance that the previous statement represents a significant departure from the oppressive and discriminatory past around the period of the forced removals from the Luvuvhu Valley, when farmworkers and their families were excluded from labour reforms; both in the working conditions and wages (Skosana, 1939: 53). It is therefore encouraging to find that the country's labour laws cover everyone who is classified as a worker and an important component of the economy.

### **6.3 The reality on the farms**

The condition of workers on most farms within the Luvuvhu Valley can be described as bad. Most farm owners behaved as though they regarded their labourers as their own

properties (interview with E. Baloyi, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2020). Therefore, if profits from farming were based partly on the exploitation of consumer, they derived even more from the exploitation of the labourers. Approximately one-third of the total African population of 10 (ten) million lived on farms in the white areas, while in the Western Province and Natal this labour force was supplemented by several hundred thousand Coloured and Asian workers. Although there was wide a variation in the income of farm labourers, the figures showed that the overwhelming majority had a standard of living considerably below that of the industrial workers in town (Bunting, 1989: 374; Moyo, Rutherford and Wilks, 2000: 182).

Flowing from above the wages of farm workers within the Luvuvhu Valley were considerably low. Such wages were not simply reckoned in money but also in kind. This refers to “benefits” which workers commonly received such as food rations and housing but sometimes their wages were supplemented by vegetables like tomatoes, cabbages, and fruits such as bananas and oranges when they were ripe. Therefore, the farm owners evaded paying workers by giving them a bag of mealie meal. Basically, such wages ranged from R150 (one hundred-and-fifty rand) and were mostly for women whereas those earning R300 (three hundred rand) were men who have worked for a longer period of time. In short, gender played an important role in determining the wage differences between men and women on the farms (Mudau, 1997: 117; Interview with Magwada, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022). The above evidence suggests that farm workers were underpaid whilst the farm owners reaped huge profits out of the labour of the farm workers.

In some cases, although workers might have had the right to grow crops for themselves or to keep animals, it was often difficult to put monetary value on such benefits. There were no minimum basic conditions of employment which apply to farm workers as there were no set of hours per day or per week. In essence farm workers within the Luvuvhu Valley started the hours of work from six o’clock in the morning until seven o’clock in the evening; but sometimes it stretched beyond seven depending on what they were doing. In between those long working hours they only had thirty minutes’ lunch break. Furthermore, there were not set of annual leave, no sick leave or public holidays. The above evidence indicated that farm owners in the Luvuvhu Valley were overworking their labourers without considering the state of their physical health. However, in terms of the

current labour laws of the country Sunday has been declared a non-working day and generally public holidays have to be observed. However, these standards have been set by farmers on their own (Interview with E. Baloyi, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2020).

One other thing that has been an important feature evident in the farm workers was that they did not receive pension money (Interview with E. Baloyi, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2020). Therefore, farm owners evaded contributing to the pension fund of their workers regardless of the exorbitant profit they accrued from their blood and sweat such that at the end of the day they would rely on the state old age pension when they retired. It was hard to see farm workers who served their employers for 40 (forty) years or more under the white settler farmers receiving during retirement. Such farmworkers usually end up with no money at all because it was alleged that pension from the state was also subjected to nepotism to an extent if someone does not know, you would end up not getting your pension. The only thing that was left was that they had to be evicted from the farms where they had been labour tenants for the most part of their lives. This is a sorry state of affairs because, whichever way, the farm owner remained the winner, while the government had turned a blind eye to this predicament. The same workers were generally “psychologically enslaved” because when such issues were to be addressed the desperate worker would pretend as if they were not experiencing any problem at their workplace. This was mainly a result of the fear to lose ones’ job (Bozzoli, 1984: 121).

As far as workers were concerned, the only law protecting them was the Workman’s Compensation Act. Be that as it may, workers are/ were largely dependent on the farmer to get their benefit (Hempe, 1987: 79). In the Luvuvhu Valley for example the workers were never compensated. The white settler farmers in general denied them individual rights, especially African workers. The only thing that was evident was that the white farm owners have always been striving to enrich themselves. The result was that there out of confusion, there was an increase in the number of assaults among farm workers. The consumption of liquor also contributed to such an extent that issues of this nature gave the white settler farmers an upper hand over their African labourers (Interview with the M.P. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

Earlier it was pointed out that by the late 1950s opportunities to gain access to land by Africans had dwindled (Manona, 1988: 8). As a result, the workers required increased wages to maintain themselves and to afford consumer goods like bicycles, clothing, musical instruments and television. Although by that time workers were already being provided with rations which consist mainly of mealie meal or maize, they had to depend largely on their earnings to meet their increasing needs which were no longer entirely different from those of people living in town. Yet, a continuing effect of the lack of conventional means of labour representation such as trade unions on farms was the payment of low wages, which in any event had always lagged behind those paid in town (Manona, 1988: 8). As a result, a major complaint of farm residents was the low level of their cash earnings which they saw as being the most important aspect of their remuneration. Their inability to improve their situation generated an urban orientation and alienation from rural living conditions.

According to Rantete (1997: 53) an elderly employee in the Luvuvhu Valley, indicated that he ate his wages, meaning that he bought everything for himself out of his wage. He further went on to show the difference between the lives he led before he became a labour tenant. He indicated that in the past there was no need for him to buy these things, because he depended in his farm (Rantete, 1997: 53; *City Press*, 2017). A married man in another farm indicated that he was not different from people who lived in town like Johannesburg because he bought all the things he needed. He indicated that he worked and earned R200 (two hundred rand). From that amount he paid for lay-by on his television set, bought a battery for the television set since his compound was not electrified, and she also had to buy groceries for his family. He indicated that he was not allowed to buy on credit from the local shop since they would need a pay slip which he did not have. He indicated that, the situation compelled them to buy goods on lay-by. On several occasions they only bought on credit from people who knew them like street vendors who did not need any proof that they were employed or not. In addition, the things they buy from street vendors were commonly not expensive like tomatoes, onions and “*mashonzha*” (Mopani worms). He ended up by showing that after all the transactions had been done, he hardly had R50 (fifty rand) pocket money for the whole month (Interview with M. Magatshavha, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020).

During, the 1980s the South African government claimed that it had relaxed influx control (Skosana, 1987: 135). In reality the farm workers could not move freely to sell their labour in the industrial centres where they felt would offer them better wages. This was because farm owners in the area were opposed to the training of their workers because they feared that their workers would leave them. With increased mechanization in agricultural sector workers were exposed to serious hazards as they were not trained for such machines (Skosana, 1987: 135). This was the case with workers in the Luvuvhu Valley. These machines were difficult to operate and the accidents they caused were severe and fatal. Such dangerous machines included soil tillage machines, harvesting, sorting and packaging machines. One Mr. Mashawana has indicated that cultivating with the help of a tractor needed training, because if you were not trained it might cause death or serious injuries. He indicated that he knew quite a number of tractor drivers who were not properly or adequately trained who ended up being disabled or even lost their lives. One incident that he mentioned, and he said is stuck in his mind, was when a tractor being driven by his friend overturned while he was ploughing on a steep slope at Lwamondo and crushed to death underneath, part of it being that his friend was not adequately trained to drive the said vehicle (Interview with S. Mashawana, 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020).

The dangers faced by farm workers range from traumatic injuries which include cuts, burns, electrocution, fractures and organic injuries caused by noise and vibration from machines and lastly health impairment. Organic injuries caused by noise and vibration from machines were not easy to diagnose and may be incurable. The high level of noise and vibration encountered on certain machines usually caused fatigue pains in the body and loss of sensation in the hands (Skosana, 1987: 136) According to the comments by Mr. Mashawana, a tractor driver in one of the farms in the Luvuvhu Valley indicated that he did not like his job, but he was working for the sake of feeding himself and his family. He argued that people may think that driving a tractor was nice, but he indicated that the pains and damage a tractor causes to the driver were permanent. He indicated that presently he suffered from kidney problems as a result of bumps he experienced while cultivating a farm at his workplace. He further indicated that he even failed to satisfy his wife sexually since his waist has always been aching due to the continuous use of the tractor (Interview with S. Mashawana, 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020). This serves to indicate that



even machines that one might think made life easier on the farm were causing irreparable damage to the lives of those using them.

Farm workers were also exposed to dangerous substances. The farm owners refused to provide workers with adequate personal protective clothing (PPC) and equipment such as respiratory and barrier creams. As a result, this has left workers openly exposed to extremely dangerous toxic substances like pesticide, fungicides, dipping chemicals, fertilizers and fuel. Inhabitation or skin contact with these chemicals may result in serious skin injuries and incurable diseases like lung cancer with no compensation from the employer (Skosana, 1987: 136). On the other hand, of late most of the farm owners in the Luvuvhu Valley have been offering some of their workers protection against toxic substances which has shown an improvement on the conditions of the workers. It is important to note, however, that the South African Agricultural Union (SAAU) only implemented these measures after a series of worker stoppages.

The conditions of the African labourers were equally disadvantageous to their offspring because the head of the family had no right or powers to encourage, let alone order his children to attend school. According to Masters' and Servants Act, the contracts were sufficiently broad to enable landowners to call on the services of minors whenever they were required (Interview with G. Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2021). In other words, it was like the children of farm workers were destined to inherit the hard conditions of their fathers. The painful part was that even if they would be summoned through their father to come and offer services to their father's boss, they would be doing so without any financial reward. The Masters' and Servants Act effectively stripped tenants' families of their defense against the landowners. The education of farm owner's children was at the mercy of farmer such that whenever schools were built on their property and they were seldom properly staffed, furnished or equipped and they did not provide learning beyond standard six (Grade 8 in today's language). This implies that these children were being educated to benefit the farm owner because immediately after completing standard six they expected to join the farm working force as an enlightened generation that was able to count the stock of the farmer when it was destined for the market.

Although all expenses for running farm schools were the responsibility of the government's Department of Education, with all its of education's shortcomings, the end

result was the shortage of almost everything needed in these schools (Interview with the G. Ravele, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2021). In the midst of all this, within the Luvuvhu Valley the only school that was built was known as Tshitungulu Lower Primary which was only in the 1990s and no secondary school was ever built in the area. Most of the farm workers' children who wanted to attend secondary school had to go to other villages nearby to attend or stay with relatives so that they could attend without any interruption (Interview with E. Baloyi, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2020). From this evidence, one could deduce that the intention of not building adequate schools for the children of farmworkers was to disadvantage them so that their lives would be destined for the white settler farms, and nothing else.

Although most of the older farm residents in the Luvuvhu Valley were illiterate, the people had a clear understanding of the possibilities of education and where there was a school in their vicinity, they could educate their children. Within the farms where investigations were conducted, the older workers had attended school up to standard to (Grade 4 in today's language) and they could not further their education because the farm school had been closed. Under such circumstances, many children made little progress and eventually dropped out of school (Interview with S. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). The above evidence indicates that schooling difficulties were due to the government's lack of interests in the education of children who stayed in the farms. In spite of any appeals made in the past by social workers, the ministers in charge of education made assurance that something would be done, but there was hardly any progress to point to the direction of change. This was virtually the end point for the few children who were fortunate to attend such schools. In some cases, the progress of the school was disrupted by lack of money from farm workers. The few farm workers who tried to equip their children with better education beyond standard five or six, carried the heavy burden of the costs. For instance, a boy attending secondary school at Ha-Kutama in 1997 indicated that his school uniform, stationery and school fees cost about R600 (six hundred rand) (Interview with S. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). However, it must be borne in mind that by this year a democratic government was three years old and therefore assisted schools much better than it was in the past. However, there was always the need to often supplemented more stationery that would cost an equivalence of a month's wage for the ordinary worker on the farm.

Employment on the farms was also linked to accommodation. Included in the Masters' and Servants Act was that farmers should provide housing for their farm workers. However, such housing was far below standard and there was no system of monitoring these dwellings by house inspectors. They were built like compounds like in the mines such that they were not divided into separate rooms. and thus accorded no privacy. Therefore, all sexes, children, extended family members and at times visitors slept in the same room. An interesting part was that losing employment was closely related to automatic loss of accommodation (Skosana, 1987: 134). Therefore, in the Luvuvhu Valley this implied that reaching old age was tantamount to losing accommodation because at old age such an individual could not render the services required by the farm owner. In such instances, the farm owners would be swift to retire the old aged and immediately replaced them with those who were still energetic (interview with the Ravele, 2021). Another scenario was that within the same Valley some farmers did not provide their workers with housing. In other instances, some of the workers had to build compounds for themselves on the farmers' land. It was very sad to find out that such houses were erected on an unwanted land especially near in rivulets of dams (Interview with S. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). The above evidence indicates that the farm workers were not as important because the farm owner erected such compound on unwanted land which were breeding ground for mosquitoes. This implied that the farm workers risked being infected with malaria. All in all, having accommodation in close proximity of the farm or better still on the farmland was for the benefit of the farm owners because his workers would stay next to the place of work and therefore, they would start work on time.

The farm owners used the following way to maintain control over farm workers. According to Monona (1988: 11) the white settler farmers argued that "you had to supervise them all the time, if you are not there they do not work". However, this was not the case with the workers within the Luvuvhu Valley. Since they lived in fear of the farm owners, they worked to the bone even in the absence of the boss. Mudau (1997: 13) indicates that he enjoys working when the farm owner was not around. Working in the presence of white settler farmer was uncomfortable because one was forced to endure vulgar language, verbal abuse and sjamboking. This abuse also included situations where farm workers complained about food, whereafter the farm owner would either beat them up or send them to their 'chief' for punishment. This means that the

'chief' was a collaborator. This also applied when they reported late for work. In summary, life as a farm labourer on many farms was extremely harsh because workers were subjected to stringent control.

Up to the present the reduction in the opportunities to supplement for the farm wages by stock rearing and cultivation have been one of the contentious issues between the farmers and the workers. In some farms workers were allowed to own livestock whereas in others they were not. Problems arose mostly when the number of their livestock increased. They feared that once you owned a large number of livestock you would leave them and become independent. The results would be that they would get rid of their livestock. This argument was supported by the experiences of one Mbulaheni Muswazi of Waterpoort whose fourteen goats were shot by the white settler farmer. Maswazi lost all his wealth although he started raising livestock as an attempt to improve the socio-economic and financial standing of his family (Hall, 2012: 823; Nefale, 2000: 87; *Sowetan*, 1997: 13)

Most farmworkers in Luvuvhu Valley did not own livestock. The only livestock they were allowed to own were mostly chickens. No goats, sheep and cattle were allowed. This was because the farmer was afraid of competition over grazing land. Simple livestock was allowed because one could feed them from their own pocket and not from the farmer grazing land (Mudau, 1997: 12). A "vicious circle" was evident here: farm workers were largely dependent on farm owners because their grazing rights had been reduced or taken away and women were not able to make full use of their grazing on account of their poverty (Manona, 1988: 8). The corollary of this declined in stock rearing and cultivation was the widespread use of condom goods. On the farm investigated some of the residents were paying for goods mostly such as furniture and radios acquired on hire purchase. When how they managed to buy goods on hire purchase, they indicated that because they did not get pay slips, but they were allowed to buy on credit, because they used a relative to buy such goods in their name and therefore, they would be responsible for all the monthly installments. When these farm workers were asked why they bought things that exceed their wages and on hire purchase they argued that "you tighten your belt and make sacrifices to get these things, when you see other people improving their homes, you try to do the same".

Furthermore, they indicated that “even if we are poor, that does not mean that we must be in rags, we have enough rags” (Mudau, 1997: 12). These were indications of the perceived importance of customer goods which were seen as part of the present-day style of living. The reliance on customer goods left nothing for investment on the small portion of lands that sometimes were available for use and people sometimes incurred debt which made it difficult for them to meet their basic needs. But on all farms investigated, virtually all the traditional skills of making articles for domestic use had disappeared and only a few women made sleeping mats known as “*thovho*” and pots for their own use or for sale (Mudau, 1997: 12).

#### **6.4 The Social Life on the Farms within the Luvuvhu Valley**

Unlike in the past, when farm residents had to solicit their own employer’s permission whenever they had visitors (Manona, 1988: 16), people have become free to receive visitors from anywhere. Inter-farm visits enabled the people to maintain contacts with relatives and friends living elsewhere and also enabled them to gain first-hand knowledge of the living and working conditions on other farms. This contact widened the scope of social interaction in communities which had otherwise disappeared and had become relatively small. Contact between those removed to Nzhelele (New Ravele settlement at New Mauluma) and those in Johannesburg, Louis Trichardt and those in other parts of Venda were maintained with the farm workers in the Luvuvhu Valley. Reciprocal visits between farm and town residents have had the same effects.

The typical form of weekend entertainment for farm workers was known as “*tshisevhesevhe*”. “*Tshisevhesevhe*” was both an entertainment activity and economic activity along the lines of a stockvel which was followed by other social activities such as dancing and beer-drinking. “*Tshisevhesevhe*” is similar to stokvels found in towns and township because during such occasions the host provided food, liquor and refreshment and items were bought by those who attended. The patrons also paid for each records played (Nefale, 1998: 39). There were children who were born on the farm. “The implication on them was that they grew up not knowing cultural and traditional celebratory activities like *tshikona*” and “*murundu*” (male traditional circumcision school) which was ritual, which all Venda boys had to go through (Interview with D.E. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). This being an “experience” which they had been missed.

## **6.5 Perceptions of Work and Rural Living Conditions: Livelihoods in the Luvuvhu Valley and Mauluma**

Generally, farm residents were alienated from the lifestyle in the rural areas, and they saw the present livelihood as extremely inadequate (Manona, 1988: 9). The changes that had been occurring in the farms in the past three decades had undermined what a little livelihood the people were able to obtain from land and have made it difficult for them to maintain their style of living. Out of the areas investigated, the following observations were made by farm workers as far as their work was concerned. According to Ravele ever since their land was taken away from them, they have just resorted to folding their arms, because they felt that there was nothing that they could do for themselves, except that they had to work for the whites. From this comment one could argue that these workers were referring to the 1913 Land Act which had restricted access to land and turned them into farm workers (Interview with the R. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

However, these were a number of farm workers who were disillusioned with life on these farms. They indicated that they came to work on the farms in order to wreck their bodies. "If you look at me you may think that I am old yet I am young, I look like this because I lead a hard life. Some of my age mates who grew up with me on these farms are in town. They look well and are fat. It would be better if I lived in town. There if you lose your job, you return to your house. Here you lose everything, your job and accommodation" (Interview with D.E. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). This means that life on farm was not good, it was difficult such that should arise and if one of the opportunities it would have been good to leave such job.

In conclusion one would argue that wages and conditions of farm workers were terrible. One wonders how workers coped in such a situation. This was because they had no choice. If workers had a choice, they would have left the farms or to stay on the farms and become organized. However, both choices had been limited because there were a number of government control measures in the past which made it difficult for farm workers to leave the farms and to look for alternative employment. In the past the government has relied mainly on the pass laws but has also tended to rely mainly on other measures for example the availability of housing, in many areas the only housing which was made available was on the farms. On the other hand, farm workers had so

little cash that was impossible to move. Many were in debt to the farmers and were not able to move unless the farmer agreed to cancel their debts.

## **6.6 Land Tenancy**

Land tenancy was most important because it tried to address one of the thorniest economic and political issues for the government. It dealt with the accessibility of land to farmworkers. Overpopulation in the reserves increased the pressure on the land. Due to population pressure, poverty increased and in order to uproot it, it implied not only the transformation of agriculture, but it included the redistribution of the land, but also the restructuring of the relations between capital and labour. Questions of power ownership were crucial since those who were powerless had no land rights and they had to move from the land to live permanently in the towns. Those who were left behind in the rural areas resorted to farm labour as an alternative means of employment and to eke out a living.

According to (Bundy, 1988: 40)., mine owners, white farmers and the South African government, denied African producers access to land and markets, while increasing labour and tax demands. Another source shares the same idea by indicating that under Mphaphu Vhavenda were denied the opportunity to produce food for themselves, they denied the opportunity to own land in their area and were also forced into labour for white settlers on the farms (Wilson and Ramphela, 1989: 40). The alliance between mine owners, farmers and the government spelled doom for that period and the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the deepening immiseration of African communities in the reserves and on the farms (William, 1986: 12). African tenants and sharecropper were soon under pressure as the state intervened in the interest of white commercial farmers. For example, for years in the Transvaal, the 1908 Tax Act had imposed a 2 (two) pound levy on the rent paying tenants, and in the Northern Transvaal some of these tenants were removed from white farms by direct government action. In the Orange River colony an Act had already been passed earlier in 1908 with the intention of prohibiting all forms of African tenancy other than labour tenancy. Years later this intervention became even more forceful with the enactment of the 1913 Land Act (William, 1986: 12). The government also provided a number of agricultural extension services and promoted white occupation and improvement of rural land. The result was that it became more

profitable for landowners to derive an income from the land through production rather than renting. The main victims of this trend towards white commercial farming were African peasant farmers.

Generally, though African rent-paying tenants were either evicted or called upon to enter into labour tenants' arrangements, those who were able to retain their cash tenancies were faced with rising rent (Maylam, 1989: 139). White demand for land also resulted in massive expropriation of African-occupied territory in the Luvuvhu Valley. The form of tenancy found in the Luvuvhu Valley was labour tenancy. Farmworkers in the Luvuvhu Valley rendered a certain amount of labour in return for the use, for residence and/ or for meagre wages (interview with Baloyi, 2020). The leasing of African land for cash was known as kaffir-farming. An inelegant phrase that, nevertheless, was accurately the source of non-production for the profit of landowners. The appropriation of surplus then, commonly occurred in the form of these feudal relationship on extensive lands of low cash value, a relationship which provided a short-term answer to white labour needs, which afforded a rent income to absentee proprietors and permitted for the development of a significant sector of Africa peasants, also referred to as the squatter peasant (Bundy, 1988: 45).

The 1913 Native Land Act provided for a far wider ranging segregation of white and African lands and the curtailment of the extension of African ownership, but also because it sought to mould the precise form of tenancy permitted on white farms. The Land Act ended both rent tenancy and stay sharecropping and installed labour tenancy as the dominant relationship of exploitation on the land. Delius, Trapido and Benart (1986: 23), challenge this view as a shift from landlord enforcing labour tenancy. They pointed to the importance of 'inboekseling' (indentured) labour system, that was instituted during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and insisted on the significance of a range of landlord and tenant relationships. The Boer notables, missionary societies and land companies forged differing relationships of exploitation with the African communities living on the lands which then laid claim of the lands. Rent tenancy was probably not so much of a feature of occupied Boer farms of land held largely for speculative purposes by companies and other absentee landlords.



## **6.7 Conclusion**

The chapter attempted to highlight the plight of farm workers in the Luvuvhu Valley. It also provided a background which was useful in locating the conditions of farm workers in a historical context. It also showed how the Raveles were turned into farm labourers in the Luvuvhu Valley, because of racially inspired legislation which widened the gap between the farm worker and white settler farmers. Colonial conquest and apartheid led to the unequal distribution of resources such as credit from the Land Bank. The chapter also highlighted both the working conditions and living conditions of farm workers on in farms around the Luvuvhu Valley and painted of exasperation, desperation and hopelessness which was also promoted by the white government to pin the African youth down in the farms for the rest of their lives without any prospect of any improvement in their socio-economic status, let alone their political outlook.

The next chapter deals with land restitution in the Luvuvhu Valley.

## Chapter 7

### Land Restitution in South Africa (1990-1998)

#### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the period between 1990 and 1998, during which time the process of discussions on cases of land, dispossessions, land claims and land restitution was getting underway. Accompanying this was that on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 1994 the ANC won the first ever democratic elections to be held in South Africa to set up a democratic government, during which elections it campaigned on the ticket of 'a better life for all' who lived in poverty. It also promised a better life for those who had been segregated and relocated from their land for the benefit of the white settler farmers (Levin et.al., 1998: 5). Addressing the issue of land redistribution, land restitution and rural development had been high on its agenda of reforms as promised in its election manifesto, which promised a better life for all those who lived in poverty (De Beer and Swanepoel, 2012: 2, 21; Cloete, 2012: 9, 10, 11; Iliffe, 2009: 278, 281, 286-287, 291; Shillington, 2005: 426, 477; Thornhill and Cloete, 2014: 14-15). The past had been characterised by those who had been segregated in relation to their homes and had often been relocated off the land for the benefit of the white settler farmers (Levin, et al. 1998: 5), as it has been outlined in the preceding chapter of the study. This is what Levin (1996:1), calls "the pursuit of a developmentalist version for South Africa" within which the democratic state hoped to address the "continuities and discontinuities with the past ...to determine what has been done and what has changed in the lives of those Africans whose land was taken away and who live in poverty, as a result of relocation." The current researcher is inclined to posit that the future plans of the new state were really noble and ambitious, given the socio-economic and political damage that had been inflicted on Africans over the years of colonialism and apartheid.

Following this South Africa's Restitution of Land Rights Act 23 of 1994 was enacted, in terms of which the constitutional provision that people unfairly relocated after 1913 were entitled either to restitution of that property or to compensation was given effect (Hall, 2004: 12). Right from the onset of the process of the restitution of land lost during colonialism and apartheid, most claims for restitution were lodged with the Commission

on the Restitution of Land Rights, which was established by the Act to solicit and investigate claims for restitution and to prepare them for settlement (Restitution of Land Rights Act 23 of 1994; Hall, 2004: 12). However, given the history of selfish white land ownership that was legislated by the previous administrations, the government was soon to experience land restitution failures, which in the case of the Luvuvhu Valley led the government imposing partnership on the claimants. There was on the one hand skills deficit among African groups that the government has inherited from the apartheid era, yet which had to be dealt with in delivering its promises such as restitution (Bradstock, 2004: 3; Walker et.al., 2010: 121; Hall 2010: 63).

Regardless of these imminent frustration over land restitution and redistribution, there is no gainsaying that the restitution of land ownership had become a central political issue in virtually all the countries that were under colonial rule. Colonial powers and white settlers from outside had dominated the property and ownership arena for many centuries. Therefore, Africans had no immediate alternative but to campaign for the return of their land that was taken by force by the colonial and apartheid governments. They argued that insecurity of property rights and land ownership had upheld the poverty and perennial social distress among them; in this particular instance the Raveles and the accompanying communities, among them women and children who down the years had been two vulnerable groups when property rights were not secured (Nonyana, 2003: 1). In essence what this meant was that without land restitution, they would remain poor and could not have any opportunity to execute their family rights. Therefore, land ownership was seen as the means to escape from continuous poverty and its harsh effects (Fraser, 2006: 299-311; Hall and Kepe, 2018: 131; Interview with M. Netshifhefhe, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2020). The current researcher has outlined in the preceding chapters how South Africa, black South Africans in general and the Ravele community in particular, had been affected by the forced removals, land dispossession and relocation. Flowing from above the next subtopic focusses on land restitution in South Africa.

## **7.2 Land Restitution Practices in South Africa**

During the last days of apartheid, South Africa's last white president, F.W. de Klerk (1991: 260) set along the path to allay the insecurities of his traditional white

constituency by attempting to sell his government's land restitution approach. The approach argued that the previously disadvantaged Africans could now participate with whites to reconstitute their land, since measures of control such as the Land Act of 1913 and the Natives Trust and Land Act of 1936 had been repealed (U.G. (Union of South Africa, 7-19: Land Act of 1913- Report of the Natives Land Commission, vol. II). According to him the removal of these restrictions was expected to lead to the restitution of commercial farms to Africans. However, Claassen (2008: 5) argues against the approach because of the lack of funds to reconstitute such land at market prices of that period. To aggravate the situation, very few African people in the rural areas had money to reconstitute their land because the majority of them lived below the poverty line. This means that those targeted for restitution, who were in the majority of the victims of the brutal forced removals, would remain poor and destitute and, in the process, this would perpetuate further inequalities. Consequently, the white settler farmers in the Luvuvhu Valley would remain in advantageous positions because they had the resources accumulated during the colonial and apartheid period of dispossession. The result has been that to date the Luvuvhu Valley has maintained its white settler's population composition. Therefore, although the legislation that had dealt with the land issue and had resultantly excluded African from owning land had been repealed, the market value of the same land was effectively used to exclude the same Africans from owning land alongside white settlers (U.G. (Union of South Africa) 7-19: Land Act of 1913. Report of the Natives Land Commission, vol. II; Hall and Kepe, 2018: 131-132; Hall, Wisborg, Shirinda and Zamchiya 2013: 57). In other words, in this way the market was perpetuated the legacy of the past. Furthermore, removing restrictions and giving African the right to buy land did not address the claims of the communities that had been forcibly removed (Claassen, 2008: 5). The question remained therefore, as to how communities were going to respond to such an approach when their ancestral homes were being put on the market. The current researcher would like to believe that it is no wonder that the recent years have seen the widespread of violent land invasions by frustrated Africans: an exercise that has been manipulated to the advantage of some political parties like the EFF (Interview with M. Netshifhefhe, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2022).

Claassen (2008: 5) further remarked that, in order "for land to be given to someone who does not have, it has to be taken away from someone who does". In simple terms the author's veiled insinuations seem to be along the approach of the late Zimbabwe's

President Mugabe's of Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP). On the other hand, Dorner (1972: 48) has noted that the only major way to acquire land for restitution purposes has been through expropriation and confiscation, which proved to be successful in Chile, Japan and Mexico. Despite the successes of expropriation and confiscation in other countries, the ANC government has opted for the market approach, which has been characterised by pitfalls, with neighboring Zimbabwe providing a living example of such failures (Department of Land Affairs: White Paper on South African Land Policy, Pretoria, 1993; BBC News, 1989). This market approach was a product of a negotiated settlement during the Congress for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). In this regard, Alexander (1994: 325-326) has noted that this approach is the root of Zimbabwe's economic failures. However, it suffices to say that the ANC was forced to shift from its economic policy of nationalization to negotiate a settlement and to dance to the tune of leading international agencies like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) (Cliffe, 2000: 276). These institutions have been influencing the economic policies of every country in the world since they have depended on them for decades economically. Therefore, the market approach was a product of pressures from these groups and not from the ANC since its Freedom Charter stressed the need to end famine as "land shall be shared among those who work on it (Freedom Charter for South Africa, 1954, adopted in 1955). However, Cliffe (2000: 48) has noted that "a collection of papers of international experience or of South African realities and designed to yield a model for the right policy choice, were authored by interconnected experts from the World Bank". Their influence was fed into the policy - making the process through a series of conferences and other dialogues with the ANC, government and activists from the early 1990s" (Cliffe, 276: 276; Hall, 2011: 127; Hall and Cousins, 2011: 18; Hall, 2009: 15, 62). This means that the approach was a result of the thinking tanks of the World Bank, as one of the foreign agencies that have created the economic conditions in which the already rich could get richer, while the poor get poorer.

Meanwhile, in the past white settler community along the Luvuvhu Valley were given land that had been grabbed from Africans for free. They were also provided with seeds and implements by the white government to establish themselves, whilst the Ravele community amongst others, were removed to barren areas so that they could remain perpetual servants for whites (HT, interview between S. Dowling and Mrs. Mulder, 1987).

One could argue that in order to redress the past injustices, that the very same political mindset used by the racist government to expropriate land from Africans should be used to expropriate land from white settlers. However, the government finds itself in a predicament because it has been unable to expropriate land from white settlers without compensation because of the millions of rands that are being contributed by these landowners in the form of taxes (Hall and Williams, 2003: 103; Hall, 2010: 182). Accordingly, these white settler farmers are/ were regarded producing enough food for consumption in South Africa whilst surplus produce was exported to other countries; thus, they are an important segment of food security in the country. Therefore, expropriating land from these white settler farmers would mean loss of revenue for the government both locally and internationally, since there has always been a belief that Africans, particularly those within the former, homelands did not have the capacity to practice expert agricultural production. Moreover, the post-apartheid state was highly fragmented politically and it was still in the process of consolidation. Democratic South Africa was politically divided and still in the process of unity. Therefore, within the democratic South Africa we still find architects of apartheid working in the new democratic offices (Hall, 2010: 21; Everington and Jannecke, 2006: 549). They remain influential in the design and conceptualization of post-apartheid social transformation. The result has been that policies developed from these offices have ignored restitution, particularly land restitution in the rural areas (Interview with an official from the Limpopo Land Claims Commission, 26<sup>th</sup> December 2020).

The essence of the market approach was that land had to change hands based on a "willing buyer and willing seller" principle (White Paper on Land Policy, 1997: 5). This meant that; white landowners had to volunteer to sell their land, because they were operating in a free market economy. In order for the government to acquire land for restitution, white settler farmers had to sell it, if they were not selling, such land could not be taken away from them. One may argue that the approach depended largely on the mercy of white settler landowners who must be willing to sell. On the other hand, it was assumed that the dispossessed masses were "willing buyers" who could be assisted by the government to buy that land for agricultural purposes (White Paper on Land Policy, 1997: 5). This approach did not take into account that the dispossessed communities like the Raveles did not volunteer to be destitute, but they were forced by colonial and apartheid policies. The result of this voluntary transaction was that white

settler farmers were not willing to sell their land. It was also difficult for them to give up the wealth they had accumulated during the colonial and apartheid dispensation, and therefore venturing a new lifestyle would be difficult for them because they would need to make "major adjustments" when they resettle somewhere, even in the event of being adequately compensated (TA, DLA, M. Nkatingi Papers, 199/97. Letter from the Secretary for Lands to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 16 June 1937; De Wet, 1994: 371). De Wet (1994: 371) further makes a point that "farmers moving off the land had to find an alternative source of income, and many farmers have few professional qualifications" This means that if white settler farmers sell their farms, they would starve, since they would be unable to compete with others in the job market. Consequently, if white settlers were not selling their land, restitution would not work hence, the poor would remain poor. According to Nefale (2000: 67) an officer of the Nkuzi Development Association (NDA) observed that "white settler farmers in the Luvuvhu Valley have demonstrated unwillingness to sell their farms. However, there was one farmer who was insolvent and as such was forced to sell his farm within six months in order to pay the bank." Such a white settler farmer could hardly be classified as a willing seller because he was under pressure as he needed money urgently. Therefore, such a farmer could be classified as a willing seller but was just not prepared to wait for the bureaucracies involved in the process of restitution which could have lasted up to 18 (eighteen) months. In this regard one ex-farmworker, S. Shirinda (Interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020) commented that:

*We were assisting farm workers and farmers residents to buy the farm they were occupying. The farmer was calling us three times a day saying how far was the project. We were charged with the responsibility of drafting a proposal to the Department of Land Affairs (DLA). DLA had to come back to us and we were supposed to hold meetings with the white settler farmer, farm workers and farm residents. But within three months the white settler farmer called us and said he had already sold the farmers to another white person.*

Despite the long process experienced by willing sellers, the beneficiaries of the restitution programme were required to provide the DLA with a "business proposed plan" (Interview with Shirinda, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020). This has proved to be an obstacle to restitution for the poor in the Luvuvhu Valley, especially the Ravele community. Such

business plans were expected to explain how people would use portions of the farms, how they would plough, how many cattle they would have and how they would use water and labour (TA, DLA, M. Nkatingi Papers, 199/97. Letter from the Secretary for Lands to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 16 June 1937; Interview with Shirinda, 2020; Lahiff, 2007: 1577). The result was that business plans that were prepared by such people were heavily criticized by the DLA, which argued that people would not use the land effectively because the income generation from such plans was not viable. After all, the DLA knew very well that the people would be unable to come up with such plans because, not only were they poor, but also lacked the expertise to draw such plans. The potential beneficiaries of the restitution programme would then believe that was another measure by the DLA (government) to deny them of access to the land; hence the impression was that the programme was perpetuating the inequalities of the past (Commission for the Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR), 2007: Memorandum in terms of Section 42D of the Restitution of Land Rights Act, Polokwane, Limpopo Province; Lahiff, 2007: 1581). They also believed that business plans were not necessary for people who wanted to use the land to sustain themselves. Therefore, it seemed as if the purpose of restitution, and as such of providing the poor with land for residential and productive purposes to improve their livelihoods had been forgotten (White Paper, 1993: ix). People did not understand such bureaucratic nitty-gritties because to them business plans were meant for those venturing into commercial farming with the aim of applying for grants and subsidies. Nevertheless, impoverished communities like Raveles believed that they were entitled to apply for a grant allocated by the government regardless of business plans (White Paper: 1993: ix). The purpose of the grant was to help impoverished communities like Raveles to finance the land, to improve their homes, infrastructure and to buy farming equipment. Therefore, these plans might have been required in order to choose, among others, individuals who qualified for such an amount because the government would be unable to subsidize all land for the needy people of the country. The result was that not even a single family in the Luvuvhu Valley amongst them, the Ravele community and the Limpopo Province in general, benefited from this programme or were even able to access the grant. One may argue therefore, that there seemed to be confusion among government officials who appeared not to understand the purpose of land restitution. Such confusion stemmed out of their pre-occupation with the notion that restitution of land to small emergent farmers could lead to the collapse of agricultural output, the end-result of which would impact on the economy (Commission for the



Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR), 2007: Memorandum in terms of Section 42D of the Restitution of Land Rights Act, Polokwane, Limpopo Province, 2007; General Agriculture and Plantation Workers' Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ) Statement, 18 October 2008).

On the other hand, in the Limpopo Province, the farmers who wanted to sell their farms because they were willing were only available between 1996 and 1997 in the vicinity of Waterpoort, an area north of the Soutpansberg Mountains. Such farmers were selling their farms at high prices (Interview with S. Shirinda, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020). This problem of white settler farmers charging high prices was not only unique to South Africa, as Namibia and Zimbabwe reportedly experienced it as well (Manenzhe et al, 2015: 157). The high prices they were charging demonstrated their unwillingness to sell and their intention not to part with their land. Despite the fact that prices charged were high, farms in the Luvuvhu Valley were very far from the Ravele community's new settlement of New Mauluma (Commission for the Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR), 2007: Memorandum in terms of Section 42D of the Restitution of Land Rights Act, Polokwane, Limpopo Province, 2007; Nefale, 2000: 72). This proved to be a thorn on the side of this community because the question of distance came into the picture, as to how they were going to work on such farms if restituted. The main object of these people was to use the land and not to stay on the land. All they wanted was to use the land that was next to them, where they could walk, work but sleep at home. The result was that the poorest of the poor did not benefit because they did not have funds or transport facilities in their areas. Therefore, they lost interest on this restitution programme because it was not working for them. They no longer believed that the government wanted to buy land for them and by so doing extend basic services to them (Interview with an unnamed official from Limpopo Land Claims Commission, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020).

Immediately after their unbanning in 1990, the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) had popularised a version of Land restoration through slogans such as "Mavibuye i Africa and Izwe lethu i Africa" (Sepaela, 2006: 1). This led to the general assumption that the new period would be characterised by redress and restoration of land to Africans, amongst them the Ravele community. While such assumptions were true, it also appeared as if their implementation plans would fall short of the people's expectations. Following the democratic elections in 1994, the South African parliament

promulgated the Restitution of Land Rights Act 22 of 1994 (Restitution of Land Right Act of 1994). The aim was to provide for restitution of rights in land in respect of persons or communities like the Ravele community who were dispossessed under the controversial and racially based laws. This would be achieved through the establishment of a Commission on Land Rights and a Land Claims Court. The implication was that when communities lodged a claim with the Commission on Land Rights they would be acting within the Constitution of South Africa of 1996. However, the very same Constitution of 1996 also protected and entrenched private and individual property rights (Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994; Thome, 1993: 106). The former Minister of Land Affairs, Derek Hanekom referred to the "Constitution as a compromise document." However, rural people at the Community Land Conference in 1994 criticized the Constitution as it would hinder land restoration (Commission for the Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR), 2007: Memorandum in terms of Section 42D of the Restitution of Land Rights Act, Polokwane, Limpopo Province, 2007; Thome, 1993: 106).

Alexander (2000: 325) has noted that "constraints of a negotiated independence" in Zimbabwe could shed light on these constitutional debates and serve as lessons for South Africa. The author argued that countries that gained independence through negotiations with the oppressors have led to the entrenchment of property clauses, and how proprietors should be compensated during expropriation. According to the same author (2000: 325), this has affected Zimbabwe's land redistribution programme adversely because it made it difficult to alienate property protected by such clauses, hence leaving the economy dominated by white settler farmers. Since the transfer of power in South Africa was achieved through negotiations, Claassen (1993: 6) contends that F.W. de Klerk had claimed that "white title to land would remain secure and protected", with the end result that this guaranteed that South Africa would economically remain in white settler hands and thus delay the provision of a better life for all (Henricks, 1990: 18; Hall and Williams, 2003: 103; Kingsley, 1999: 173).

Such properties were actually a power structure, which empowers the owners by granting them exclusive access to owned resources while dispossessing the landless by denying them access to own land. Therefore, ownership of property empowered some sectors of the society at the expense of others. The argument therefore was that the entrenchment of these clauses within the South African Constitution served to

perpetuate inequalities within our society, because they were protecting properties acquired under colonialism and apartheid through forced removals. Since the Luvuvhu Valley was privately owned by white settlers it would, therefore, remain under white settler control, denying the dispossessed an opportunity for restoration (Department of Land Affairs (DLA), White Paper on South Africa's Land Policy, Pretoria, 1997; Claassen, 1993: 103).

Besides entrenching rights accumulated under apartheid, the South African Constitution of 1996, in conjunction with the property clause, could also be seen from another perspective as a document that laid down rules which would regulate the smooth-running process on how people could be restored to their dispossessed land. Such claims could only be done through Land Claims Courts and Land Commissions. Through the South African Constitution, the government could have allowed people to settle on any land. However, this would have created a recipe for lawlessness in the form of land invasions and squatting on white settlers' private property. Those who invaded other people's land would have been trespassing and thus contravening the South African Constitution, which would have been a punishable offence (Commission for the Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR), 2007: Memorandum in terms of Section 42D of the Restitution of Land Rights Act, Polokwane, Limpopo Province, 2007; Buckle, 1995: 66).

In Western societies title deeds provide owners of property with tangible proof of their place and a sense of belonging to a society (Buckle, 1995: 66) White settlers farmers in the Luvuvhu Valley own that land by virtue of title deeds. According to Claassen (1993: 103) this shows that whites have "vested interests" in such land, on the basis that they have bought the land, and as such, they could sell and transfer it if and as they wanted. However, those who were relocated from the Luvuvhu Valley argue that they did not recognise such documents because "they took away our land for free." They argue that white settlers were "given title deeds because they fought in the Second World War and the South Africa War (Anglo-Boer War), while Africans were merely given bicycles". The communities that were relocated from the Luvuvhu Valley had vested their interests to the land in question by virtue of their traditional birth right. What was evident from these comments was the perception by the relocated communities that they would only recognise title deeds as valid if the land had been bought from them (Harries, 2004: 169-71).

In all these situations, both Africans and white settlers have personal stakes in the land of the Luvuvhu Valley, both legally and customarily. What has emerged in this situation was conflicting interests between Africans and white settlers over land. Such conflict of interests has to be resolved through the Land Claims Court, which was charged with the duty of resolving claims without causing conflict (Restitution of Land Rights Act 22 of 1994). Based on the notion of “willing buyer - willing seller” one could argue that the courts intended to make white settlers “willing sellers” who would charge enormous amounts of money for the sale of their land at current market rates (Lahiff, 2007: 1577). Claassen (1993: 103) notes that "...white landowners were worried that their land would be appropriated without fair compensation since they have made improvement on the land". While communities such as the Matumbas and the Ratomboas on the one hand, agree that white settlers should be compensated for the improvement they have made on the land, on the other the Raveles have argued that they should not be compensated because the land was never bought from them in the first place, but forcefully taken away from them (Interview with Adolf Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022). One therefore, may argue that compensation should not be paid while expropriating land from white settler farmers, because it was not fair to compensate them while the Ravele amongst others were relocated forcefully from the Luvuvhu Valley without compensation. If such white settlers were compensated, the Raveles would in the process be buying back their birthright in the form of the land, the land which they never sold in the first place (Interview with T.B. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). In a different context, Levin (1997: 11) has noted that "if someone comes at night and steals your pair of shoes, and if there were slight changes made on them, do you expect him to pay for such changes made on them"? In short, therefore, compensation was not possible because it was acquired through unlawful means.

However, arguments such as these were against the spirit of reconciliation, which the land restitution programme seeks to achieve. The current researcher believes that land restitution seeks to prevent conflict between the claimants and that the present owners within the Luvuvhu Valley appear to be fuelling conflict. According to Shirinda the white settler farmers have directed this conflict to farm workers and dwellers who they have frequently evicted from farms because of old age or disability (Interview with S. Shirinda, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020). In one instance an elderly woman was evicted because she was brutally savaged by dogs belonging to a neighbouring white settler farmer while on duty

in 1998, to the extent that she was crippled on the arm (Interview with T. Samba, ex-Luvuvhu Valley farm worker and a victim, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020). This meant that her services were no longer needed by the white settler farmer. Despite the fact that farm workers and dwellers were protected by the Extension of Security of Tenure Act (ESTA) 62 of 1997, farmers in the Northern Province (now known as the Limpopo Province) have continuously evicted workers without following proper procedures and got away with it, mainly because such farm dwellers were not aware of their rights: they did not know where to get help (Government Gazette No. 18467, 1997; Wegerif and Grundling, 2005: 1). However, conflict also arose after the death of workers on the farms, those with no other place to stay other than on the farms where they had worked and lived for a long time. Furthermore, white settler farmers have frequently denied such workers the burial rights on their farms because of fear that such graves would be used for restitution purposes. As a result, white settler farmers in the Luvuvhu Valley have agreed that they would only allow such workers to be buried on condition that, they formally agree that the presence of their family graves would not be used as grounds for restitution of the same land (Interview with S. Shirinda, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020; Hendricks, 1990: 1).

### **7.3 The Beneficiaries of Land Restitution in the Luvuvhu Valley**

Levin (1997: 111) has noted that "the process of land restitution based on historical claims demands means that the beneficiaries be clearly identified." In this instance the communities claiming to be *bonafides* of the Luvuvhu Valley were those of Ravele, Matumba, Ratombo, Mashau, Shigalo, Matidza, Makatu and Masakona, who have been claiming the land because it was their ancestral land (Mirror, Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May 1998). Most of these claimants were *mahosi* and *magota* who were the direct descendants of the relocated communities and who had organised themselves into groups with other members of the community to lodge their claims with the NDA. On the other hand, the NDA had the responsibility of making sure that claims lodged complied with the terms laid down by the Restitution Clause that the removal must have been carried out after 19 June 1913 (TA, DLA, Nkatingi Papers, Government Notice No. 176/308, No. 2029). Therefore, and unfortunately, the NDA did not only cater only for those removed after 1913. Shirinda (Interviewed on 15 November 2020) stated that, "it would be useless to entertain their claim because they would be acting unconstitutionally and that there was no chance to get the land back" (Interview with Shirinda, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020). This was

a narrow interpretation of restitution as people were dispossessed of their land rights under racially based laws.

An important aspect that dominated the perception of the communities like the Raveles, and others, as claimants for the restitution of the Luvuvhu Valley, was the common thread that ran through their perceptions on the oppressive and racially discriminatory law that had deprived them of their God-given livelihood. They associated their forced removal, dispossession and relocation more closely to the physical occupation of farms by white settlers in 1937 and to establishment of the forestry plantations as well as the accompanying irrigation scheme. Strongly embedded in their memories were the first removals of the Ravele community between 1921 and 1923, more than the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 (Nefale, 2000: 15; Mirror, Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May 1998). One may argue therefore that, although the legislation that were instrumental in their relocation was enacted in 1913 and 1936, for most people the ramifications of such laws became apparent following the occupation of farms by white settlers (TA, DLA, 3148, 1733, vol. 2. Report from Grimbeeck to the Central Land Board, 13 July 1937. Harries Collection: Interview between Harries and Chief Khamanyani, 1987).

An example is that of *Hosi* Khamanyane and his community, who were removed from New Barrotta in 1958 as part of the project to establish the Luvuvhu Settlement Scheme whereafter they were relocated in the Groot Spelonken District, and the other community from Driefontein who were removed between 1970 and 1971 in terms of Natives Land Act 1913 and Natives Trust and Land Act of 1936. Khamanyane and these communities perceived their relocation as a result of the apartheid laws implemented by homeland governments of Venda and Gazankulu (Harries Collection: Interview between Harries and Chief Khamanyani, 1987). One Tambani from Valdezia added that what was evident in their testimony was the notion of going home to Giyani where other Vatsonga/Machangana were dominantly settled, whilst on the other hand, labour tenants perceived their removal as being a result of the objective of the authorities to expropriate forced labour for the farms, and that their livestock were not wanted on the farms (TA, DLA, 3148, 1733, vol. 2. Report from Grimbeeck to the Central Land Board, 13 July 1937; Harries Collection: Interview between Harries and Chief Khamanyani, 1987; Harries Collection: Interview with Tambane, Valdezia, 1984). The impact of these relocations on these communities were aware that what happened was fundamentally

because of discriminatory laws. This was demonstrated by these communities' initiatives to lodge the claims for restitution even before they knew about the existence of the NDA, whereafter they were the ones who approached the Association for more assistance (TA, DLA, Nkatingi Papers, Government Notice No. 176/308, No. 2029; Hall, 2003: 7).

Murray (1994: 315) observed that beneficiaries need to be asked questions as to what form of land restitution they need. This meant that the beneficiaries would be directly involved in solving their plight rather than being told what to do. The experience from Zimbabwe has proved that decisions taken by experts at national level without involving popular participation were detrimental to land restitution and that people were not encouraged to decide for themselves but to believe that the experts know best. The result was that the problems facing the communities were not tackled directly (Alexander, 1994: 322; GAPWUZ, 11 October 2008). However, this has apparently served as a lesson for the South Africa government because, as noted by Levin (1997: 3), the era of transition to democracy (1990-1994) emphasised popular participation in the formulation of policy documents. Such practices of popular participation had been marginalized in the transition from apartheid to development. According to Levin (1997: 31) the implication was that policy formulation has remained centralized and top-down in a character dictated by forces of economic growth and development, which were in contradiction with the improvement of the quality of people's lives. The point that the current researcher intends to drive home is that the people of the Luvuvhu Valley want restoration of their land rights, which they believe would greatly improve their quality of life. "However, such a need was complicated by the fact that such farms were playing a significant role in the economic sector of South Africa". As a result, the claimants would be made to accept terms formulated from the top-down without their full participation and understanding of underlying issues. This includes the return of original land, alternative land, and monetary compensation or prioritization in access to government housing and land development programmes (White Paper on South African Land Policy. 1993: xi; Interview with an unnamed official from the Limpopo Land Claims Commission, 2th December 2020). However, Alexander (1994: 325) further argued that when people lodged their claims, they had to be sure that such possibilities would apply to them and that they could not dictate what possibilities they wanted from the Land Commission. Since the first option of restitution for land was impossible, people would be forced to settle for alternatives which they did bargain for. The result has been that this has

effectively suppressed the idea of popular participation in land restitution. In the Land Charter that was compiled in 1994 during the Community Land Conference in Bloemfontein, rural communities made it clear that they wanted land that was "stolen from them to be returned with compensation for damages and losses suffered due to their forced removal" (Buckle, 1995: 66). It seems as if the Conference held in Bloemfontein was intended to give rural communities an opportunity to voice their problems so that they could have faith in, and vote for, the ANC in the elections of 1994. However, communities such as the Raveles who had been relocated from the Luvuvhu Valley, such that by virtue of the distance were left out of the proceedings (DLA, Department of Land Affairs White Paper on South Africa's Land Policy, Pretoria, 1993). Be that as it may, the Raveles' priority has always been restitution of their land rights; and according to them, basic services such as access to clean water, electricity, health care facilities and jobs would come later. According to Manenzhe (2015: 137) tendencies of continuing with the past, wherein the poor were having no say in matters affecting them and for them, would imply that there is no new SA until "there was land, services and growth."

#### **7.4 The Role of *Mahosi* in land Restitution**

Turning to the affected communities, a key issue was what the role of *mahosi* in restitution should be or should have been from the onset. As has been noted elsewhere (Regan and Gilmartin, 2003:15; Claassen, 2001: 32), the post-apartheid government has not sufficiently challenged traditional authorities in the former homelands in pertinent matters that affect communities under them. According to Regan and Gilmartin (2003: 639) *mahosi* retain the powers to control spaces in *de facto* homelands, and mostly function on the principle of hereditary rule, and exercise traditional customary law in these areas which area fundamentally rural. Thus, while the Constitution of South Africa of 1996 has abolished the homelands, as enshrined a Bill of Rights, and also accorded equal rights to women and men, the situation in the former homelands highlighted contradictions within this important document (Government Gazette, 2009. Traditional Leadership and Governance Frameworks Act (Act No. 23) vol. 535, No. 32904). The continued strength of *mahosi* has meant that, in land restitution in general, and restitution in particular, the government has had to reconcile its determination to transfer



land with their presence, which *mahosi* have the potential to undermine the egalitarian character of land restitution.

In investigating restitution of land rights in the Luvuvhu Valley, one area of focus in this study has been the internal dynamics of the claimant communities, especially with regards to the role of *mahosi*. For example, as beneficiaries the Raveles, whose ancestors (and displaced rulers of the Valley) were displaced from the land in the Luvuvhu Valley in the late 1930s were claiming their land under their *Gota/Khosi* Ravele (Government Gazette, 2009. Traditional Leadership and Governance Frameworks Act (Act No. 23) vol. 535, No. 32904). They were subsequently granted alternative land to the one that was dispossessed by the Union of South Africa, which is at present-day Mauluma, some 20 (twenty) kilometres from the Old Mauluma in the Luvuvhu Valley. Today the village boasts around 5000 (five thousand) inhabitants, many of whom were not members of the restitution claimant community. Furthermore, only 22% (Twenty-two percent) of the registered beneficiaries reside in Mauluma. The late *Gota* Nndwakhulu Frank Ravele was one of the influential leaders in the former Venda homeland. However, he was the one who formed the land claims committee and became its leader before he died.

Regardless of this the Raveles remain in their position as rulers of New Mauluma to date, such that even the new traditional leader has not been able to replace him as a *khosi* in the New Mauluma (Government Notice, R167 of June, Venda Territorial Authority. Minutes of the First Session, 1969, 6-9 October). Not surprisingly, given all of the meetings that *mahosi* have attended with government officials, non-government organizations (NGOs) and strategic partners, the leadership of the Ravele beneficiaries has acquired considerable knowledge of the claim, the legal and procedural process, and on how the land would be used under the term of the strategic partnership. They said that many of the inhabitants of Mauluma who should have registered and signed the claimant documents did not sign up on the beneficiaries' register because they believed that by registering, they would have to move back to the land (Mahosi, 2020: 31-32; Derman et.al., 2010: 318-19); which one could consider as a drawback from a lay man's perspective. The current researcher is of the view that such scenarios should have been explained the beneficiaries or the grandchildren to the letter, so that they

could understand that those who were reluctant to move back to Old Mauluma and/ or the Luvuvhu Valley were entitled to compensation.

*Mahosi* were complicit in the implementation of the discriminatory government laws during the apartheid era and its various legislation among them land dispossession. Therefore, as explicitly put by Levin (1997: 350) "...land allocation constitutes the fundamental material basis of the power of *mahosi* and was also the most crucial mechanism for the interplay of corruption and control." Be that as it may, the relationship between *mahosi* and the apartheid regime led to their decline in popularity amongst the people (Proclamation R12 of 193. Venda becomes a self-governing state, Republic of Venda; Verbatim Report (Hansard) of the Fourth Session of the Second National Assembly, 20 March-17 September 1987, vol. 29, No. 7, Thohoyandou, Government Printer; Status of Transkei Act, 1976 (100/ 1976); Status of Bophuthatswana Act (89/1977). Consequently, it is no wonder that during apartheid they were attacked, especially during the 1980s, which trend changed after the unbanning of the liberation movement such *mahosi* were once more used to organise people in the struggle for democracy despite their unpopularity within the colonial and apartheid trajectory (Levin, 1997: 350). This main reason behind this was that in the rural areas *mahosi* still enjoyed a degree of influence over their followers, and as a result the belief was that they could help rally the rural masses behind the Biblical "road to Damascus". This saw progressive *mahosi* within the homelands forming alliances with the liberation movement in an attempt to consolidate their hold over prospective land allocation. On the other hand, Walker (2005: 355; Pillay and Prinsloo, 1995: 13-14) has made the observation that the "South African Constitution as a whole recognises the institutions of *vuhosi* and customary law and makes some attempt to incorporate traditional leaders into government at an advisory and ex officio level. The South African Constitution also provides for the establishment of a National Council of Traditional Leaders and a provincial house of *mahosi*, with the authority to advise and make proposals to their respective levels of government, but not to initiate or veto any Act" (Walker, 2005: 355).

It therefore also became pertinent whether *mahosi* like the Raveles still had a role to play in land restitution matters when the land was being returned to the previous communities of the Luvuvhu Valley, which also brought their popularity to the former residents of the Luvuvhu Valley into focus. It is for this reason that the current researcher

raised the concern of *mahosi* like Ravele claiming for restitution of the land within the Luvuvhu Valley and "...who purported that they were doing that on behalf of their subjects (TA, DLA, M. Nkatingi Papers, 199/97, Letter from the Secretary for Lands to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 16 June 1937; Nefale, 2000: 45). This showed that the *mahosi* within the dispossessed and relocated communities were being looked at by their followers as people who could correct the mistakes of the past their behalf, regardless of them having been complicit in the system. One may also argue that such *mahosi* lodged claims on their behalf of such communities so that they could be seen to play a role in the event of getting their land back; but such a role could have been motivated by the desire to control the forces of production and continue to receive tribute from their people (Government Gazette, 2009, 13638 of 1991, Traditional Leadership and Government Frameworks Act (Act No. 23) vol. 535, No. 32904).

The extent of the popularity of *mahosi* could only be ascribed to the fact that the majority of people were still illiterate, and that culture and tradition still had some semblance as dominant facets of their lives, hence they accepted the word of *mahosi* as final. This was evident in some meetings as commented by Shirinda who remarked that "... the subjects could not talk or make decisions when *mahosi* were absent. Even if they were not happy with the decision taken by the *mahosi*, they did not have the platform to challenge him as it was taboo according to our culture" (Interview with S. Shirinda, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020). The only platform used to challenge the authority of *mahosi* was through refusal by certain members of the society to pay traditional or customary levies, as a way of showing that the communities were not happy with the decisions taken as they were not consulted. Those who refused to pay levies were denied access to letters of confirmation written by *mahosi* so that they could qualify for opportunities such as credit loans, opening bank accounts and recommendation for employment (Interview with S. Shirinda, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020). This could have also been used in future to deny such people access to plots to plough, which represented a manipulation of the worst kind by a leader who people had put the trust in.

Matumba indicated that *mahosi* still had a role to play within their communities in future. Such a role consisted of "...their power to allocate land to their subjects, to give them food and to get tribute from them" (Interviewed on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020). Despite the fact that in the past *mahosi* in the Luvuvhu Valley proved to be popular, though with little

opposition, De Wet (1994: 368) has observed the same and made a point that such opposition to the power of *mahosi* could lead to "settlement problems". In this instance, problems would arise between those who challenged the authority of the *mahosi*. The current researcher is of the view that such groups of people opened themselves to be discriminated against in land allocation and as such, they would not have wanted *mahosi* to have the authority to allocate land to the community. This was of course a pipe dream because *mahosi* have been placed by law to administer the rural areas, and by implication the rural people, on behalf of the government. Equally, the land policy recognized the role that *mahosi* had to play in land restitution programmes. It has been maintained by law that *mahosi* should be allowed to continue exercising rights on land and/ or communal land as most land had been so held in the past. It has been recognized that the underlying principle under communal tenure was that the principle of freedom of choice was upheld and that changes to the communal systems could take place only on agreement by members. However, the potential for conflict that might result from this system has also been recognised by government. Consequently, the government has recommended that royal councils should operate democratically and in ways that would not undermine the constitutionally entrenched basic human rights (Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa. 1990/91. African National Congress (ANC); White paper on South African Land Policy, 1993: 31-32).

Despite such assurances, the DLA did not put in place structures that would monitor people's access to land rights within communal systems. As noted by Shirinda, "...most *mahosi* think the land belongs to them, they do not understand the rights allocated to them by the DLA" ((Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa. 1990/91. African National Congress (ANC); Interview with S. Shirinda, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020). This misunderstanding could have resulted in *mahosi* violating the democratic rights of their followers, and therefore the object of alleviating poverty would be an ideal. As a solution to this problem, Walker (2005: 356) has suggested the "democratization of chieftainship" and claims that would be achieved "through popular education, monitoring and the enforcement of the rule of law," while the author further opines that "...the other option would be to vest the control of such land rights in democratically elected committees, which would hold office for five years". Levin et al. (1994: 163) has remarked that in Mpumalanga this might be an explosive issue, as *vuhosi* without the rights to allocate land would be dangerous and useless. Equally, transferring such responsibilities to

allocate land to democratically elected committees has been seen to be a recipe for conflict because municipalities and royal councils have always been on a collision course in many places in South Africa over the same issue.

## **7.5 Property Rights**

A clear understanding of what the concept “property” and “property rights” entailed was necessary for the development of a relevant ethical approach to the issue of land allocation. Regarding the concept of property, De Waal. Currie and Erusmus (2001: 413) state that property is a word with such variety of meanings that it was almost impossible to accurately and exhaustively define it. For this reason, lawyers in the Roman Dutch legal tradition prefer to conceptualize property as a legal relationship between persons and corporal (physical tangible) things. In the law of property, property was narrowly defined as the object of the relationship, the physical object of a real right while a property right was defined as an abstract legal relationship which signifies that:

- A legal relationship exists between the owner and a thing (legal object) in terms of which the owner acquires certain entitlements in respect of the thing; and that
- A legal relationship exists between the owner and other legal subjects with regard to the thing in terms of which the owner could force other legal subjects to respect his exercise of the entitlement in respect of the thing.

## **7.6 A Legal Relationship**

According to Van de Walt and Pienaar (2002: 53) a legal relationship refers to an indefinite entitlement between two or more parties which may vary from time to time in respect of the same legal relationship, or from one legal relationship to another legal relationship, and which is restricted by statutory measures, limited real rights, other persons rights and the interest of the community. In this respect Devenwash (1999: 351) opines that a property was therefore not restricted to land. However, the investigation of this study focussed on land as a property. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, it would also be necessary to distinguish between the concept of “property rights” and “communal land ownership”. The concept of property rights in any given community was

determined by legal, economic, religious, political and philosophic considerations and the news regarding ownership of property. Property rights in the developed world were mostly seen as an individual right of a person. An individual as a juristic person could own land and buy the land and in turn sell it as they would. In addition, the land could be subjected to inheritance according to the wish of the owner. Van de Walt and Pienaar (2002: 46) further quote the case of *Gien n Gien* in South Africa in 1979, where it was stated, *inter alia*, that “a property right was described as the most complete real right that a person could have with regard to property”. The point of this departure concerning property is that a person could use his own property as he or she would as long as this was within the limits set by the law.

However, in Africa, and in other areas of the developing world, property rights have come to refer to the rights of a particular community instead of an individual such that this translates into a communal type of a relationship. In other words, the situation was more or less similar to the view of property right held by the indigenous people of North America, which Van der Waal and Pienaar (2000: 46; Khapoya, 1994: 72) have also explained that Native American lands were held communally and not as a private property. However, during the early colonial times in South Africa, whites naively and deliberately perceived the southern part of the African continent as basically unoccupied. In the same manner they also held the view that the same land was underutilized and could therefore be occupied and cultivated in a proper manner by white settlers. However, the current researcher would like to argue that the concept of an unoccupied land and an underutilized has never been here nor there but was just the colonizers historical pretext aggrandize the land from the rightful owners. Even if it could be argued that African, in this case in South Africa, was taken through treaties that were entered into between the colonizers and African rulers, the latter either did this under duress or they were clouded by ignorance of the contents of the treaties (Richardsson, 2005: 541-2). In essence fraudulent intentions or schemes were perpetrated by the white colonizers which if needed sheer force was employed to achieve the end to the means: such could be explicitly understood if one were to revisit the history of numerous territorial wars around the Kei River between the whites and AmaXhosa, the Makhado versus the Boers debacle around the Soutpandberg Mountains and the Mphephu-Boer War of 1898-1899, as examples (Mahosi, 2020: 63, 130, 167; Shillington, 2012: 218,

225, 263, 271-278, 340; Muller, 1993: 50-60, 328-360; Davenport, 2000: 59, 75, 169, 223, 262).

Similarly, the displacement of Native American 'tribes' was underwritten by government edict, and by the late 19<sup>th</sup> (nineteenth) century, most of the remaining native population had been forcibly resettled in reservations of the Mississippi. It was not coincidental that reservations were located on lands deemed by whites to be virtually workless for farming or grazing because they knew exactly why they deemed the same land that way: a pretext to shift ownership to themselves (Van der Waal and Pienaar, 2000: 163; Chaskalson, 1995: 224). As a result, the native Indian society were physically reduced through a combination of exposure to white settler diseases, armed conflict, starvation, and the breakup of a cultural system that had traditionally provided for social and material needs. Though the native Indians did make many cultural adaptations to the presence of whites (as if they had a choice), this did not prevent the eventual destruction of their social forms and the succession of white dominance in their natural birthright: their ancestral land (Van der Waal and Pienaar, 2000: 163; Chaskalson, 1995: 224).

Steytler (2002: 10) explains that traditional or customary law always recognized land ownership of different cultural groups. The history of the African communities of occupation and control of territory determined land ownership and other land rights such that communal ownership was the order of the day. Having said that being land was owned by African communities and large families under the leadership of *mahosi* (Government Gazette, 2009. Traditional Leadership and Governance Frameworks Act (Act No. 23) vol. 535, No. 32904). Terreblanche (2002: 260) refers this phenomenon as "semi-feudalism". Therefore, this means that the idea of individual land ownership and that of 'nobody's land' doctrine that originated during the rule of colonial powers was strange to the African socio-economic and political setting. It is for that reason that the white settlers of that time regarded unregistered land and "wide open space" as a pretext to claim the doctrine of nobody's land and as a result equally claimed it while it in fact it was African communal land. Resultantly, as it was discussed in the preceding chapters regarding the Luvuvhu Valley, this land was divided into farms with new title deeds, and in this way African communities were eventually relocated (Sachikonye, 2005: 36-37). In contrast, traditional law did not recognize individual rights since rights were not regarded as independent rights but derived rights that were dependent on ownership of

'tribe' to which the individual belonged. In essence this means that shared African community rules of the individual's access rights to land were taken away by this colonial doctrine and its end-product (TA, NAD, File No. 33/303, Minutes from Native Commissioner to Secretary for Lands, Louis Trichardt, 19 March 1919; Steytler, 2002: 2): forced removal, dispossession and relocation. Equally, as it has been explained in the paragraphs above, Africans did not understand why a single person could own land exclusively while others had no claim to use the same land; hence the different views on property rights resulted in severe conflicts between Africans and whites in South Africa: examples of which have been cited above. It is a foregone historical fact that in South Africa the Land Act of 1913 reserved land for white settlers and as a result as the African population increased, their land deteriorated rapidly, the scenario being that Africans, the Raveles and associated communities in this particular instance of the Luvuvhu Valley. Therefore, they had to move to "white" areas where they received meager wages, a system within which Africans were excluded from socio-economic advancement by a legislated "color-bar" *visa-vis* the system of private ownerships for white settlers only (U.G. Archives of the Union Government, 7-9, Land Act of 1913-1919; Elphick, 1997: 351; Terreblanche, 2002: 260; Feiberg, 2006: 131). Seen within the framework of divine ownership, the principle entails that stewardship becomes the main principle in property management, wherein each individual could manage his property. However, this management keeps the benefit of white settlers in such a view that the togetherness and the well-being of the white settlers and their attitude were observed (Interview with between Dr. J.J. Tabane and A.P. Groenewald, Leader of the opposition Freedom Front-Plus on TV's "Power to Truth" Programme, on the Land issue, 21 April 2022).

In light of this point, it would be fair to argue that land ownership should not lead to monopolies of individuals or groups and should not be administered in such a way that some parts of the community were became enriched while others deteriorated into impoverishment. The corollary would mean that a fair distribution of land was of immense importance, particularly for the prevention of deep poverty such that the position of land should have been considered against the background of calling to share and to live in the spirit of fellowship wherein land ownership should have served the purpose of reconciling people and preventing social divisions. In essence the land should have been utilized in a responsible way for the social and economic wellbeing of



the entire community ((Interview with between Dr. J.J. Tabane and A.P. Groenewald, Leader of the opposition Freedom Front-Plus on TV's "Power to Truth" Programme, on the Land issue, 21 April 2022; Elphick, 1997: 351).

In view of this explanation, it was fair to conclude that the possession of land to bring the "light of civilization to indigenous peoples, as well as white settlers, inter alia, Africa, violated these norms" (Elphick, 1997: 351) because the possession of land in the former colonies ran against African ethics regarding the management of land. A fair distribution of land and restitution seemed to be the basic African values, because the aim was to alleviate deep poverty and to prevent monopoly of the land by the state or by the rich elite. This idea was in line with basic African moral ideas concerning the management of land (Richardson, 2005: 546). People who own land should have a right not to be relocated by anyone through, for example force or invasion, as enshrined in Article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which reads: "no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property" (United Nations, 1948). This means that this right not to be arbitrarily relocated and should also be regarded as a fundamental right through which an owner should be protected by law, as was the case in constitutional democracies (South African Human Rights Commission, 2003).

In essence, relocation did not exclude the expropriation of land and the deprivation thereof. Expropriation occurs when a state takes away property and either keeps it for itself or transfer it to someone else. In such a case the individual has a right to monetary compensation for the property that has been taken De Waal, Carrie and Erasmus (2001: 417). This possibility was in accordance with African ethical norms that ownership must be accompanied by stewardship. However, the reason for expropriation must have been determined by the benefit of the community wherein the state must explain how expropriation would benefit all and, equally, the courts must have the power to evaluate the reasons for expropriation (Keet, 2006: 32). Therefore, deprivation involves the state's regulatory powers over property and occurred when the state has left the property in private hands and ended up imposing restrictions on its use. According to De Waal, Carrie and Erasmus (2001: 417; SALDE 202 1082/17, Secretary for Lands. Secretary to the Location Commission, 1906.01.12; Chaskalson, 1994: 136) this act was permissible, provided that, it was not arbitrary and was carried out in terms of law or general application. Seen from unethical perspectives deprivation must be applied

cautiously because such an action could disturb the welfare of a community. When the restrictions have led to suffering and poverty, the stewardship principle in property right could not have functioned and the court should have once again have had the power to rule out the action of the government.

A good example of the protection of this right was found in the South African Constitution of 1996, which was regarded as one of the most liberal constitutions in the world and which has to deal with the very sensitive issue of land restitution against the background of the South Africa's past. Article 25 (1-2) of this constitution reads as follows (Pienaar, 2005: 698; Constitution (Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 200 of 1993), date of Commencement date, 27 April 1994):

*When needed for the development for the broader community, private land could be expropriated with fair compensation by the government. It was permissible only for public purposes or in the public interest. The benefit for the community should be evident and should be proved with ample legal, moral, and economic norms.*

However, everyone should have the right of access to land. This right was enshrined in the actual aims of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948). In colonial times, for example, property was relocated, and people lost the right to acquire land. The same was true in the apartheid system in South Africa. In the lighter case African people had no right to own land in 'white settler areas', and the same limitation was applied to white settlers with regards to African people, and the Ravele community in particular. In the same instance, the Group Areas Act of 1950, amended by Acts of 1958, 1966 and 1984, prohibited any granting of ownership to a group in another group area and in the process, land was sometimes relocated with insufficient remuneration (Sachikonye, 2005: 38-39). By doing this, the government endeavored to establish homelands of each ethnic group to be developed as 'independent republics' (Davenport, 2000: 378, 397, 438, 467, 605, 626 and 644; Mazrui, 1999: 118, 252 and 258; Muller, 1993: 482 and 494; SAHRC, 2003).

Flowing from above, the Constitution of South Africa of 1996 aims to rectify this position by recognizing that everyone in South Africa should have access to land. However, this does not mean that everyone should have land and that the government should provide

land to everyone (Sepaela, 2006: 1). Therefore, guided by the principle that everyone must have access to land, the government entered into an orderly land restitution programme, which to date has been the most sensitive issue in the process of reconciliation in South Africa. The aim was to redress the inequalities caused by the apartheid system, with regard to land ownership (Nonyana, 2003: 1; Ihenduru, 2004: 16). As regards inequalities, the position of women and children needed special attention. In this respect, aboriginal title may have been introduced since the argument advanced in certain quarters has been that the practice of communal ownership discriminated against women and children; a claim that the current researcher opines that remains to be debated if the discourse on communal property rights and the African law of inheritance could be considered (Steytler (2002: 10-13; Van Warmelo and Phophi, 1949: 5-15). Ironically, the Black Administration Act 38 of 1927 held that this type of land was not always divisible but must invariably devolve upon one male person who was determined according to a prescribed table of succession (Nonyana, 2003: 2). In terms of this Act women were deprived of property and contractual capacity, which in the informed view of the current researcher was a view purported by the white man to suit his objectives and similarly went against African communal rights and the African law of inheritance the foundations of which are African values and norms (Sibasa/Makwarela Archives, Statutes of the Union of South Africa, 1927, Native Administration Act (No. 38) of 1927). There was an inherent assumption that either the husband or male relatives would take care of them within the ambit of family life, as was the case with their children. The white man's interpretation in terms of the above Act was that the custom of communal ownership under the administration of *mahosi* in South Africa, posed a number of ethical problems (Walker, 2003: 136-137). In this case, the current researcher is inclined to be 'mind-boggled' since such situations had never been a problem before the arrival of the white man on these shores because African values had been sacrosanct from generations to generations.

Ironically, during the development of the dispensation of apartheid in South Africa, land was expropriated with the pretense that such an action would benefit all the population groups. In fact, the government of the day argued that the apartheid system would be better for all inhabitants of the country (Terreblanche, 2002: 260). However, generally accepted legal, economic and moral norms revealed various deficiencies in the system, such as that better and more developed land was reserved for white settlers (SAA,

Director-General of Demobilisation (DGD) 423/10/22, 1243. Fields of employment, Levubu Land Settlement; Moodie, 2005: 1). The restitution of land took place with the aim to strengthen the political and economic position of white settlers, although the argument was always 'for the benefit of all'. Therefore, the government's expropriation of land should have adhered to internationally accepted norms, to prevent a reputation of such a policy (Interview with an unnamed official from the Limpopo Land Claims Commission, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020; Moodies, 2005: 1; Terreblanche, 2002: 260).

Access to land meant nothing if the state and other financial institutions did not assist the relocated people financially in acquiring land because the relocated had been transformed into the poor, who did not have the means to acquire land by themselves and without the assistance of the government and related financial institutions (Terreblanche, 2002: 260). It could therefore be argued that every person or community coming from a background of institutional discrimination should have the right to institutional assistance. In the South African land restitution programme, the Constitution makes provision for such institutional assistance which was on par with African ethical principles and values; the end results of which should have been that land ownership should be managed in such a way that it did not perpetuate poverty and monopolies (Commission on Land Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) 2014. Readiness of the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights for reopening of the lodgement of land claims: Presentation to the Portfolio committee on Rural Development and Land Reform, Pretoria: Department of Rural Development and Land Reform; Terreblanche, 2002: 260). Having said that, it was also important to stress the principle that land should have been utilized for the benefit of the community at large, and that institutional assistance must have included assistance in training and education to ascertain that the beneficiaries of land restitutions could have utilized the land for the benefit of the whole community. The bottom line is that mere ownership of land without adequate utilization has been found to have enhanced deep poverty and hampered socio-economic development among the beneficiaries (Terreblanche, 2002: 260; Keet, 2006: 11).

## **7.7 Land Restitution in the Post-colonial Period**

In the post-colonial period, land restitution was necessary in order to create opportunities for all and to eradicate the imbalances of the past such that land restitution could take

the form of equitable redress within the principle of Africanism or African ethics, to the point that land ownership should not have led to deep poverty and social inequality (De Waal, Currie and Erasmus, 2001: 17; Inheduru, 2004: 21). This required a fair redistribution of land in case of transactions from an unfair past to a new dispensation. Therefore, land restitution in South Africa could be regarded as a necessity when viewed from the African ethical point of view or perspectives. In the execution principle, a certain condition should, however, have been applied. In this instance De Waal, Currie and Erasmus (2001: 17) stipulate that any property restitution programme must have clearly fallen within the ambit of the public interests. Therefore, the principle was clear, but the execution of this ethical principle was not easy because public interests entailed the interest of Africans as well as the white landowners at the time of the process of land restitution (Interview with an unnamed official of the Limpopo Land Claims Commission, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020).

This also entailed the benefit of the people who were dependent on the owner's use of property. Therefore, expropriation to benefit some could have led to the improvement in the livelihoods of others. Clear ethical norms must therefore have been set for land restitution in the national and international context such that the following ethical norms for restitution in a national context could have been set (Everington and Jannecke, 2006: 562):

*In a divided community, the process of land restitution should have aimed at redressing the injustices of the past, and also aimed at serving the process of reconciliation. Redress and reconciliation were both African norms and both must have been considered as the two pillars of a restitution programme. Land restitution must not have led to further diversion and animosity in a community at large.*

For this reason, a historical data indicating the commencement of the era of relocation and injustices must have been agreed upon as well as based on sunset clause for claims (Harries, 2004: 176-178). Such a limitation was necessary because the process must not have caused impatience in the cycles of the agreed or insecurity of justice in the midst of the white settler landowners. Otherwise, restitution could have been chaotic as in the case of Zimbabwe (Murisa, 2016: 252-254). In South Africa the land Act of 1913, which led to the relocation of African people's land was chosen as a date ushering in

the period of legal claims such that claims for restitution had to be lodged and this meant that once all submitted claims had been finalized, the restitution entitlement would have come to an end (U.G. (Union of South Africa) 7-19: Land Act of 1913: Report of the Natives Land Commission, vol. II; Keet, 2006: 4). This provision secured a responsible and peaceful process up to this point in time when restitution should have started with state-owned property.

In spite of the fact that the doctrine of the concept '*terra nullius*', 'nobody's land or no man's land' to be cobbled out among colonial powers (in the case of South Africa between the Dutch (Netherlands and the British colonial powers) (Neluvhalani, 2018: 32; Mahosi, 2020: 93) doctrine has been rejected, the present government still owns land that was relocated due to colonial conquest. This has presented the colonial and post-colonial land discourse with ironies and contradictions because the pre-colonial land belonged to the African communities at large and on a communal basis, with the rulers being overseers. Therefore, it presents the current government with ironies and contradictions when it preaches the 'gospel' of total land restitution to its original owners while it continues to own the same land: a double standard steeped in the capitalist system. Lest we forget, under colonialism the conquest and ownership of the land was complete and backed by military domination (Mahosi, 2020: 94; Rodney, 1981: 22). Be that as it may, restitution of such property must have demonstrated the collective responsibility of the previous advantaged communities. Furthermore, such a process would not have harmed the delicate filer of the economics of the country.

The government of the day must have been in a position to pay fair compensation to the present owner and his employees after a long period that stretched generations such that the present owner could not have been held responsible for the injustices of the past, in the sense that the owner should not have borne the burden alone (Moodie, 2005: 11). Furthermore, fair compensation by the government could also have been a symbol of collective responsibility of a whole community in rectifying the injustices of the past. The people who have lost their means of survival when the land they lived and worked on was restituted should also have been compensated. Otherwise, the land restitution programme would have created poverty instead of development. Therefore, such an action would have been contrary to the African norms of that ownership of land and may not have led to impoverishment (Pienaar, 2005: 701).

In line with the above, the new owners should have been trained and educated to utilize the land as responsible stewards because mere ownership of land must not be seen as an end in itself but the means of the benefits of the community. To have repossessed the utilized land and to have redistributed it in such a way that it was not utilized profitably would have, and equally could have, endangered the growth and development. Therefore, any restitution of a land should have aimed at serving the delicate balance between the necessity of land restitution and the aim of economic stability and growth (Commission on Land Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR), 2008. Memorandum in terms of Section 42D of the Restitution Act, Polokwane). Furthermore, land restitution itself may not have always been possible, but redress could have taken other forms such as providing job opportunities, education, or housing. In other words, a disadvantaged person may have perhaps not received the land he/ she had lost, but he/ she could have been compensated through other means, in order to rectify his/ her material losses. According to Devenwash (1999: 354) the practice of communal land ownership and the land that aimed to redress the situation must have been revisited from an ethical and legal perspective such that the doctrine of 'aboriginal tittle' could have been considered as it has been the case in the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

Following the history of large-scale relocation of indigenous people in the United States, the recent American policies have focussed on political self-determination and on the protection of the remaining Indian lands into 278 (two hundred-and-seventy-eight) federal Indian reservations which implied that the Indians experienced greater empowerment and have developed many enterprises on the reservation lands (Marger, 1994: 165; Chaskalson, 1995: 227). However, the percentage of impoverished families was two and a half times more than the average in the United States. Therefore, if the doctrine of 'aboriginal tittle' had been applied in South Africa, it must have been done in such a way that it ended ownership in 'tribal' communities and this would have been beneficial to women and children as well as to economic empowerment. The practice of registering the tittle in the name of *mahosi* and thereafter in the name of his/ her male successor could have created a problem regarding the financial security of women and children. Women were excluded from land ownership according to this practice (Walker, 2003: 128). In this regard the process in South Africa would have been more just if it followed the example of restitution in United States and Canada, where 'aboriginal tittle' included women (Marger, 1994: 165). Therefore, the present practice regarding

communal ownership in South Africa has supported Africanism or African ethics which has always preached that the land ownership should have been to the benefit of the community and not to impoverish people. The use of the current international instruments such as the conventions of the United Nations and the African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child could have been a great problem on land restitution (Interview between Dr. J.J. Tabane and A.P. Groenewald, 21 April 2022).

In the current researcher's opinion, the South African programme has failed to meet the requirements of African ethical norms. To prove this statement, the current researcher has referred to the South African Constitution where restitution has been addressed in Section 25 (6-9) as an example of land restitution in the national context. This section was repeated by Section 1 of Act 108 of 1991. The present legal system in South Africa was on the right track with its requirement that group based land holding system should have functioned in a transparent, accountable and the democratic manner. However, the problem has not been solved completely as indicated by Nonyana (2003: 7; Section 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1991), date of commencement 1996).

Since the assumption of office by the sixth parliament, the South African process of land restitution has been on a different direction, what with the national debate around Section 25 (6-9). On the foundation of the principle set in Constitution and the relevant legal parameters, which have made it difficult for the government to solve the conflict over land among different communities. Until May 2005, 58 000 (fifty-eight thousand) of the 79 000 (seventy-nine thousand) claims had been lodged at the cut-off date of December 31 of 1998. In addition, of the disputed claims only 41 (forty-one) had been amicably resolved by the Land Claims Courts between the years between 1995 and 2005. During that period the former and second president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, had instructed the Land Claims Commission (LCC) to complete the process at the end of 2005. An investigation of the development of a representative number of settlements indicated that up to that point the process had been fair and satisfied all the parties concerned, although some claimants had complained that progress had been very slow (Commission on Land Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR), 2008. Memorandum in terms of Section 42D of the Restitution Act, Polokwane; Pienaar, 2005: 709).



The number of claims that have not been dealt with indicated that the process would take more several years to complete. Expectations and hope may have turned into impatience and unrest, and that would have harmed all the good intentions and the well-developed structures of the process of land restitution: meaning that the process should have been accelerated. The lack of training of the beneficiaries of land restitution, especially in the field of modern agricultural methods, may have harmed the agricultural industry in the long run. Therefore, training should have become an inherent part of land restitution in South Africa (BUANEW, 2006; Pienaar, 2005: 703). A process of land restitution should have also addressed the issue of international redress because in the past colonial powers utilized lands in the colonies to their own advantage. Huge agricultural and mining enterprises were good example of this because in some cases, such processes were still ongoing. This fact has stressed the issue of international redress of the injustices of the past on land dispossession to the point that the colonial powers should have paid remuneration for the utilization of the land that they have exploited under the '*terra nullius*' doctrine.

Seen from the perspective of the ethical norms previously mentioned above, one could argue a case for international restitution if it could have been proven that international exploitation of land had benefitted the colonial powers rather than the impoverished local communities. International redress could have been carried out in order to effect debt relief and by providing access for new farmers in the old colonies to the market of Europe (Deiningger and May, 2016: 16). The interests paid on internal debt would have constituted a large percentage of the current budget of the former colonies, and this situation has aggravated because of the devaluation of currencies in the developing countries due to the tremendous financial growth in the northern hemisphere. In the former colonies, farmers have found it difficult to compete with farmers in United States and Europe due to substantive subsidies to agriculture in the mentioned areas. Abolishing these subsidies could have opened the market and would have given the farmers in the old colonies the possibility of entering the foreign market and open a space to compete on an equal level. At this point in time many countries have engaged in such a process of redress with good results. However, it remained important for the United Nations Human Rights Council and other international bodies to debate the ethics of international redress, in order to rectify past justices (BUANEW, Commission on Land

Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR), 2008. Memorandum in terms of Section 42D of the Restitution Act, Polokwane). 2006; Pienaar, 2005: 703).

### **7.8 Land Restitution in South Africa in the Neo-liberal Context**

According to Bernstein (2002: 451) the market-led approach both discursively, and as illustrated by the bias of World Bank funding for land transfer schemes, has come to prominence in recent years, restitutive or state-led land restitution has therefore had to take a back seat (Feranil, 2005: 257; World bank, 1994) to the new wave (Bernstein, 2002: 451) of Market- led Agrarian Restitution (MLAR). The MLRA approach emerged out of the pro-market critique of the state-led approach to agrarian restitution (Borras, 2005: 95; Moyo and Yeres, 2005: 8). It could also have been seen as a response to new peasant uprisings in Chiapas to the activities of the landless workers movement (MST) in Brazil, or to pre-empt rural sources of social unrest and political disturbance (Bernstein, 2002: 451).

The proponents of MLAR such as Deiminger and Binswaunger (1999: 25) have argued that state-led policies, were among other things, overly bureaucratic and relied on top-down implementation methods that disempowered beneficiaries, encouraged rent seeking within the bureaucratic, distorted land market through the prohibition of land sales. It also relied upon government-led after care of support services and were supply-driven insofar as the state identified land and then sought out beneficiaries. Thus, they have concluded that land restitution would be politicized and unsuccessful in achieving goals when the state assumed a leading role (Interview between Dr. J.J. Tabane and A.P. Groenewald of FFP, 21 April 2022). In contrast to this, the MLAR approach accorded priority to economic efficiency in the market and determined the allocation of resources (EL-Ghonemy, 2001: 107) and hence used very different means to effect change in rural areas. Rather than using expropriation of land, for example, the MLAR advocated for voluntary land restitution under willing seller, willing buyer principles whereby landowners were paid full market related values for the land sold. Furthermore, the MLAR encouraged the states to adapt to demand-led or demand-driven approaches to locate the most determined and fittest beneficiaries to the most economically efficient product (Borras, 2005:95)

However, as Bobrow-Strain (2004: 5) has noted, this separation of the political from the economic was fallacious. In the so-called market-led approaches, neither supply nor demand was innocent of power relations. Finally, the MLAR entailed a requirement for beneficiaries to develop a viable form of business plan before land purchase, and cash grants for beneficiaries to acquire private consultancy for farm development. In these key respects, then, the MLAR aimed to achieve change in rural areas by mobilizing the forces of the market. Yet it remained to be seen whether the MLAR would have been successful in its attempt to pre-empt the rural uprisings or defeat what Moyo and Yeros (2005: 24) call the progressive force that advocated for the peasant-led land invasions, such as in Brazil (Petras, 1997: 7; Wolford, 2003: 20), or the unique offensive against the capitalist landed property (Bernstein, 2005:89) such as in Zimbabwe. Moreover, although the MLAR has been rolled out in countries within Latin America, Africa and Asia, the question has arisen as to whether states that adopt the MLAR approach would have stuck with them. In this respect, it was important to recognize that places – countries, regions or locales – would have had their own peculiarities, different histories, spatial arrangements, positions relative to a wider flow of capital, ideas or people. Certainly, places were not immune to going on elsewhere, rarely were they entirely isolated, unaffected by changes, shifts, or pressure reaching from afar (for a far-reaching discussion of this understanding of geography (Messey, 2005: 32).

Flowing from above, however, it was precisely within the context of such an interrupted, inter- Geographical scenario that the national land restitution (or any other) policy must have been implemented, but necessarily with respect to local the conditions that were often deeply sedimented historically. We should not be surprised then, if the policies and practices, enjoying some wider resonance and implementation, were mutated, shaped even abandoned, given the wider range of both the obstacles and opportunities that could have arisen in particular countries or regions. This was indeed the picture that seems to have been taking shape in South Africa, which initially embraced the new market-led approach to land restitution – at the advice of the World Bank (Van Zyl et al, 2000: 17; Bond, 2000: 15; Lahiff, 2001: 30, Hull, 2003: 24) – along with numerous other policies of the neo-liberal slant (Bond, 2000: 15; Chem, 2001: 12, Carmody, 2002: 21, Peet, 2002: 11; MirafTab, 2004: 33, Smith, 2004: 15-20). Embracing the market-led approach meant that the state led a willing seller, willing buyer approach to land restitution, which protected the private property right of white settler landowners and

committed the state to using the market to acquire land for delivery on its promises (Zimmerma, 2000: 7; Lahiff, 2001: 30; Kepe and Cousins, 2002: 13). According to Deninger (1999: 665) the adoption of the willing seller-willing buyer principle in South Africa, “was based on the Land market, and more generally to affirm the government’s respect for individual property rights”.

The need for such a respect for private property was a major concern of the white minority during the transition from apartheid to democracy, a concern which was ongoing. This sensitivity continued and has been intensified as a result of the way in which neighbouring Zimbabwe rejected the neo-liberal approach in favour of a “fast track” (Barnstein, 2004: 63) expropriation of white-owned land. In this respect, it would have been advisable to consider how the restitution programme which provided for the restitution of land rights to person or communities dispossessed after 19 June 1913 functioned in terms of racially law (Lahiff, 2001: 32; Ramutsindela, 2003: 27; Hall, 2004: 29). Its legal basiss was the Restitution of Land Rights Act 22/1994.6. The Act established a Land Claims Court to adjudicate contested claims in 1996. The court has the same status as High Court, hence appeals against its judgments were made to the Supreme Court of appeal or, in exceptional circumstances, to the Constitutional Court. All claims for land restitution had to be lodged with the Commission for the restitution of land rights by the end of 1998. The Commission was therefore responsible for investing claims and preparing them for settlement or adjudication in the Regional Commission became formal in 1999 (Commission on Restitution on Land Rights (CRLR) 2008. Memorandum in terms of Section 42D of the Restitution of Land Rights Act).

The provision of alternative land, financial compensation, the provision of alternative relief, and/ or priority access to other government programmes were not fully provided. By March 2004, there were 79, 993 (seventy-nine thousand nine hundre-and-ninety-three) claims for restitution (Umhlaba Wethu, 2005). According to Hall (2003: 25), between 20% (twenty percent) and 25% (twenty-five percent) were rural claims. These were large group claims involving hundreds, if not thousands, of people who were clustered in Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal (Hall, 2003: 15). Yet, while few in number, the rural claims accounted for the bulk of the restitution programme. Since these represented the majority of the people claiming land restitution, they would probably have also accounted for most of the costs (Hall, 2003: 16). By mid-2004,

around 9000 (nine thousand) rural claims remained unsettled and only 6% (six percent) of these which were settled involved transferring land. Not surprisingly, the government has been criticized for its slow pace in completing the restitution programme. In explaining this, attention has focused on the budget for land restitution which in 2001 for example, was only 0.38% (zero point three eight) of the national budget, equivalent to the Department of Arts and Culture Science and Technology (DACST) (Walker, 2003: 17). The problems of such a small budget were heightened by the fact that the current owners had to be compensated, that restitution had been carried out, and in other words, under the constraints of the willing seller, willing buyer principle. It was notable, then, that the allocation for land restitution from the 2005 National Budget, which was 1.18% (one.one eight) of the National Budget was from what has been allocated in the past (Lahiff, 2007: 1579-1581).

Although in principle land restitution required considerable state involvement - the adjudication process, claim processing and buying the land to be restituted could therefore have been understood as a more hybrid type of land restitution policy than the government's other programmes, which nevertheless has been underpinned by the market-led approach. This was because initially the system of land restitution had relied on the state acquiring land on the willing seller, willing buyer principle. However, the slant of land restitution towards the market has changed as the state has learned about the various shortcomings of its policy (Lahiff, 2007: 1580-1581). First the state had acquired the power of expropriation via the Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Act 48 of 2003. Not surprisingly perhaps, given the high profile given to expropriations in Zimbabwe the amendment has generated a debate about this potential for abuse of this power by the Minister and the possible impact of expropriations on investor confidence (Hall, 2004: 20; Murisa, 2016: 244). Indeed, when the then Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs, Thoko Didiza, exercised these new powers in 2004 it attracted a fair amount of attention from the international media (BBC News, 2005). Yet, in some restitution cases, such as in the Limpopo Province, where nearly wall-to-wall claims in much of the province's prime agricultural land like the Luvuvhu Valley, Waterberg and Tzaneen (Hall, 2004: 21), the new power may have had to be exercised to complete the land restitution programme against the wishes of white settler landowners who refused to sell. In short, the state has learned that its commitment to the willing seller, willing buyer principle has been a major stumbling block (Moodie, 2005: 5).

The state has begun to impose conditions on how the claimants could use the land. One aspect here was the government's detractions on using the land as if it was a collateral for a loan capital. While this has meant that they would have had a difficult to find money to invest in new machinery or irrigation works, or indeed to have a sufficient working capital. It has also protected the beneficiaries from the possibility of losing the land in the future. An important dimension of this stance was the desire of the government to nurture African farmers after land restitution, which was one way to redress the racial restitution of land in South Africa, given that the most likely buyers of restituted land would be whites which was not something the government was anxious to facilitate (Hall, 2004: 21: Interview between Dr. J.J. Tabane and A.P. Groenewald, 21 April 2022).

The result has been that the state has altered its approach towards issues of post-settlement assistance. Although only 185 (one hundred-and-eighty-five) claims had been settled with land transfers as at March 2003 (Hall, 2003: 13), there were already indications by that time that some beneficiaries were failing to maintain agricultural production. Cases began to emerge of what, from the standpoint of the earlier use of the land could only be described as regression: failure to maintain fields, abandonment of property, stripping of the equipment for want of the capital to put it to work, among other things. An example of this was the Mamathola Land claim, near Tzaneen in the Limpopo Province, which in 2001 resulted in the transfer of 1400 (one thousand-four hundred) hectares of land at a cost to the government of R43m (forty-three million rand) (Du Toit, 2004: 41). The land which was highly developed and had been operated as a commercial farm enterprise production began to collapse almost immediately after the handover (Interview between Dr. J.J. Tabane and A.P. Groenewald). A state attorney eventually required the government to assume management of the farm and blamed the community leadership for the failure as well criticized the government's approach to land restitution. Du Toit (2004: 41) has used this case to draw attention to ineffective government's support to land restitution beneficiaries because such deteriorations in productivity suggested that, where restrictions restored commercial agricultural land, beneficiaries required extensive skills ranging from technical and legal to procurement and marketing, that farmers had but which many beneficiaries had been denied the opportunity to acquire. This has generated arguments for a degree of post- settlement assistance for beyond what was initially on offer Du Toit (2004: 41).

In the context of neo-liberalism, it was not entirely surprising that the government has opted for a private solution, of course, so that the beneficiaries of the land to be restituted should have been given an opportunity to decide how to handle the process. However, the government was increasingly opting to shift the responsibility to the private sector. The current researcher would like to opine that such a practice fell in the face of the objective of the government to redress the injustices of the past that emanated from the forced removal, land dispossession and relocation.

## **7.9 Designing the Land Restitution Agenda**

It was far from clear what form land restitution would take when the constitutional negotiations between the outgoing white-only government and the ANC began in 1992 (Walker, 2005: 813). Although many movements had supported a radical land restitution programme involving widespread expropriation of white-owned land, agreeing to such a scenario was politically unacceptable for the National Party, which spoke for both rural and urban property classes (Walker, 2005: 813; Hendrickse and Ntsebeza, 2000: 13). Overall, the land issue became even more likely as negotiations proceeded and as the ANC turned its attention from fighting the liberation struggle towards fashioning substantive economic policies Walker, (2005: 812). As Bond (2000: 16) has noted, the ANC needed, and was beginning to receive, support from domestic capital and from international lenders, to which group the late apartheid state was heavily indebted, and to which the ANC would have to repay much of the apartheid debt. Its radical land restitution agenda, which obviously was not in the interest of domestic capital, nor the sort of policy lenders and their waterdogs were likely to support, therefore dropped off the ANC negotiating agenda. Land restitution was never going in the way of the more important negotiations in which the ANC was involved, land therefore “became an issue for strategic compromise (between the NP and ANC) early on “in the constitutional negotiations (Walker, 2005: 812; Everington and Jannecke, 2006: 556).

Although a radical land restitution process was out of the question, the ANC negotiations strongly pursued a restitution programme, against the wishes of the NP. The issue was not resolved until quite late in the negotiations, by which time the NP was prepared to negotiate a trade-off between land claims for those who had lost formal land rights in the past and guarantees for existing property rights (Walker, 2005: 183); meaning that

land restitution was on the cards. Even still, mechanisms towards achieving land restitution had to be worked out. One issue was the cut-off date for land restitution claims. A “pragmatic but appropriate cut-off point of 1913” (Walker, 2005: 814; Feinberg, 2006: 134-135) - pragmatic, because documenting earlier relocation would have proven difficult at best - was eventually selected, even though “extensive relocation had already taken place by then” (Hall, 2003: 4). Another issue was the process of adjudicating land claims such that the land claims working group (LCWG), which consisted of individuals from NGOs and some of their lawyers, initially recommended a “right – driven court – overseen” process (Walker, 2005: 814). Resultantly, the NP adopted this proposal, even as the LCWG realized it would favour white landowners rather than the claimants. The NP succeeded in having claims adjudicated in the Land Claims Court until a 1998 review of the land restitution process recommended “an administrative route for settling uncontested claims” (Walker, 2005: 817; Greenberg, 2003: 57-63).

Then there was the issue of compensation for landowners. As noted above, expropriation was not possible. Therefore, the state had to provide some level of compensation. The 1993 Interim Constitution, which protected private property rights, made a “provision for land expropriation for undefined public purposes, subject to the payment of just and equitable compensation” (Walker, 2005: 815). It was determined that market value and other considerations would determine what was just and equitable compensation. As a result, land restitution was not included in the public interest until the 1996 Constitution was enacted. Although this gave the state a green light to embark on a land expropriation programme and advance land restitution, it steered well clear of that option. Rather, the government published the White Paper on South African land restitution policy in 1997, which stated that the land policy would not follow expropriation except in exceptional circumstances (*Farmers’ Weekly* of Friday 18 August 2005; Walker, 2005: 815). In this regard the Department of Land Affairs (1997) and Lahiff (2007: 1586) noted that:

*The government was committed to a land restitution programme that would take place on a willing-seller – willing-buyer principle where possible. However, where this was not possible the state had to be able to expropriate the land required in the public interest. The new Bill of Rights expressly recognizes that the public interest included the nation’s commitment to land restitution.*



In view of this, it was for the first time that the government mentioned its commitment to the willing-seller willing-buyer principle (Lahiff, 2005: 1), although the concept “entered the discourse around land restitution in South Africa gradually during 1993-1996” (Lahiff, 2005: 1). The DLA’s White Paper Policy of 1997 justified this commitment in the following way:

*There were those demands that land should be taken from those who have too much of it and that it should be restituted free to the landless. Therefore, they favoured drastic state intervention to restituted land. There were others who insisted that the land should be allocated only to those who could prove that they could use it productively and that in any case private land was sacrosanct and the land should only be transferred on the basis of willing-seller willing-buyer. The government studied the above argument, as well as attempts at land restitution in other countries. The challenge was to find a way of restituted land to the needy, and at the same time maintain public confidence in the land market.*

Thus, land restitution under restitution and other land restitution programmes was destined to occur under the terms of a principle, which “fully protects the interest of existing landowners, as it neither compels them to sell against their will nor at a price with which they were fully satisfied” (Lahiff, 2005: 2). Although the willing seller-willing buyer (WSWB) principle has maintained confidence in the land market, it has “granted enormous power (no doubt far beyond what the NP anticipated during the negotiations) to landowners to influence the pace and direction of land in South Africa, tantamount to a veto over the land restitution process” (Interview with an unnamed official of the Limpopo Land Claims Commission, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021; Lahiff, 2005: 2). Its adoption by ANC has clearly and fundamentally shaped the present configuration forces.

### **7.10 Rethinking a Model for South Africa’s Approach to Land Restitution**

For Hall (2003: 13), there were three important areas for better post-settlement support, and these were institutional support for the legal entities taking on ownership of the restituted land, support for agricultural production, and assistance to enable the beneficiaries to access municipal services on restituted land. Evidence from elsewhere in South Africa has confirmed the government’s willingness to have land restitution

beneficiaries' work in partnership with the private sector (Interview with an unnamed official of the Limpopo Land Claims Commission, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021; Mayson, 2003: 12). In 2003 the Zebediela citrus estate of the Limpopo Province was taken over by the Agricultural and Rural Development Corporation (ARDC), which was formed in 1996 to oversee the management and restructuring of the former homeland's assets farms and estate. Yet, according to Shaker (2003: 3) "financial, technical and managerial weakness" in the ARDC meant that it required a R70m (seventy million rand) annual government subsidy. The ARDC was forced to sell or to restructure these assets when this subsidy was withdrawn from the national budget. In the case of Zebediela, the Bjathladi community had a restitution claim, which the Limpopo Land Claims Commission (LLCC) had recognized (Mayson, 2003: 12-13). The need to restore the land and to restructure the asset led the Limpopo Provincial Department of Agriculture and the LLCC to agree to transfer the asset to the beneficiaries but under the agreement that a strategic partner would manage the land (Shaker, 2003: 3). Similarly, in the case of the Luvuvhu Valley the arrangement was as follows (*Financial Mail*, 23 October 2004):

*There was a management board on which representatives were the workforce, the African landowners and the government (the government was also represented on the board, although without voting rights)*

The partners signed a lease agreement for fifteen years and committed to pay an annual rent to the African landowners (Derman, 2010: 309). For example, in the Luvuvhu Valley, the Ravele community were paid rent by their strategic partner, South African Farm Management (SAFM) (*Financial Mail* (23 October 2004)). It was also agreed that the profits accrued would be shared between the Ravele landowners, the workers and the strategic partners according to the following formula: the partner would receive 50% (fifty percent); landowners, 35% (thirty-five percent); and the workers, 15% (fifteen percent). In return for the higher shares of the strategic partner, it had to provide working capital for the enterprise, a management team and commit to provide an accredited training to the Raveles and their workers, in order to enable some of them to assume management of the estate at the end of the lease agreement. However, a Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) company, the South African Farm Management (SAFM) was identified as a silent partner in 2004. However, the relationship between the BFG and the SAFM was not exactly clear, such that according to one member of SAFM's board,

the BFG was only an investor in the SAFM, yet many of the white settler farmers in the Luvuvhu Valley, who knew the Boyes family, claimed that the SAFM fronted as an empowerment arm of the African communities for the BFG. Adding to the confusion was that a government official, said that the SAFM consisted of comrades<sup>15</sup> (Interview with an unnamed official from LLCC, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021).

## 7.11 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to explore the post-colonial restitution of land in South Africa, after 1998. While the focus of the chapter and the study in its totality remains the Raveleled communities within the Luvuvhu Valley, the current researcher located the arguments of this study within the ideological, historical, political, socio-economic and international context. A multi-dimensional analysis of the land restitution was crucial in generating a crispy understanding of the phenomena being studied by locating it within a wider context. Using historical imperatives as a point of departure to make sense of land restitution in South Africa and in the Luvuvhu Valley, in particular, is a pre-cursor for understanding its contemporary dynamics, implications and respective roles of the stakeholders including *mahosi*, the community(ies) and the South African government.

The next chapter expands on this discussion by focusing on the intersection among the Luvuvhu Valley community, white settler farmers, foreign investors and the government in the restitution of land in the Luvuvhu Valley and to a greater extent, the Limpopo Province.

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<sup>15</sup> In this context, comrades are usually those individuals who have strong ties with the ruling party, the ANC, who are generally deployed, on a ticket to line their pockets.

## Chapter 8

### Stakeholders' Engagement on Land Restitution in the Luvuvhu Valley

#### 8.1 Introduction

The prevailing discourses in the preceding chapters on forced removals, land dispossession and land restitution that South Africa's land restitution policy was and remains influenced by the market-led approach. However, it should have been evident by now as well that there has been a gradual shift by government from a 'willing-buyer-willing-seller' approach towards expropriation of land without compensation which has forced the government to revisit Section 25 of the Constitution of 1996. The recent approach by government of reconsidering expropriation of land without compensation came as result of pressure from the opposition Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) which has preferred Zimbabwe's approach to the land problem as its policy. This has to be understood within the context of the Afrocentric values in relation to the community(ies) *vis-à-vis* land as, as discussed in chapters 5(five) and 6(six). Accompanying this change in the approach to redress the injustices of the past has been the fact that the government has also seen the need to consider imposing new forms of post-settlement assistance to the beneficiaries of the land restitution programme. This is unlike previously where the government had to buy land from the 'willing-seller' in order to reconstitute the same land to the 'willing-buyer'. This change in approach has encouraged and, in some cases, compelled beneficiaries to establish strategic partnerships with private consultants or agribusinesses, just like in the case of the Raveles and SAFM. This issue has also played itself out in the case of the restitution process in the Luvuvhu Valley wherein the Ravele community has been the victim of forced removal(s), dispossession and eventually turned out to be the beneficiaries, as it is reflected in the discussion hereunder.

#### 8.2 The Luvuvhu Valley and the Ravele Community

The area known as the Luvuvhu Valley is located on the western part of the town of Thohoyandou along the Punda Maria road, which goes to the Kruger National Park (KNP). Given the experiences of the communities who had settled within the Luvuvhu

Valley before the forced removals and dispossession of the years 1920s and 1930s, the post-1994 period saw a rush to have the land returned to its rightful owners, a process which started around 1996/1998 (Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR), 2005. Memorandum in terms of Section 42D of the Restitution of Land Rights Act, 2004). As it has been discussed in the previous chapters, the white government saw subtropical climate in the Luvuvhu Valley was ideal for the commercial farming of mangoes, avocados, bananas and macadamia nuts, among other products. Accompanying this was the arrival of about 200 (two hundred) white settler farmers in the Valley and the subsequent establishment of irrigation and settler schemes. Although many of these white settler farmers dispute the restitution claims and refuse to sell the farms, a group of 50 (fifty) farmers did agree to sell and this led to the first group of purchase, which means that the remaining farms – owned by the group of white settler farmers who have refused to sell, the latest has seen the intention of the government to expropriate land without compensation in order to speed up and/ or complete the land restitution process in the Luvuvhu Valley (Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR), 2005. Memorandum in terms of Section 42D of the Restitution of Land Rights Act, 2004).

Outside the two groups who have either refused to sell and the other willing to sell, another group of farmers, in particular, was positioned to become a strategic partner with some of the claimants. In this regard, some interviews were conducted with community leaders, community structures such as the civic association, the tribal council and faith-based groups to further obtain a broader view on the restitution of land in the Luvuvhu Valley, which process has proved to be a sensitive matter and remains sensitive to this day and age (Interview with R. Mufamadi, 22 April 2022. Within this equation of land restitution within the Luvuvhu Valley, has been the question of who would really benefit from the land claims and restitution, some said that traditional leaders would keep the benefit for themselves, others accused their respective land claim committees of withholding important information with a view to controlling the transferred land for their own personal benefit (Fraser, 2006: 10-11). The section below discusses the solution by the South African government regarding land restitution in the Luvuvhu Valley.

### 8.3 Government and the Solution for Luvuvhu Valley

The government revealed that the restituted land would be transferred under the following restitutions conditions: they looked at the value of the land and its commercial use and whether the beneficiaries could not resettle it. This condition was not unique to the Luvuvhu Valley according to one of the government official, who intimated that where farms were not commercially viable, people could re-settle (Interview with an unnamed official from Limpopo Land Claims Commission, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021). However, the current researcher would like to opine that this approach bordered on a major imposition on the claimants by government, many of whom do/did not have sufficient access to land and who would have like to improve their lives by farming on the land. Another option would have been that the communities could settle to having the land restored and then later lease it back to the white settler farmers. The government unreservedly disallowed this option with the result that many beneficiaries of the restitution process said was the reason they had agreed to sell. On this issue, one government official said (Interview with an unnamed official from Limpopo Land Claims Commission, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021):

*As a province we do not overwhelmingly receive this. This thing of leasing back could not be a leasing back and left at that. Some of the farmers were proposing that, "you buy my land, you give me 810m. I take it and put it in my bank and pay all my debts" and then I come back and say "OK, I want to lease this land and just continue making money right? I'm not going to train you guys so one day you could come and run it". Actually, you have not changed anything. You were creating perpetual dependence. The community just gets rental at the end of the month*

In the same vein another official from the Limpopo Provincial Department of Agriculture advised that the claimants had to accept a strategic partner to manage their land, within which context one member of the land claims committee stated that, MEC for Agriculture in the Province, Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi made it clear that those who wanted the land to be returned must agree to take on board a strategic partner (Fraser, 2006: 305). The specific arrangement in the Luvuvhu Valley was similar to the model used in Zebediela (Shaker, 2003: 57), although in contrast it was agreed that there would be two strategic partners working with the beneficiaries, whereafter the Ravele community was partnering with the SAFM. The beneficiaries, who entered into a Joint Venture Company

(JVC) with one of the agribusinesses, received an annual lease payment for use of the land. They also share(ed) the profits with the strategic partner. That being said the beneficiaries could not raise capital on their own given the constraints of using the land as collateral for loans. Therefore, the strategic partner provided working capital. One government official sought to give this a more positive slant by emphasizing that having the partner bring working world mean that (Fraser, 2006: 305):

*He would make sure it does not go down, unlike where he has leased (?) the land and where the farmer does not pay, the bank takes the land, which was a policy decision of this government. We could not afford it, otherwise we'll have a situation where we give land, the bank takes it, and sell it to a white settler landowner*

The Luvuvhu Valley settlement also included a skill transfer plan, which was intended to enable beneficiaries to take a 15 (fifteen-year) lease period. The intention was to create a new group of African farmers in the Luvuvhu Valley, one that would potentially highlight the benefits of the government's land restitution programme. This had a strong empowerment element because, as one official stated, "the government task was to be a catalyst for change and transformation, and the skills transfer plan was central to achieving this goal". In short, the emphasis on training claimants to farm underlined the development goals of the government and its distancing from a more market-led process. The government did not want to insert the claimants as landowners, it wanted to develop them. Importantly, both partners involved pitched their operations to the government consisting of African partners as per government's concern that land restitution had to comply with its black economic empowerment intention (BEE). As I have already noted with regards to SAFM, and which appeared to have been the case with other partners, the financial backing and leadership position of these companies was white and not African, this did not however, mean that either company was serious about BEE (Fraser, 2006: 307).

Adopting of the partnership approach evidently reflected the government's experience of high profit cases of restitution failures in other parts of South Africa. Indeed, officials explained the government's position with respect to the case of the Luvuvhu Valley through reference to the past failures. For example, the collapse of the restituted farms at Mamathola in the Greater Tzaneen Local Municipality of the Mopani District, clearly

led the Limpopo Land Claims Commission along with the Department of Agriculture to look for alternative ways to provide post-settlement support. One official noted that (Fraser, 2006: 307):

*The assumption was that communities were ready, communities want to become commercial farmers. Nobody really thought about the post-settlement implications of what we were doing, nobody. And then finally when Mamathola happened, fortunately for us this happened everybody started to say hey, we need post settlement support. We could not hand back highly commercial farms to communities and expect them to survive on their own.*

Therefore, some empirical bases for the reluctance of government to opt for direct transfer of land was to avoid a situation where the claimant could not come on board and be expected to run the farm in a short space of time. Such a concern was borne out of the fact that most of the claimants were not readily experienced; hence the need for post-settlement assistance for future production (Fraser, 2006: 307). Therefore, rather than allowing claimants to re-settle on the land or lease the land to other farmers, the government opted for a privatized post-settlement because “we believe that it’s not only (about returning the) land, (the partnership plan was) a long process maybe fifteen years, maybe twenty years, but it has to happen and it has to happen this way we really want it to be a private deal” (Interview with an official from the Limpopo Land Claims Commission, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020, quoted in Fraser, 2006: 307). The strategic partnership arrangement could therefore have been viewed as a form of privatization post-settlement support that minimized the need for government-provided support, but which also placed severe limitations on how the rightful landowners could use their land. It also reflected the learning process through which land restitution practice had moved, from a stance of favouring direct transfer to imposing restrictions on communities. It also reflected on the desire of the government to minimize what it needed to spend in the context of the neo-liberalism agreement reached in the case of the Luvuvhu Valley, especially regarding the Ravele community.

Yet, despite the way the government had imposed its vision for restitution in the Luvuvhu Valley, the balance of political forces had been such as to facilitate its implementation. Not only were they able to obtain the support of the communities involved, partly through



the ability of African elites to control the whole negotiations process (possibly with a view to side payments to themselves for their trouble), but in addition the calculations of white settler agribusiness had also lent impetus to the feasibility of the plan.

#### **8.4 The Feasibility of the Plan**

Yet numerous beneficiaries claimed that the leadership had not been forthcoming with information about the claims. The *khoro* (royal council), for example, met at the Mauluma *musanda* (royal kraal) every two weeks. Although not everyone who lived at Mauluma was a beneficiary of the Raveles, and neither did all the beneficiaries live there, the *khoro* presented a regular opportunity for the committee to keep people informed. According to numerous beneficiaries, however, the committee refused to honour this arrangement. In fact, the committee was obligated in terms of the Restitutions Act to report to the beneficiaries. However, 'Khosī' was later to claim that *khoro* was not a structure we must report to (Interview with 'Khosī' Ramaano Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; Moodie, 2005: 11). Others among the beneficiaries believed that the land claims committee had deliberately guarded their positions. In this instance one beneficiary even went to so far as to claim that: "people were not as aware of what was going on as they should be, and I think this was more by design. If it was not accidental that people were not aware. It's by design". The current researcher is of the view that such insinuations were a true reflection of the extent to which the beneficiaries were kept in the dark about such matters of great importance to them. It also is a reflection that the committee itself must have been getting instructions from above regarding such an important matter which historically made the beneficiaries victims of dispossession, much as the royal family were victims.

The sentiment raised by the current researcher is derived from the arrogance of the committee which seemed to rely on the conviction that the beneficiaries should have felt indebted to them because: "We have been involved in this process since as early as 1996". In other words, the members of the committee felt that they were special because they naively believed that the beneficiaries owed them. I also sounded as if it was only the royal family and committee who deserved to know more because they were disadvantaged more than the original ordinary members of the community of Ravele of Old Mauluma, Luvuvhu Valley. This is evidence enough of the fact that the Raveles of

old whose royal family operated along African values on which their *vuhosi* was founded were no more. This also denudes the fact that the essence of humanness and communalism that used to bind the community together had vanished into thin air as a result of the forced removals, land dispossession land relocation; hence such an attitude of arrogance that oozed from the committee. In the words of 'Khosī Ramaano Ravele: "They don't believe that anybody deserve to know more that they know. They believe they have got the right to decide what other people should know and shouldn't know and, for them, anybody else who get to know anything about the process, for them, it's a privilege" (Interviewed 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

It was not clear why the leadership of the Ravele land claims committee was so intent on maintaining this sort of secrecy regarding such matters that affected the entire community. Flowing from above it was inconceivable that the leadership of the committee had the best interest of the beneficiaries in mind, unless if they were looking at making personal gains at the end of the day. Indeed, the latter possibility was most commonly raised by beneficiaries, because they believed that the members of the committee were certainly well positioned to gain as a result of holding positions on the board of directors of the JVC, especially if those positions were remunerated, or even if they were not, whomsoever felt that those positions would give them privileged knowledge of the prevailing situation. Another possibility was that the leadership wanted to control the legal entity that would oversee how income from the land would be spent. Indeed, the income from the land, via the annual lease of the payment and shares of the farm-based profit, was maintained out to be quite considerable, possibly in millions of rand annually (Interview with W.M. Netshisaulu, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

Although, the study could not determine exactly what the leaders of the land claims committee intended to do with the knowledge and power they have accumulated, it was clear that they were major supporters of the strategic partnership approach. Even if one is inclined to wonder why the imposition of the strategic partnership by the government did not experience any level of resistance, it might have been due to the fact that regardless of imposition, the government still advised the beneficiaries how they could utilize the land (Interview with T.B. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). Furthermore, although the strategic partnership proposal was imposed on the Ravele leadership and they were aware of who the potential strategic partner was, they were nonetheless supportive of

the process. The current researcher is inclined to believe that the leadership of the Raveles supported the partnership because they were aware of the benefits they would accrue therefrom. This may be as a result of the fact that they were aware of the number of farms that would be transferred to them during restitution. However, what remained to be seen was whether the entire Ravele community would either benefit from the partnership, or they would be allowed to own a portion of land from the one that had been transferred; be it for settlement or cultivation or even both (Holomisa, 2009: 138-140).

The current researcher has been made to believe that the Ravele Communal Property Association (RCPA) is sponsoring the studies of the children and / or grandchildren of the families who were affected by the forced removals and land dispossession during 1921 and 1936 (Interview with T.B. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021). However, the current is of the view that even the man on the street and/ or families who were affected by the Raveles' forced removals lost land and their livelihood. In the same vein if one were to revisit the fact that according to the principle of *ubuntu* or *vhuthu* which informed communalism and the fact that African values preach that *mahosi* are the custodian of the land on behalf of the people (Holomisa, 2009: 66-68), the affected families equally deserved to either be restituted or have a stake in the RCPA partnership with SAFM. Without sounding to be a doomsayer, the way the ordinary members of the Ravele community have been treated, is as good as, for lack of a better word, 'postponing hunger and poverty'. Flowing from above the current researcher now understands why the man on the street was never fully informed of the process of the land restitution, as mentioned above; hence the sentiment raised by 'Khos' Ravele above, regarding the secrecy with which the Ravele land claims committee handled the restitution process when he said that:

*They don't believe that anybody deserve to know more that they know. They believe they have got the right to decide what other people should know and shouldn't know and, for them, anybody else who get to know anything about the process, for them, it's a privilege* (Interview with Ramaano Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021).

Thus, despite the government's claim that restituted land would be returned to democratically elected and organized legal entities such as CPAs or trusts, evidence

from the research with the Ravele beneficiaries suggests otherwise and draws attention to the seeming indifference of the authorities to the issue of community democracy (Fraser, 2006: 303). Indeed, the government was continuing to negotiate and meet with the members of the Ravele land claims committee that was not democratically elected by the very people who were affected by the forced removals, accumulation and dispossession. It was the same committee that the beneficiaries suspected of pursuing individual personal gains. The current researcher would like to further argue that the above explains the turnaround and subsequent acquiescence of the RCPA to the plan of the government plan for this particular process of land restitution. The solution that was arrived at regarding the Luvuvhu Valley turned out to be partly a deal between a small and minority representative group of community leaders and the government as well as the SAFM that emerged as strategic partner for the Raveles (Fraser, 2006: 303). The section below discussed strategic partners that are coaxed into the equation by the government officials.

### **8.5 The Strategic Partners**

From the last part of the previous section (8.4) it should be evident that the beneficiary communities, in this case the Ravele community, were only part of the equation which has made this odd hybrid arrangement politically feasible. There was also the interest of the white settler agribusiness. One of the owners of the agribusinesses which is/ was involved SAFM which consisted of white settler farmers within the Luvuvhu Valley and the surrounding areas. In the process SAFM partnered with the Ravele Royal Council with the exclusion of the Ravele community. What made the SAFM attractive to the Ravele Royal Council was that the company owned upstream agricultural supplies, downstream processing facilities (nut drying and hulling, juice processing) and they have marketing channels to domestic and foreign buyers. (Fraser, 2006: 303). The farmers who were affiliated to the SAFM stated that they believed restitution via direct transfer of land to the beneficiaries would place their fixed price on an upward trend on such products as the downstream instruments, which have been developed and had been in circulation since the 1980s.

The SAFM MMS shared the view of the government that the ordinary beneficiaries of the restitution process would not be able to farm the land adequately (Interview with

Adolf Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2020). They further intimated that such a development would place the supply of high-quality raw material to their processing facilities and marketing operations in jeopardy. One possible strategy, which was the SAFM farmers, in common with most of the farmers in Luvuvhu Valley, had been able to lease back the land from the claimants, as noted. However, the government was opposed to this move. Entering into strategic partnership arrangement with the claimant communities was therefore the only way for SAFM farmers to ensure their raw material supply. As one of the farmers who was affiliated to SAFM noted, “the best way to (secure your raw material base) was to farm it yourself”. He continued thus (Fraser, 2006: 306):

*SAFM was a willing seller to the discussion of their role in the Luvuvhu Valley. Look, to be honest if didn't have many investment in the factories I wouldn't have been a strategic partner. I would have been out of here. Remember, a factory if your raw material basis was not secure, it's actually just a heap of stainless steel.*

The other potential strategic partner, SAFM was positioning itself to manage the farms in the Luvuvhu Valley, which farms included the Ravele. On the other hand, another potential strategic partner, Mavu Management Systems, had another incentive to get involved. “My factory processed the stuff. If (another partner) takes over the whole 10, 000 (ten thousand) hectare (in Luvuvhu Valley) and takes over many raw materials base, then I'm actually in dire straits.” If ensuring future supplies of raw materials was the primary incentive for MMS, another concern was the over-all commercial viability of the Luvuvhu Valley. The farmers in MMS owned upstream facilities, nurseries and a supply company with the future profitability which depended on a vibrant agricultural economy in the Luvuvhu Valley. Meanwhile, there was also the issue of the time and energy expended in establishing the market, both in South Africa and overseas, which would show limited return of restitution in the Luvuvhu Valley was to be a failure” (Fraser, 2006: 306).

So, these were necessities impelling in the direction of performing the role that the government has been looking to them to perform. There were also conditions of a more facilitative sort regarding the transition process between individual private ownership and the partnership arrangement. Hugely important here was that under South Africa's labour law, they were going to be able to draw on the knowledge of existing workers on

the land to be restituted. This knowledge was important because, as another farmer noted, the transition from one owner to the next could be problematic:

*Especially considering the fact that on the farms that were taken over "...it took me days to actually discover the irrigation system. When we bought the farm, the grass was this high, I cut the grass and I said ok, he has irrigation" ... "ok, if he's got irrigation, he must have a main line and a valve". And I took all six of my people and asked them to look around for a valve and it took me a week's chopping down of trees and there wasn't one because it wasn't connected--- you don't take over farm and run it. If you take over this farm, you're not going to run it like I've been running it. It's going to take you at least 12 (twelve) months to get yourself"* (Interview with D.E. Ravele, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; Fraser, 2006: 302). However, the farm workers were critical. In another sense not only were they a source of knowledge, if MMS could alter the organizational structure and the division of labour on the farms, then that could enable a radical reduction in the cost of the overall operation. One farmer who was affiliated to MMS commented on this aspect in this way:

*You must look at how people have farmed up till now in South Africa--- you had a white farm owner and a black worker, traditionally what you call a "boss boy". And he was actually doing most of the work. It's going to be a three-year phasing in where you have to change these guys, these black farm managers. Because even though they have done the work, they didn't assume responsibility. You have to get them to a point where they assume responsibility like in my farm manager: they're all black, ok. They run their farms as if it's their own property. They assume full management responsibilities. They know exactly what the cost impacts of each decision was, and they know how it impacts on their incentive bonus at the end of the year. Now that the system was not in place in the Luvuvhu Valley, under the traditional system, but the people were there. And I don't think those people were different from my people --- you have to go in and change their mindset".*

The essence of this passage is that regardless of not having been born in the farming environment or trained for the same environment, the black farm worker was as good in his/ her job and thus needed to be appreciated for his/ her presence and value in seeing the same farm productive and prospering; hence they needed to be appreciated and

valued for their presence and contribution to the success, progress and welfare of the farm. Their experience had to be recognised and what they have learned informally should have been accorded 'recognition of prior learning' (RPL), for lack of a better word. In short, they equally belong to the farming equation because regardless of lack of formal training they possessed the technical expertise acquired from years of working on the farm in whatever section they had been made to be responsible for. Therefore, they remained integral part of the agribusiness, if one should call it that way, and they also deserve 'their place in the sun', especially as beneficiaries of land restitution.

According to Mathivha (N.S. Mathivha was interviewed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; Fraser, 2006: 300; Derman et. al., 2010: 307-309) and flowing from above it is a question of managing those guys and integrating the different management philosophies. Given the secrecy mentioned earlier about the Ravele land restitution committee and by looking the passage, one would then say that the same committee was shooting itself in the proverbial foot by closing the ordinary members of the community out of the equation. It was against this background that it was significant from the perspective of that understanding that the coming together of various contingents of South Africa, that the white settler farmers of the MMS were in a position to draw on that expertise, owing to the protection of farm workers in terms of South Africa's farm labour laws. Examples are the Agricultural Labour Act of 1993 and the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 both which provide protection for farm workers. It is the belief of the current researcher that what Mathivha above offered was a proverbial 'olive branch' to the strategic partners that it should have considered the opportunities of exploiting. This could have helped the partners achieve a smooth transition, especially given the fact that the beneficiaries may have expected jobs to become available on what they hoped would be their land, and farmland for that matter (Mayson, 2003: 43). In essence, though the Labour Law would have enabled the partners to resist any call for widespread redeployment of workers. In the main the members of beneficiary communities would eventually have replaced these workers and farm managers. But since there was no little relief, one of the MMS farmers explained it this way (Fraser, 2006: 209-301; Interview with M.M. Netshisaulu, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021):

*You have got Labour Law in South Africa, which makes it practically impossible to dismissals them (the current workforce), which I'm so glad about. So, yes through*

*normal attrition, in ten years you might definitely train a new class of managers. It makes absolute sense (but) if you want to dismiss a farm manager of 20 (twenty) years' experience, and you want to dismiss a few thousand people, then you're looking for a serious pain.*

Thus, this calculation of the MMS to become a strategic partner encompassed a wide range of aspects, from the need to secure a supply of raw materials so that the returns on earlier, long-lasting investments could be achieved, to ensure that the problems in the institutional period were minimized (Derman et. al., 2010: 307-310). Furthermore, courtesy of restitution, the agribusiness would be making gains from far more land than they ever controlled before restitution (Fraser, 2006: 209-301). Therefore, despite the risks and challenges that lay ahead for a strategic partner such as MMS, a large windfall might have been in the offering, had the post-restitution environment been negotiated effectively. Such was the scenario in the Luvuvhu Valley where no assets were being bought, but they were being acquired for three times or four times or even five times more of the market price assets, within an environment where 50% (fifty percent) of the investment was being given to MMS to the value of R150m. Therefore, MMS was reaping the fruits of investment at high costs without as much as lifting the proverbial finger at the expense of the ordinary beneficiary who were being left to wallow in secrecy (Interview with Adolf Ravele, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022). Regardless of all these developments, MMS failed as a potential strategic partner because it was later liquidated (Fraser, 2006: 310). Flowing from above, it is prudent for the study to look at the 'white settler farmers and land restitution'.

## **8.6 White Settler Farmers and Land Restitution**

South Africa's programme of land restitution was a response to a highly unequal colonial and apartheid distribution of land along racial lines and an attempt by the democratic government to redress the injustices of forced removals and other restitutions. As a result, the government set a goal to restitute 30% (thirty percent) of agricultural land by 2014. Restitution was one of two main land restitution programs intended to meet this target. The first ANC government's law on restitution has focused on the restitution of land rights to persons or communities who were relocated after the 19<sup>th</sup> of June 1913; which was in terms of a racially discriminatory laws, the 1913 Land Act and the 1936



Natives Trust and Land Acts (See also Lahiff, 2001: 227; Ramutsindela, 2003: 15; Hall, 2004: 213).

It was possibly the most emotive of all the laws in South Africa's restitution programme. The emotional aspects of the law had to do with the outpouring of collective memory and grief by the land restitution claimants, many of whom experienced the often-violent forced removals that dispossessed them and relocated them of their land (Platzky and Walker, 1995: 58). The fact of the matter is that land claims for restitution have had important material and cultural ramifications for both the claimants and the owners. Therefore, while this was widely considered as a first step in improving livelihoods and reducing poverty, in many cases, on the one hand it was also about returning to places where the claimants' ancestors were buried and where they could in turn be buried alongside them. On the other the white settler farmers expressed their own emotional attachment to the land, an element in the land restitution programme which complicated the whole situation considerably (Bond, 2000: 21; Interview with an unnamed official of the Limpopo Land Claims Commission, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021)

In addition to the above, the programme was also developing into one of the most controversial and potentially most tricky for the democratic government. In the case of the government, the trickiness of the land restitution lay precisely in the complexities of acquiring highly particular, non-substitute pieces of land from the white farmers, many of whom did not want to sell (Platzky and Walker, 1995: 58). Unlike in restitution, then, under which programme white farmers experienced more general pressures, to sell the land. However, where the government could accomplish its purpose by confining its dealings to willing sellers, achieving closure of the land restitution programme meant that the government had to acquire land, even from farmers who wanted to remain on it. The result was that more cases of expropriation of farmers government were most likely to come into conflict and precisely because, of necessity, restitution targeted particular pieces of land for restitution (Interview with an unnamed official of the Limpopo Land Claims Commission, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021)

Bond, 2000: 21).

Both the restitution and restitution programme were underpinned by so-called market-led or market assisted principles. The market-led approach, which embraces(d)

negotiated settlements within the 'willing seller and willing buyer' principle at the prospect of state-led expropriation of private property was intense, despite assurance to the contrary from the ANC government and the new Constitution which enshrined the protection of private property rights (Platzky and Walker, 1995: 58). Since then, numerous observers and scholars about South Africa and its land restitution programme have argued that the adoption of the market-led approach was part of the ANC's attempt to avoid sending the wrong message to the likes of international credit rating agencies (ICRA) and potential investors, but also to the domestic capital and white settlers more generally (Deininger, 1990: 21; Bond, 2000: 21). The fear was that South Africa would follow the African basket case (later known as the Zimbabwe-style expropriation) road to land restitution. However, adherence to a market-led approach had meant that the allocation to land restitution from the national budget was critical. This was because the state had to find the money to pay market values for the land purchased from white settler farmers. Although the budget allocation had been criticized as being too minimal in recent years (Kepe and Cousins, 2001: 17; Walker, 2003: 19) the government has now begun to make increased budgetary allowances (Umhlaba Wethu, 2005). It is against the discussion on the white settler farmers' attitude that the discussion below moves on to the issue of the critical position and role of white farmers on land restitution.

### **8.7 The Role of White Farmers in Land Restitution**

Implicit in the proceeding discussion was that, in numerous ways, white farmers-cum-landowners had a key role to play in land restitution in South Africa. However, their behavior, ranging from the eviction of black farm workers and/ or those who had settled and grew up on the same land for many years to selling or refusing to the sell land, fundamentally affected the overall programme and its processes. Yet although they were often duplicated as racist and opponents of land restitution, there were many cases of them trying to play a more positive role (Mayson, 2003: 45). Some of these individuals invoked share equity schemes, consultation services to land restitution beneficiaries and even the critical issue partnership. Nevertheless, there were still cases of farmers voicing their opposition to the state land restitution approach, like it happened at the land summit of August 2005 that took place in Pretoria (*Mail and Guardian*, 2005b), where and when they threatened an armed struggle (*Mail and Guardian* 2005c) and obstructed the process through refusing government agencies to perform land inspections (*This*

*Day, 2005; Soutpansberger, 2004*), or by manipulating the process to secure private gains (*Business Day, 2005*). All of these developments drew attention to the more negative role that the white farmers often played in the restitution programme.

Surprisingly, despite their significance to the unfolding land restitution issue, there was a major silence in the land restitution literature in South Africa about them, about their actions, and the limits to, and possibilities for action (Mayson, 2003: 45). This begs the question what motivates(ed) white farmers to engage in the land restitution process in different ways, which something that a critical significance to the country's land policy implications. One particular and pressing question was why many white settler farmers refused to sell the land that was identified for restitution despite the availability to financial compensation by government. After all, the theory of market-led land restitution suggested that compensation would have led to sufficient numbers of farmers, especially from the northern part of the Limpopo Province, where incidentally the Luvuvhu Valley happens to be located, not selling because experience has shown that financial compensation alone has not been enough to encourage white settler farmers to sell their land (Kepe and Cousins, 2001: 17; Walker, 2003: 19; *Soutpansberger, 2004*, Commission on Restitution of Land Rights, 2011).

In addition to the above, another question was how changes in the organisation of agriculture in South Africa would have affected the way farmers negotiated the land restitution. In case in point is that of Mather and Greenberg (2003: 410), who have noted that the deregulation of the agricultural industry in 1996, which led to the disbandment of marketing boards and let market forces rip in the sector, has led to increased differentiation between those who could and could not take advantage of 'purer' market conditions. In their study of the citrus sector in the Cape, these authors noted that market power had shifted away from produce to privately-owned, large citrus enterprises (Mather and Greenberg, 2003: 411). Furthermore, at issue was how differentiation among farmers along class lines has affected the position from which farmers negotiated land restitution. The current researcher is of the view that such scenarios have further complicated the government's intentions and expectations for a speedy land restitution process.

## 8.8 White Settler Farmers' Resistance to Land Restitution

It has been widely acknowledged that the land question in South Africa has remained one of great serious challenges fraught with implications for the legitimacy of the state (Bernstein, 2004; Lahiff, 2001: 27; Walker, 2003: 19). Therefore, the ANC government's land restitution programme has triggered great interest down the years. Although, as mentioned earlier, the goal was to restitute 30% (thirty percent) of agricultural land by 2014, the overall programme has been fraught with political tension, including tension between the potential beneficiaries and the government, between farmers and other landowners *vis-à-vis* the beneficiaries of restitution or tenure restitution, as well as between white settler farmers and the government (Kepe and Cousins, 2001: 17; Walker, 2003: 19). The completion of the restitution programme nationally and in the Limpopo Province, in particular, where land claims for restitution were widespread, affected almost all white-owned land and in which racial tension was highlighted on the process, depended heavily on the ability of the government to purchase land from white settler farmers (Mather and Greenberg, 2003: 411). This was because farmers were expected to agree to sell under the 'willing-seller-willing-buyer' principle, an approach which underpinned land restitutions had powers of expropriation under the Restitution of Land Rights Act 1994 (*Mail and Guardian*, 2005). Nevertheless, the very possibility of expropriation has affected the calculations of white settler landowners who are/ were affected by the restitution programme. Although a relatively smaller number of a farmers, who count to less than 100 (one hundred) have/ had agreed to sell their farms in the Luvuvhu Valley, most showed resistance by refusing to sell (Lahiff, 2007: 1577-1579).

The fundamental reasons for farmers refusing to sell have been poorly understood in the literature on land restitution in South Africa, mainly because the white settler farmers believe that they had transformed the land, battled with nature, and overcome numerous obstacles in the course of making the land profitable (Lahiff, 2007: 1577-1579). These experiences outwash ideas of personal independence, a sense of their own importance, a sense of social significance locally and to South Africa as a whole, all which they see threatened in various ways by the restitution process (Lahiff, 2007: 1577-1579). This has obviously flown against the fact that the same land they have/ had developed and made profitable was acquired through nefarious means; something that the same farm owners generally choose to sweep under the carpet. Therefore, the current researcher

has chosen to show how race was closely tied to the white settler farmers' ideology of identities. In essence, through an essential reading of their African counterparts, for example, they have constructed a theory of African inadequacies to farming to justify their resistance. The current researcher would like to furthermore advance that if Africans have/ had been found to be inadequate in farming, the fault must be laid squarely at the door of the colonial and apartheid administration as well as the same white farmers. Essentially, they are/ were the ones who pre-emptily assumed that Africans could not practice commercial farming, even if they could be given an opportunity, that they were poor managers and were a superstitious 'lot' who had an irrational understanding of life. Flowing from above, many white settler farmers argued that their staying on the land was best for the nation as a whole (Lahiff, 2007: 1577-1579). They claimed that such that they also connected with an interesting, and quite authentic, sense of patriotism, in terms of the concept of a South African from which most South Africans would reconcile (*Mail and Guardian*, 2005).

The current researcher has also argued that social relations among South Africans as a whole were not just about identities, rather, there were also very real material concerns. The farmers also raised a concern about a patchwork of restituted land, because while some white settler farmers have/ had agreed to sell their land and others refused to do so, the outcome would create a loss of beneficial externalities or synergies, or (worse, for the farmers) the emergence of more Africans as their neighbours. They even and raised the stereotypical concerns about stock theft and threats to physical security (Umhlaba Wethu, 2005)). Having said that, the current researcher would like to tease the mind of the reader that this exposes the undertones of a racial mindset of the white farmers who continue(ed) to accept that the new South Africa was for all races and that they had to learn to live together in love, peace and harmony: they viewed Africans with the lens of everything negative and unprogressive. Interestingly, the white farmers hid behind the cloak of raising material concerns which extended to the farmers understanding of their prospects in South Africa as a whole (Lahiff, 2007: 1577-1579). Unsurprisingly, they even expressed concern about the difficulties of establishing new enterprises elsewhere in the country, the problem of high land prices, as well as fear that fashioning a life outside of farming would be difficult in the context of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) as a result of their relations to their locality and to South Africa as a whole. In essence, this meant that the white settler farmers regarded staying

where they were as their best option, the implication being that selling the land that was identified for restitution was not at all desirable (Fraser, 2006: 299).

Another argument with respect to the resistance of white settler farmer brings together the socio-political issues of territory and class. Particularly important in terms of interpreting the situation in the Limpopo Province, and the Luvuvhu Valley in particular, was the emergent role of white agribusinesses. These have positioned themselves to become partners in potentially lucrative deals with the beneficiaries of land restitution once ownership of the farms had been transferred (Lahiff, 2007: 1577-1579). In terms of their commitment to territory, particular places, agribusinesses and a few of the wealthier seller farmers (who were among the groups of willing sellers and who have/had the resources to make a relatively costless exit) saw opportunities in restitution for themselves and were quite a bit less intense than most of the white settler farmers, particularly the unwilling sellers (Mather and Greenberg, 2003: 65). The current researcher would like to argue that the reader needs to understand that the differences between willing and unwilling sellers in terms of a social differentiation within the agricultural sector that were found elsewhere in the world. This was one emergent big capitalist sector grouped around agribusiness and which controlled the inputs to agriculture, as well as the processing and marketing of its outputs. Therefore, in the South African scenario the power was obviously shifting towards the latter (Mather and Greenberg, 2003: 65). The reality of the matter is/ was that the more capitalist players have/ had buying power with respect to agricultural outputs, they also have/ had selling power in terms of their control of inputs of seeds, fertilizer, herbicides, machinery and consulting. Part of the power was also geographic: they were not as locally dependent as the petty bourgeoisie because they could spread risks geographically or sectorally, by investing in different sorts of business. Therefore, players in the more capitalist sector were also generating resentment from the more petty-bourgeois farmers and would do so, regardless of restitution (Mather and Greenberg, 2003: 68). This was evident from some of the claims that smaller farmers made during the interviews for this study.

Therefore, the current researcher suggests that resistance from the more small-scale white settler farmers made sense in terms of their petty-bourgeois class position, because this was apparent in diverse ways, and would be so even if agribusiness was not on the horizon and they were just going to be replaced by another petty bourgeois

farming stratum, except an African one (Sepaela, 2006: 59). The current researcher has further argued that an understanding of the resistance from white settler farmers required an attention to questions of identity: the identity of white settler farmers with their locality and what they believe they have achieved in that geographical space; they identified with South Africa such that both senses were intertwined with material interests in staying where they were, given the uncertainties of recent changes in South Africa (Sepaela, 2006: 61). Furthermore, the current researcher has also demonstrated that it was class option of the white settler farmers that really made the difference, which argument the current researcher agrees some readers might find controversial (Fraser, 2005: 302). While acknowledging that South Africa was a highly racialized society and that the identity politics of white settler farmers was closely connected to the question of race, many studies of the resistance of white settler farmers to change have shown that the farmers would have been in a defensive posture even if the claimants were white settlers. The current researcher has showed that, while their resistance was about their relations to their locality and South Africa as a whole, they strongly believed that the state was erring in replacing white with African farmers, especially because the politics of space in South Africa was very much the politics of class (Fraser, 2006: 303; Interview with George Ravele, 14 March 2021). Given the discussions on the subtopics above, the significance of land restitution in the Limpopo Province deserves attention.

## **8.9 Land Restitution in the Limpopo Province**

According to Hall (2004: 18) 5 809 (five thousand eight-hundred and nine) restitution claims for land had been lodged in the Limpopo Province by 1998. Many of these claims affected just over 3000 (three thousand) white-owned farms with just over 3000 (three thousand) of these white farmers located outside the densely populated former homeland areas of the Limpopo Province: Venda, Gazankulu and Lebowa. Around two thousand of the original 5809 claims in Limpopo (Hall, 2004:14) remained unsettled and many were claims for restitution on some of the province's most valuable land. That so many claims remained unsettled reflects not just the resistance of many white farmers to selling the land that has been identified by the government for restitution, but also the caution with which the officials of the Limpopo Provincial government have approached the land restitution programme, as well as the more general problem in the delivery of the envisaged land (Hall, 2004: 15). Having said that, the slow pace of the process of

land restitution has been frustrating for the claimants. It has also affected them to the point where that it has brought to fruition the intention of taking money and get on with their lives. As in other parts of South Africa, post-liberation business concentration and increased competition was evident in agriculture in the northern part of the Limpopo Province, especially in the Luvuvhu Valley. In the Luvuvhu Valley area, for example, a group of private farmers purchased the supply store that originally belonged to the local co-operative farmers and expanded into the downstream facilities such as juice production, nut cracking and fruit drying as well as animal skin processing. They also focussed on the issue of restitution and marketing channels that connected operations in the Luvuvhu Valley directly to foreign buyers, with the result that market power has shifted to the more capitalist sector at the same time as labour laws and prices squeezes by foreign retailers have increased competitive pressures (Hall, 2004: 15).

As such, and as was noted by many white settler farmers “I’m a farmer and I’m only a farmer. No managing boards and banana boards. You are not a businessman, you do not know how to do your cash flow, your balance sheet? You won’t make it.” Fraser, 2006: 303; Department of Land Affairs, 2004). Regarding the Luvuvhu Valley, which is located about 45 (forty-five) kilometres east of the town of Louis Trichardt, the area consists of around 10000 (ten thousand) hectares of highly productive land on which around 200 (two hundred) white settler farmers produce export quality crops, primarily avocados, mangoes, macadamia nuts and bananas. All the farms in the value have been claimed under the land restitution programme, wherein the claims have referred to the forced removals from the Valley between 1921 and the late 1930s. A partnership between agribusiness and claimants was intended to oversee the management of the farms over a 15 (fifteen) year period. Government officials have repeatedly stated that the remaining farms would be returned to the claimants. Yet it appears that unless the farmers who refused to sell changed their stance, the government would have to issue an expropriation order to acquire the land. This brings to the fore the question the reasons of so many white settler farmers for refusing to sell their land (Hall, 2004: 14-15).



## **8.10 Restitution in the Northern Part of Limpopo Province: Soutpansberg District**

One area of the country in which numerous claims for restitution have been lodged and yet remained largely unsettled is in the far northern part of the Limpopo Province (particularly in the Luvuvhu Valley, which is the subject of this study). The Limpopo Province has a population of 5, 926, 724 million people (Statistics South Africa, 2021), almost half of the labour force of around 1.3 million people were unemployed. Just over 3000 white settler farmers owned farms outside of the densely populated farmer homeland areas. The Limpopo Province had an employment of around 75 000 workers by 2005 (Statistics South Africa, 2005b), which had declined by 10% as of March 2021, meaning the first quarter (2021 Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Statistics South Africa).

As it has been mentioned by Hall (2004: 18) above, around 2000 (two thousand) claims for land restitution remained unsettled, which the current researcher believes reflected on the degree of resistance by white settler farmers who refused to sell the land that has been identified for restitution to the government, the manner in which the officials have approached the process of land restitution, and the more general problem in the delivery on the promise for restitution (Hall; 2004:18). While the slow pace has been frustrating for all involved in the restitution programme and the claimants obviously wanted and deserved to have their land back as soon as possible, the white settler farmers have had to operate under quite server uncertainty about the land in question. To aggravate the situation, it has been especially frustrating for the small number of white settler farmers who were prepared to sell and would like to see the land restitution process brought to its conclusion (Hall, 2004: 18).

This study was primarily interested in the claims for the restitution of the land from people who were forcibly removed and subsequently dispossessed whereafter they were relocated elsewhere soon after the enactment of Land Act of 1913 and its sister Act, the Natives Trust and Land Act of 1936. These claims were either lodged by the direct victims of the removal or their descendant who were affected by these legislation especially in the vicinity of the Soutpansberg Mountain, and in the Luvuvhu Valley in particular. In essence the general restitution process was an issue of significant magnitude in the northern part of the Limpopo Province which predominantly farmland. I was for this reason that the study raised questions about the history of white settlers'

Settlement Scheme within the Valley which resulted in the relocation of black South Africans of different languages and cultures *en masse*, and thus losing the right to land (Hall, 2004: 18). The result was that the future of commercial agriculture, which was a major source of employment in the area brought into focus the capacity of the government and its political will to improve the lives of black South Africans or even commit to their socio-political welfare after they lost so much during the process of dispossession.

Most of the claims for restitution in the Luvuvhu Valley referred to the land on which white settler farmers have created profitable, intensive export-oriented farming, with far-reaching assistance from successive white-only government. The case of Luvuvhu value translated into an export-oriented agricultural area of around 10 000 (ten thousand) hectares of land, which employs(ed) thousands of workers, and for which purchases of supplies and equipment contributed to the economics of the nearby towns such as Louis Trichardt and Thohoyandou reference. The democratic government had recognized the validity of seven claims in the Luvuvhu Valley during the first phase of land claims which started in 1998 (Hall, 2004: 18). However, following this the same government had been hesitant to settle these pieces of land and directly transfer the land to the claimants without attaching far-reaching conditions. A major source of the hesitance of the government was the fear that the claimants lacked the skills and know-how to manage the land and maintain commercial agricultural enterprises reference. Ironically, the claimants for land restitution had been deliberately closed out of benefitting from the management of the as well as the involvement in commercial agricultural enterprises. The current researcher would like to advance that for the democratic government to pre-emptily write black South Africans off from commercial agriculture after years of deprivation, instead of taking steps to empower them in the sector smacked of betrayal.

Experience elsewhere in South Africa, including the Limpopo Province, has shown that direct transfers of land without sufficient post-settlement support; (Jacobs, 2003: 78; Hall, 2004: 23) or what might be referred to as 'after-care' (Deminger, 1999: 22) could have led to restitution failures that were bordered on the embarrassment to the government as well as a threat to its version and vision for development. The solution by the government to this problem in Luvuvhu Valley has been to privatize the post-

settlement process by brokering deals between agribusiness and the claimants in the form of 15 (fifteen years) strategic partnership(s) (Deminger, 1999: 22). The manner in which these partnership arrangements emerged, what they entailed, and what they meant for the land restitution programme as a whole has been an issue with which this deals quite closely and was intended to be a major contribution to the literature on land restitution in South Africa, particularly in the Luvuvhu Valley.

Bradstock (2004: 1) has noted, that “white land restitution groups have individuals who have worked on white commercial farms with the majority of its members who have no theoretical or practical knowledge of farming”. Therefore, that apartheid has denied the beneficiaries of restitution of land the opportunity to obtain the skills required to intensive commercial agriculture goes without saying (Keet, 2006: 23). The result has been that the claimant communities would form a Joint Venture Company (JVC) with one of two agribusinesses based in the Limpopo Province (hereafter referred to as strategic partners (SPs), whereafter the JVC would pay an annual lease to its respective communities, the result being that any profit from the managed land would be divided between the SP and the communities, and the SP would launch a skills transfer plan to ensure that members of the community would acquire the know-how to take control of the land at the end of the 15 (fifteen-year) period (Bradstock, 2004: 1). It was under these conditions that the first 4000 (four thousand) hectares of land in the Luvuvhu Valley acquired by the government from willing sellers would be managed.

It remains unclear whether the government would require the remaining 6000 (six thousand) hectares through the process of expropriation. There was no indication at the time of the research that the state had or would exercise its expropriation power on farms left to be restituted, much as the government has insisted that the land would not be transferred to the claimants if they did not agree to enter into partnership. (Deminger, 1999: 22). However, what was remarkable about the case of the Luvuvhu Valley was just how the land would be used. As with similar restrictions that have been imposed in other parts of the country on how claimants could use the land that had been transferred that the government was telling the rightful landowners that the concept ‘rightful’, was in terms of the liberation ideology of the ANC what they could and could not do (Bradstock, 2004: 1; Keet, 2006: 13). A case in point is that of claims regarding national parks, such as the Makuleke claim in Kruger National Park (Ramutsindela, 2002: 5) which was

settled without the full transfer of ownership right which meant that stakes have been transferred under strict conditions: some claimants have found that “they may not sell, mortgage lease or land – nor do they have unfettered scope to use the land themselves (Hall, 2004: 22; Mayson, 2013: 45; Interview with M. Netshisaulu, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2020).

### **8.11 White Settler Farmers’ Resistance against Restitution in the Luvuvhu Valley**

Some of the factors which have caused white settler farmers to resist against the restitution of land in the Luvuvhu Valley were the relations between the farmers, place and farmworkers, as was in the case both at local and national scale, where part of the reasons for resistance related to farmers identities (Hall, 2004: 22; Mayson, 2013: 45; Interview with M. Netshisaulu, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2020). Flowing from this has been that the experience of farming a particular piece of land, often with the historical association of a personal character, had given the white settler farmers a sense of their own self-worth, which was used as an excuse to make it difficult for them to leave the land. These issues came from to light from the white settler farmers. (Derman et.al., 2010: 320). Added to this were spatial imagination, stories about their position in the locality and in South Africa as a whole which were accompanied by issues of material interest, concerns about the future viability of farming in the area as well as concerns about what would happen if they sold their farms and moved on. These claims about identities with, and interest in, particular places then set up the second argument, which turned attention to territory and class and their interpersonal relations (Hall, 2004: 22; Mayson, 2013: 45)

#### **8.11.1 Adaptation to the Luvuvhu Valley *vis-à-vis* Adaptation to the New Area**

It should not come as much of a surprise that the white settler farmers expressed a strong bond to the land they have learned to live and grow on, such that they knew no other land. They even explained how they and their forefathers had transformed the area through experience, blood and sweat and worries, and also expressed how they battled nature in transforming the land and overcoming hardship thus (Du Toit, 2004: 24):

*It was very difficult, we were very poor, had no water and the was area infected with malaria. There was no infrastructure. This road here was built by my father with two*

*oxen and a plough, so there was no infrastructure. Therefore, what happened then was these people arrived here and started farming but as poor as mice my father was 16 years old. He didn't even have shoes.*

Therefore, the white settler farmers identified themselves as people of the soil, people of the land, in accordance with Afrikaner nationalism, that their “forefathers started 400 (four hundred) years ago and trekked as well as fought with malaria and lack of infrastructure in order to build this and to leave this for us. You can still see their graves around here. We’re stubborn people persistent, strong-willed and independent.’ (Giliomee, 2003: 63). It was little wonder then that farming the land was important to their sense of social significance, their sense of having achieved something since farming was central to their identities, something they enjoyed, and something that gave them a strong sense of pride in what they do, did and have done down the years. Thus, the following statement by white settler farmers was a common refrain among those who refused to sell. “I’m bonded to this place. I have roots on this place. I have 100 years of roots on their place. I could see what my grandfather did, I could see what my father did...this land was our land...this was my father land” (Dewald, 2000: 512).

According to the current researcher, the tie to the land that farmers expressed, and which confirms the aspect of the story of Afrikaner identity, was also closely intertwined with their identities as whites as an integral part of their identities as whites. Moreover, there is, and was, the stereotypical understanding who they were in contrast to others, especially black South Africans. Therefore, the white settler farmers draw/ drew contrast with African, their ‘other’, contrasts that paint themselves in a positive light and which, in turn, paint black South African in a negative light as expressed in the preceding pages, which then fuels(ed) their sense of justice at seeing the land given back to people who, in their view, were and remained incapable of being food farmers and entrepreneurs (Dewald, 2000: 512).

Therefore, there were serious doubts about the plan of the government to transfer land to black South Africans, with the prophets of doom in the form of white settler farmers claiming that it would prove fatal for South Africa, given various inadequacies of black South Africans about which the white settler farmers believed they had first-hand evidence (Du Toit, 2004: 24). The great South African hand was referred to as further

evidence of these shortcomings when they claimed evidence of these inadequacies: Africans were depicted as poor farmers who could not manage, who were not commercially oriented and, therefore should not be entrusted with the land. These sorts of racist, essentialist viewpoints were widely held (Du Toit, 2004: 24). For example, again a contrasted commercial outlook of white farmers with one of an African farmworker; which contrast highlighted the essence of African agriculture and hence the need for white farmers is depicted below (Du Toit, 2004: 24).

*When you drive here along the mountain, you would see the mountain there was all cut down. Scattered pieces of land. It was bush but now it's all cut down. They were planting maize there. You'll see them small plots of land, small little blocks, each and every one has a small block. One of my workers has piece up there. I supplied the seed and I supplied fertilizer to him to plant maize. He had a good crop. He was very, very satisfied with the crop which was 22 bags. Big bags. So I asked him, were you selling them, the extra bags because you could only use one bag a month? He said, "No, this year I won't plant" that's the mentality of the people. They were real subsistence farmers"*

To the white settler farmers, the 'gospel truth' was that entrusting the land to black South Africans, then, would lead to managed, land given the Africans' different, inferior approach to farming. Issues of land management, however, were about much more than how to approach farming. The impression was that the problem with black South Africans was that they lacked respect from other Africans and hence they could not manage the farm enterprise effectively. A different picture could have been painted had the white commercial farmers made black South Africans their partners in agricultural development throughout the years, instead of adopting a policy of racial exclusion and regarding Africans as subhuman, backward and uncultured. The passage below further captures the mentality of white settler farmers (Dewald, 2000: 512):

*I think it's a matter of managing people to do the job. But they have mentality of well my boss was black so why should I listen to what he was saying? This portion here that we bought... belonged to a black man. He bought here land for millions of rand but eventually he couldn't manage. Why not? Because he was black. He couldn't manage his people. It depends on the management and nothing else.*

However, this is what one may refer to as ‘the story of my life’ of being denigrated and written on all front without being given the platform to unlock that potential. The current researcher would like to describe this as the fear of the unknown based on racial connotations, instead of starting the journey of socio-economic development together centuries ago without defining and designing the racial divide. Therefore, this has come down to the way whites have constructed stereotypes about black South Africans as irrational, superstitious and/ or backward. Thus, they made the following claim (Dewald, 2000: 512):

*One thing that was a huge problem to the African people themselves believe everybody was born equal. If somebody has more than the next person, he has more because he took from someone else and, therefore, they don't appreciate one person getting up and servicing or making a profit. That's not good to them. Because he's got some muti somewhere, that's why he's getting more.*

This claim was supported by Dewald (2000: 512) who suggested that: “successful people were a threat to Africans, in that they see their inability to do what you could see that there were continuous people getting killed to witchcraft or this or that, but it always relates back to somebody that has been successful in some way and the rest not liking it”.

Thus, these essentialist notions about Africans raised serious doubts in the mind of white settler farmers about the prospect for agriculture if land was transferred back to South Africa. The farmers believed the government was gambling by restituting land currently owned by whites, they believed that transferring commercial farms to unproven black South Africans was potentially disastrous for locality and for the country. In contrast to their African other, then, the white farmers explained that South Africa needed their skills. It was, or so they claimed, the skills and resilience of the white farmers who in their mind made South Africa so productive. Hennie, for example, stressed that (Manenzhe, 2015: 69):

*It's difficult to farm here. When you go north into Africa up to the tropics, you have enormous piece of fertile and rich land, good climate, rich soil, lots of water. But there's nothing going on there. Emergency supplies were being handed out by the UN and other*

*European countries. Now in south it's going well because we have few commercial farmers sticking to their guns, producing enough food to feed the nation.*

If they were forced to sell under restitution, then the country would lose their skills. Important to understand here was that the white settler farmers expressed a strong sense of caring about what happened to South Africa. Their identities as South Africans, then, were an important element in their concern about the prospects of land restitution. Thus, they decried the particular way that the government had pursued land restitution because it had limited their opportunities to contribute. This could be seen in the following claim by Gert (Fraser, 2006: 300-301):

*I still think we could make a large contribution towards the development of this area. The country was going to lose that. I think we could have contributed to the welfare of most of Africa. We were born here and we know the land. It was our father land. We have got an affection for this place, and we would very much like to make a positive contribution.*

Trevor expressed this differently. He said, "I'm that thing that South Africa needs: it's called an entrepreneur" what the farmer express, then, was a strong feeling of exclusion from the picture, of the government ignoring their claim to the land and their arguments about the future of south Africa. The state was therefore mistaken in forcing them to sell because, "that's years of knowledge that goes down to drain if we leave and we'd like to think we still have a part to play here" (Fraser, 2006: 302)

To summarize the argument so far, this was about forming the white settler farmers' identities, their sense of social significance, and by giving them opportunities to draw comparisons with their African other, and sense of their importance to South Africa as a whole. The current researcher had shown how the farmers had strong nationalist feelings, a concept of South Africa that stands in stark contrast to the 'rainbow nation' sentiment that the ANC has tried to nurture, but one that nevertheless' handed them to argue a national standpoint: how the nation would and could benefit from their efforts and how they wanted to go on making that contribution (Fraser, 2006: 299). Yet land restitution also raised very real material concerns that, on the one hand, gave white settler farmers a stake in shaping what occurred in their respective farming communities, and which, on the other hand engendered a strong sense of inertia, or spatial



entrapment. If neighboring farms were transferred under restitution, for instance, there were fears about what would have happened if they had Africans as neighbours. For some of the more mobile farmers, those for whom selling was not so much of a problem, this was indeed one of the reasons for selling. There were also concerns, which Fraser express below, that a loss of productivity on some of the transferred farm would have led to a loss of desirable externalities as suppliers or distributors would have gone out of business (Fraser, 2006: 299):

*The first thing to disappear would be your transport contractor because you do not have the products to move anymore. The second thing would be your local suppliers of agricultural products: implements, tools, chemical, fertilizers, etc. and then your supermarket would go. Your café would go, your tire dealer would go, so in the end you'll have nothing. We've built on this (infrastructure) for sixty years now.*

Concerns about livelihoods, profits, future returns on the investment extended beyond what would happen if there was land restitution. Rather, conditions in South Africa were regarded as particularly worrying. Selling and moving elsewhere was not quite as straight-forward as one might expect. There were, for example, worries about finding ecological conditions that matched their agricultural skills if they decided to buy alternative land. This could be seen in the following quote from Jan (Fraser, 2006: 306):

*The question was what I do with compensation? Because there's no farms where I could farm with macadamia or guava, which was my main crops, that I could buy which wasn't under land claims.*

However, there were also issues about buying land elsewhere and the fear that, if indeed they did so, they would again have to face up to the challenge of land restitution. Wounded, for example, stated, "I've been around, been to the Cape, Northern Cape, Upington and all those places. There were a lot of opportunities. But the same (land restitution) laws were going to catch me there". This was echoed by one of the younger farmers in the Luvuvhu Valley, Johannes: "there were guys that say, no, just sell and go and buy a place somewhere else: I don't know, a few years and you find that place was claimed as well and then you must leave there as well" (Fraser, 2006: 306).

Other problems arose when the farmers considered starting enterprises outside of agriculture. BEE policies, for example, were understood by white settler farmers as limiting the freedom of white entrepreneurs to operate without interference from the government such that starting a new business was not appealing, which combined with the other constraints to engender a feeling of spatial entrapment. This could be seen in the following statement by Jan (Fraser, 2006: 307):

*If you want to go into business you've got this BEE thing. The soft option was to leave South Africa. But that has its own problem because am not going to set residence in any first-world country in the world. So where must I relocate to? You're an economic prisoner to South Africa. If I go to America, what would I do?*

Finally, few farmers expressed interests in selling land and entering into the non-agricultural labour market, especially in the context of black economic empowerment (BEE) policies that, according to the farmers, would leave them behind women and blacks at the back of the line for jobs. One farmer, Marcus, suggested that: "we wouldn't be able to search for work anywhere else because we're not black" (Fraser, 2006: 307). Another claimed that "if you were a white man under 30 (thirty) forget it, you'll never get a job." One young white settler farmer had the following to say about selling and moving on: "some sell and go and do something else, but where do you go? I mean, we couldn't all do a different job elsewhere else... I'd still like to stay here... it's taking me quite a few years to get knowledge that I have now and now to start from the bottom somewhere else was going to be hard" (Fraser, 2006: 307).

In summary, while farming outwashes(ed) white settler farmers' identities, refusing to sell land was also intertwined with material concerns, fear that entrepreneurial opportunities would not be easy to find outside of agriculture. According to the current researcher the fear had some legitimacy given the class position of white settler farmers in a changing agriculture in which power was shifting to the capitalist sector.

### **8.11.2 Location and Class**

While there were unwilling sellers among the white settler farmers, and they were vociferous, there were also those who were termed willing sellers. This raises the

question as to why some have agreed to sell while others refused to do so. An important matter here was class, more specifically the increasing differentiation between the capitalist and petty-bourgeois farmers, between those who have moved upstream and downstream from farming, performing purely a managerial role, if that, and those who still mixed their own labour with the soil and hoped that their children would want to do the same. As has been noted elsewhere (Mather and Greenberg, 2003: 89) power in South Africa's agriculture has shifted towards the capitalist sector. Important was that some of the agribusinesses that have benefited from the liberation of the sector have positioned themselves to take advantage of the post-graduate environment. One of the main players in the Luvuvhu Valley was a group of local white settler farmers who were willing sellers, in partnership with each other, whose major concern was maintaining the supply of raw materials to their factories and processing facilities in the form of fruit and nuts.

They were also concerned about the prospects of their supply businesses if production on post-restitution farms falls. In other words, the success of their businesses was closely tied up with making a success of land restitution. As a result, they have agreed to enter into the management of the farms. Although there was a degree of spatial entrapment propelling them into partnership, when asked about the motives for entering into the agreement one of the white settler farmers said: "I'm stuck.... I didn't have an option" (Mather and Greenberg, 2003: 89). The more capitalist farmers were nevertheless less committed to the area or even to farming. They could and indeed were already moving some of their capital into new sectors and new geographical regions. Compared with the smaller, petty-bourgeois farmers, they simply were not as locally dependent on farming in the Luvuvhu Valley. Indeed, some of the more capitalist farmers were already looking at options outside of agriculture. As Marius volunteered (Mather and Greenberg, 2003: 71):

*I've been to a lot of courses and tried to look at options (outside of agriculture), but at this stage. I'm thinking to take (my compensation) and move into property and rent it out. That's where I am now. I've started buying property in some places but not in the way that of the land claims don't go through I'm in any trouble, not at all. I'm busy with my pension on another side. The scale "I'm at now, I pay my deposit and the rent would pay the bond".*

Other farmers expressed the willingness to leave South Africa if necessary. Trevor's skills and relatively large base of capital provided a sense of geographic mobility that the others, among them many of the unwilling-sellers, lacked (Manenzhe et al, 2015: 76; Fraser, 2006: 306):

*If am not necessarily relocating money but relocating some of my own skills or some of my children...That's the way to relocate. My children would not stay in agriculture, definitely not, and the chances were they would not stay in South Africa. In fact, I'm pressurizing them not to stay... we're looking all over. I'm involved in the export of citrus. I export 18 different countries of the world and I get to their very regularly. I've got my contacts. It'll actually be really simple to relocate my children's starting point.... I started with nothing, you could do that anywhere in the world.*

The contrast with the more mobile farmers' position was with those who feared selling, moving into other areas, or moving into the non-agricultural labour market, a move that farmers believed was destined for failure because, if you were not black, you could forget about finding the job. Resistance from the petty-bourgeois farmers therefore made sense in terms of their class position, regardless of whether they were about to be replaced by white-owned agribusiness or African land restitution beneficiaries (Manenzhe et al, 2015: 76; Fraser, 2006: 306). They were locked into place since their ecologically specific, crop-specific expertise was so important to their business success (the contract here was with the owner of money capital who could hire people to supervise, hire advisor on what sectors to get involved in, who has the money to be invited to find joint ventures and who therefore, was not so place-bound, who, in fact, would that money capital in order, among other things, to spread risks geographically, even invest in other lines of business, their class position also gave form to their identities( their labour gave them their social position, their social status as independent, as people who mix their labour with their land and capital) (Manenzhe et al, 2015: 76; Fraser, 2006: 306).

Thus, while leaving the area was possible for the farmers who entered into partnership, who could recover their investment, for example, from selling their stake in the partnership to others or by selling their factories ongoing concern, leaving was not so feasible for the smaller scale farmers. Some of the farmers altered the logic of their

arguments such that their relative immobility was presented as a virtue rather than a problem. They stressed their commitment to the Luvuvhu Valley and South Africa as a place, a commitment which the other farmers lacked. One farmer, a leader among those who refused to sell, commented in the following way on the farmers who want to be partners (Walker, 2005: 107):

*The whole philosophy (of the partners) was the following: a group of people in Luvuvhu Valley, a chose group decided that, with the uncertainty of the future and the politics and the South African democracy, it was not safe to have your investment in your land. So they decided amongst themselves, to sell their land. but you must remember they were all business people and I mean business, with import, export, processing businesses, shops, hardware, etc. so what they want to do was to let the land go, reclaim their money and then utilizing whatever is happening in that area to the full potential for the business. Now they were safe, if the poo-poo strikes the fan, they could just leave. That's all. That's all they were interested in. They were preparing themselves to run. They were already putting their running shoes on. Should things that was the pattern in Africa. So in my opinion that was the difference between loyalty to your country and just looking after your own interest. Although this farmers presented has commitment to Luvuvhu Valley and to South Africa as a virtue rather than a problem, it remains the case refuse to sell, their class position-in the face of their fears about leaving agriculture-locks them into the place and fortifies their resistance.*

The current researcher attempted to show how land restitution through the market approach in Luvuvhu Valley could serve to maintain the status quo created by the segregation law dispensation and the development of capitalism. This proved to be an obstacle towards the realization of a better life for all because the majority of black South Africans were not benefiting from such a programme. The only way in which a better life for all could be achieved was through a more aggressive approach rather than relying on the market which was failing to bring about meaningful change. If needs be, land should be taken away from white settler, and given back to black South Africans who were the original and historical owners of the land.

## 8.12 Conclusion

The solution for the Luvuvhu Valley drew attention to a hybrid approach to land restitution. Consider how the government acquired land for restitution in Luvuvhu Valley: reflecting the influence of the market-led approach, it has not used expropriation in the process of land restitution, rather, it has relied on the 'willing-seller-willing-buyer' principle. This has led to fifty-one farmers to agreeing to sell their farms. Yet, while the approach to land restitution reflects the market-led approach, the way in which the ANC government has sought to transfer land certainly does not. The state has imposed far-reaching restriction on how the beneficiaries could use the restituted land. By so doing, it has acted as the protector (Bernstein, 2002: 21) of the community interest. This aspect has highlighted a developmentalist or state-led approach to land restitution. In the current researcher's view, restitution of land in the Luvuvhu Valley was a combination of these two ways to address the land question.

The current researcher argued that this fusion could only be understood in terms of the geo-historical context of South Africa as a place, for example. Plans such as those in the Luvuvhu Valley were closely bound up with the worries of the South African state about foreign currency earnings, the rate of exchange and inflation targeting which were the anchors of monetary policy in the country (*Business Day*, November 8, 2005). The solution of the Luvuvhu Valley has also emerged from the experience of implementing the country's land restitution policy and, in particular, the reality that communities could not achieve success without the ANC government's support. This was as much a part of the apartheid inheritance as the land question itself was. There was the disposition of political forces around the case of the Luvuvhu Valley. This included the acquiescence of the black South African claimants and the interest of white agribusiness.

Despite the confidence of the community that the ANC government would be able to monitor the case of the Luvuvhu Valley effectively, it obviously remained to be seen how successful it would have been. On the other hand, one of the strategic partners had a stake in the area in the form of facilities whose future commercial viability depended on making the project a success over a longer-term period of more than the 15 (fifteen years). Government, too, had a stake in securing employment on the farms and maintaining exports, and of course, the beneficiaries have/ had a major stake, albeit one

that they might have been tempted to trade off against consumption. There were also challenges ahead which were related to monitoring the activities of partners, ensuring, they truthfully stated financial earning, not manipulating accounts, buying over-priced inputs or selling outputs at under-market rates. For communities that obviously suffered from forced removals, dispossession and relocation under apartheid, the promises of land restitution would have hopefully brought much-needed financial resources. Yet precisely who would control the money that would come from the land was not clear. Some community members monitored the land claims closely and appeared to be jockeying for positions to influence how income from the land would be spent. Others were resigned to the fact they would have little or no influence in the restitution process.

The issue of what the strategic partnership would have generated was a new and important social structure among the Ravele community and the RCPA, which would have had the potential to create enduring changes in the New Mauluma. For example, the Ravele land claims committee stressed that the income from the land would be used to develop Mauluma; to improve schools in the village, lay new roads surface, and possibly to build new sports facilities. Future research might be gained from this approach to land restitution and how the Communal Property Associations (CPAs), a new and potentially wealthy structure, would interact with existing structures, the communities and *mahosi*.

## Chapter 9

### General Conclusion(s)

#### 9.1 Summary of the Findings

This study used the Ravele-led Luvhuvu Valley as a test case to explore livelihoods transformation through land restitution with specific reference to the Ravele Community (1890-1994). Inasmuch as the land restitution is the brainchild of the ANC led government, the ideology and philosophy behind it cannot be fully understood without a historical reference to land dispossession in South Africa. The period between the year 1890 and 1994 has been arbitrarily considered by the current researcher as sufficient for painting a qualitatively rich picture of the phenomena being studied. Inasmuch as the focus of this study is on the period between the year 1890 and 1994, it is logically unavoidable to also reflect in passing on the developments prior to the year 1890 and post 1994 due to the spillover effects of the evolution of historical events and/ or issues. The heated and emotive nature of the on-going public policy and academic discourses on the historic question of land in South Africa has generated a wide body of knowledge on this subject. Much of the works on this subject are located within the Eurocentric worldview, which is deficient of the African reality- whose foundations remain the voices of the Africans who have been at the receiving end of violent land dispossession in South Africa. It is for this reason that this study was underpinned by Afrocentricity, which is well poised to introduce an alternative contextual and theoretical lens and perspective to the study of land restitution in South Africa and the Luvhuvu Valley in particular.

Contextually, the status of the Ravele royal family of Mauluma as *mahosi* and not *magota* as colonizers have tried to portray them falls within the scheme of the historic distortions that this study has sought to correct. Bele-la-mambo was one of the sons of *Thovhele Khosikulu* Thohoyandou, one of the greatest rulers of Vhavenda. Bele-la-mambo was installed by himself at Vuvha as *khosi*, like all his brothers who ultimately became *mahosi* in their own territories, but under Thohoyandou. Having established himself at Vuvha as *khosi*, there was a special relationship between Thohoyandou and Bele-la-mambo.



After his ascension to *vhuhosi* of Vuvha under Thohoyandou, their relationship became stronger to the point that Bele-la-mambo became more than a son. Thereafter, his successors also ascended the throne at Vuvha as *mahosi* under various *Vho-Thovhele Khosikhulu* who belonged to the house of *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Mpofu which was led by *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Toni Peter Mphephu Ramabulana. Bele-la-mambo was the first royalty to leave Dzata before Raluswielo, Tshivhase, Munzhedzi, Mpofu and others to establish his *vhuhosi* at Vuvha.

Therefore, Bele-la-mambo was *khosi* under *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Mpofu Denga, under *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Rasithu Ravele Ramabulana. Matzheketzheke was *khosi* under *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Rasithu Ravele Ramabulana, Nndwayamiomva was *khosi* under *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Makhado Ramabulana, Ravele was chief under *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Makhado and *Thovhele Khosikhulu* Mphephu Ramabulana, Nanga Ravele was *khosi* under *Khosikhulu* George Mphephu Ramabulana.

Nndwakhulu Frank Ravele was '*khosi*' under *Mahosimahulu* P.R Mphephu, Dimbanyika Mphephu and Toni Mphephu Ramabulana. '*Khosi*' Ravele became the victim of demotion to *vhugota* in 1959 and was re-instated to *vhuhosi* in 1989 and was once more demoted to *vhugota* in 1991 by the Military Junta of General Gabriel Ramushwana.

*Vhuhosi* of the Ravele community was already established as at 01st September 1927. They are descendants of *Khosi* Bele-la-mambo. The last being '*Khosi*' Ravele Ramaano, with others who came before him are the *mahosi* of the Ravele community and not *magota*. Their equals who originated from Dzata like Rambuda, Mphaphuli, Raluswielo, Tshivhase are *mahosi* in their territories. *Mahosi* like Nelwamondo, Madzivhandila, Netshimbupfe, Mashau, Masia, Netsiandsa and Mugivhi who were juniors to the Ravele's, who also suffered colonial conquest with the Raveles, are *mahosi* in their territory (Black Authority 68 of 1951, Mushasha Commission, 1990).

The following subheadings are organised according to the research objectives and in overall, they represent the summation of the findings of this study:

### **9.1.1 The geopolitical situation of the Ravele Community land before the forced removal**

It has emerged from the research of this thesis that the Ravele/ Mauluma community, Ratombo community and Magwada community were co-living in different spaces and times before (the Luvuvhu Valley) and after (new Mauluma) the forced removal. This has happened under the different *mahosi* and *magota* who were in control during those days. They kept livestock including cattle and goats. The shared boundaries between the Ravele community and other neighbouring communities took the form of mainly rivers.

The history of the Ravele community remains incomplete without a reference to the Ratombo community, Magwada community and Matuma community as they were sharing borders and that most of the members of this community were staying at the Luvuvhu Valley. The forced removals were not a nice experience for the Luvuvhu Valley community, particularly with the Ravele. In the process, many people died and many properties were damaged and lost. Their livestock got lost and others died. Many people in the Luvuvhu Valley also lost their lands.

### **9.1.2 The causes and the impact of forced removal on the Ravele Community**

The 1913 and 1936 Land Acts have served as the enablers for turning the Luvuvhu Valley into a white settlement. White settlement in the area meant that the Africans who were living in the Luvuvhu Valley had to be removed and resettled in arid and mountainous areas without assistance at all. In these areas, Raveles and other African communities suffered impoverishment.

### **9.1.3 Land restitution and its impact on the Ravele community**

The shortage of land has impoverished the Ravele, amongst others relocated from the Luvuvhu Valley. Despite this, they managed to survive under conditions of extreme hardship. The alternatives that communities relied on, like migrant labour and farm work, had far-reaching effects on their families and culture because they were designed to serve capitalists' interests. They could be manipulated and disposed if they were no longer fit to serve the system. The white settlement in the Luvuvhu Valley became a success, with the full support of white minority rule. [Inconsistent font] The implication is that through the Levubu settlement scheme the local poor white problem has been

eradicated; but at the cost of creating a poor Africans problem. It is unacceptable in any society to solve a problem by creating another problem. Thus, socio-economic injustices are still stubbornly found in the current the Luvuvhu Valley and race relations are at the lower point.

#### **9.1.4 The effects of Luvuvhu Valley's land restitution on farm workers**

This study has revealed that the Raveles in the Luvuvhu Valley were turned into farm labourers because of racially inspired legislation which widened the gap between the farm worker and white settler farmers. Colonial conquest and apartheid led to unequal distribution of resources such as credit from the Land Bank. The working conditions and living conditions of farm workers on the Luvuvhu Valley farms were also despicable.

The Luvuvhu Valley 'solution' draw attention to a hybrid approach to restitution. Yet, while the approach to land restitution reflects the market-led approach the way in which the ANC government has sought to transfer land certainly does not. The state has imposed far-reaching restriction on how the beneficiaries could use the restituted land. By so doing, it has acted as the protector (Bernstein, 2002: 21) of the community interest. This aspect highlights developmentalist or state-led approach to land restitution. In the researcher's view, restitution in the Luvuvhu Valley was a combination of these two ways to address land question.

The Luvuvhu Valley solution has also emerged from the experience of implementing land restitution policy and, in particular, the reality that community could not achieve success without the ANC government support. This was as much a part of the apartheid inheritance as the land question itself. There was the disposition of political forces around the Luvuvhu Valley cases. This includes the acquiescence of the African claimants and the interest of white agribusiness.

Despite community confidence that the ANC government would be able monitor the Luvuvhu Valley case effectively, it obviously remains to be seen how successful it would be. On the other hand, one of strategic partners has a stake in the area in the form of facilities whose future commercial viability depends on making the project a success over a longer-term period than the fifteen years. Government, too, has a stake in securing employment on the farms and maintaining exports, and course, the

beneficiaries have major stake, albeit one that they may be tempted to trade off against consumption. There were also challenges ahead relatives to monitoring the activities of partners, ensuring, they truthfully state financial earning, not manipulating accounts, buying over – priced inputs or selling outputs at under – market rate. For communities that obviously suffered from relocation under apartheid, restitution promises would bring much – needed money. Yet precisely who would control the money that would come from the land was not clear. Some community members monitored the land claim closely and appeared to be jockeying for position to influence how income from the land would be spent. Other resigned to the fact they would have little or no influence.”

What the strategic partnership approach certainly generates was a new and important social structure among the Ravele community and the communal property Association which would have the potential to create enduring changes in New Mauluma. For example, the Ravele land claim committee stressed that income from the land would be used to develop Mauluma: to improve schools in the village, lay new roads surface, and possibly to build new sports facilities. Future research has gained from this approach to land restitution, and how the Communal Property Association (CPA), a new and potentially wealthy structure, would interact with existing structures including *mahosi*.

## **9.2 Implications for Theory and Practice**

Gazing from the findings of this research, it is safe to state that this study makes a significant contribution in History and Politics. Also, the issue of political rhetoric is path-breaking on the land discourse. In the final analysis, the ‘hybrid approach’ to land restitution is also a significant observation which dispels the myth of a “one size, fits all” model to land reform.

Secondary to the hierarchy of concerns for this study is that it has shown that there have been attempts to shift the very foundations of thinking away from Eurocentrism. As such, Afrocentricity was showcased as a silenced theory from Africa in order to demonstrate that it helps in the understanding of Land Studies, Politics and History in in general.

### **9.3 Limitations of the Study**

Minor constraints were experienced during the conduction of this research. Most of the elders with strong memory on the history of the land question in the Luvuvhu Valley are no longer alive. Covid-19 adjusted regulations in South Africa made it difficult to collect data at a certain stage. Hence, some of the targeted participants preferred a face to face exchange when it was not safe to do so or let alone travel in the environment of Covid-19. During the operationalisation of this study, the researcher was also diagnosed with an acute ailment and subsequently, his prolonged hospitalisation posed serious challenges in terms of research focus and concentrated writing.

### **9.4 Recommendations**

Emerging from the findings of this study, it is recommended that the Ravele community and other African community in the Luvuvhu Valley and beyond must admit what hinder their individual and collective progress and discard them. This basis is critical if sustainable development, land restitution, preservation and development are to bear long term positive impacts for the African beneficiaries.

This study could be embarked upon by using different case studies. However, this study calls for a shift from viewing Europe and North America as the universal referents for the geography of reason. Instead, it is concluded that there is a pressing need to also foreground future studies on decolonial Afrocentricity.

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## Appendix A: Research Interview Guide: English/ Tshivenda

1. Personal Particulars of the participant: Zwidombedzwa zwa muhumbeli.
  - 1.1. Full Names (Optional): Madzina nga vhubalo.
  - 1.2. Age: Miṅwaha:
  - 1.3. Nationality: Lushaka:
  - 1.4. Institutional Affiliation (if any): Tshiimiswa tshee vha diṅwalisa khatsho (arali tshi hone):
  - 1.5. Employment (if any): Mushumo (arali u hone):
2. Interview Details Mbudziso nga vhubalo:
  - 2.1. Date of interview: Duvha la mbudziso:
  - 2.2. Location Fhethuvhupo:
3. Semi-Structured questions for interviewees: Mbudziso dzo vuleaho dzine dza: vhubziswa.
  - 3.1. What was the relationship between land and the Ravele community before the forced removal? Ho vha hu na vhusakade vhukati ha vhadzulapo vha ha Ravele na shango musu vha sa athu u pfhuluswa?
  - 3.2. Who was the ruler or rulers of the Ravele Community? Ndi nnyi kana vhone vhe vha vhe vhavhusi kha / vha vhadzulapo vha ha Ravele?
  - 3.3. What was the position of their ruler or rulers? Vhuimo ha muvhusi kana vhavhusi ho vha hu vuhfio?
  - 3.4. How did eviction occur in the Luvuvhu Valley? U pfhuluswa kha govha la Luvuvhu ho bvelelisa hani?
  - 3.5. What role did the land question play in the land dispossession and forced removal of the Ravele community? Mbudziso ya shango ndi ya ndeme hani zwi tshi da kha u dzhiwa halo na u pfhuluswa nga khombekhombe kha vhadzulapo vha ha Ravele?
  - 3.6. How was life under segregated or apartheid South Africa? Vhutshilo ho vha vhu hani nga fhasi ha ndaulo ya khethululo na tshitalula Afrika Tshipembe?
  - 3.7. How did the Ravele Community resist against eviction in the Luvuvhu Valley? Vhadzulapo vha ha Ravele vho lwisana hani na mupfhuwo kha govha la Luvuvhu?
  - 3.8. What were the feelings or emotional consequences of eviction in the Luvuvhu Valley? (Focus on mental states not necessarily facts) Vhubziswa



na mvelele dza vhudipfhi havho kha u pfhuluswa afha govhani la Luvuvhu zwo vha zwi hani (rolavhelesa tshiimo tsha kuhumbulele hu so ngo sedzwa mbuno)?

- 3.9. Explain your history in the Luvuvhu Valley, together with your attachment to the disposed land (Luvuvhu Valley). Kha vha talutshedze divhazwakale ya govha la Luvuvhu, khathihi na zwine la badekanywa nalo kha u dzhiwa halo (govha la Luvuvhu).
- 3.10. How was the economic status (living conditions) before eviction? Tshiimo tsha ikonomi tsho vha tshi hani (nyimele ya kutshilele) phanda ha upfuluswa?
- 3.11. How was their economic status (living conditions) after eviction (not about feeling)? Tshiimo tsha ikonomi tsho vha tshi hani (nyimele ya kutshilele) nga murahu ha u pfhuluswa (hu si vhudipfhi)?
- 3.12. How were their family relations/compositions before the eviction in the Luvuvhu Valley (not about feeling)? Zwo vha zwi hani sa mita ya mashaka / tshiimo tsha mupfuluwo u thoma kha govha la Luvuvhu (hu si vhudipfi)?
- 3.13. How were as the family relations/compositions after the eviction in the Luvuvhu Valley (not about feeling)? Zwo vha zwi hani sa mita ya mashaka / tshiimo tsha mupfuluwo nga murahu kha govha la Luvuvhu (hu si vhudipfhi)?
- 3.14. Are there any changes in the character of the community before and after eviction (not about feelings)? Hu na tshanduko ya mikhwa kha vhadzulapo phanda ha mupfuluwo na nga murahu hawo (hu si vhudipfi)?
- 3.15. What were the impacts of forced removal/eviction from the Luvuvhu Valley? Ndi mudzinginyo ufho we mupfuluwo wa khombekhombe / u bviswa kha govha la Luvuvhu zwa ita?
- 3.16. How was the process for land restitution in the Luvuvhu Valley handled? Ndila ya u vhuwedzwa shango la govha la Luvuvhu yo itwa hani?
- 3.17. How did the Ravele community get affected by land restitution? Vhadzulapo vha ha Ravele vho kwamea hani nga mbuedzedzo ya shango / mavu?
- 3.18. What happened to the farm workers who were employed on the farms? How were they affected by the process of land restitution in the Luvuvhu Valley? Ho itea mini kha vhashumi vha bulasini vhe vha vha vha tshi khou

shuma bulasini? Vho kwamea hani nga mbuyedzedzo ya mavu a govha la Luvuvhu?

- 3.19. What is your understanding of the challenges during the restitution of land restitution in the Luvuvhu Valley? Vha kwamea hani nga khaedu dza mbuyedzedzo ya mavu a govha la Luvuvhu?
- 3.20. How much control did the Ravele community feel the royal family gave them in determining the type and/ or amount of compensation during the restitution process and how did the process unfold? Vhadzulapo vha ha Ravelel vha zwi pfisa hani zwi tshi da kha ndango ye muṭa wa vuhosi wa vha nea wone kha u langa lushaka na tshelede kana ndiliso ye vha tea u i wana na uri ndila ya u i netshedza yo vhisana hani?
- 3.21. What are/ were the opportunities that were available after land restitution? Ndi zwifhio zwiṅwe zwikhala zwe vha zwi wana nga murahu ha mbuyedzedzo ya shango / mavu?
- 3.22. What do you understand about the process of compensation? Vha divhama mini nga ha ndila dza mbuyedzedzo (u vhuwedzedza mavu)?

## Appendix B: Ethics Clearance Certificate



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**TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**  
**ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**MEETING:** 24 March 2021

**PROJECT NUMBER:** TREC/50/2021: PG

**PROJECT:**

**Title:** Land dispossession and restitution in South Africa: A case study of the Ravele Community in Luvuvhu Valley, Limpopo Province (1890-1994)  
**Researcher:** FE Ramudzuli  
**Supervisor:** Prof KB Shai  
**Co-Supervisor/s:** Dr AV Dhliwayo  
**School:** Social Sciences  
**Degree:** PhD in History

**PROF P MASOKO**

**CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

**Note:**

- i) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
- ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
- iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

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