

On Renamo 'War', Entrepreneurial Synergies and Everyday Life in the Honde Valley Borderlands, c.1980s–2020

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Abstract

This article examines how Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo) operatives have become part of everyday life in Zimbabwe's Honde Valley communities since the 1980s. While most studies of civil conflict and insurgency in African borderlands emphasise the predicaments of borderland communities, we examine how socio-economic and political dynamics in the Honde Valley borderlands challenge the dominant characterisations of borderlands as zones of predicament and borderlanders as mere victims of transnational socio-economic and political instability. By centring on borderlands and borderlanders, we argue that the Honde Valley borderland communities share common ethnic, linguistic, cultural, socio-economic and political networks that defy state-centric notions of national boundaries. Using the Honde Valley case study, we articulate University of Pretoria, Department of Historical and Heritage Studies, Private Bag X20, Hatfield, Pretoria, 0028, South Africa. E-mail: wesmel2001@yahoo.co.uk how people's historical ties created various opportunities for trade and self-determination for the local people, Renamo bandits and the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) forces. Drawing from interviews with Honde Valley borderlanders, archival documents and media reports, we provide a 'bottom-up' interpretation of the Renamo phenomenon, to contest scholarship that principally emphasises violence and suffering in African borderlands.

Keywords: Renamo; Borderlands; Trade; Everyday life; Sanctuaries; Zimbabwe; Mozambique

Introduction

Following Zimbabwe's independence from colonial rule in April 1980, the new African state's eastern border with Mozambique was yet again transformed into a bitterly contested war zone or what Mkandawire calls a 'hostile rural terrain'.¹ As part of their 'strategy' in the Mozambican civil war (1976–92), both the Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Renamo) insurgents and Mozambican Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Frelimo) government forces utilised war tactics that partly centred on inflicting pain on unarmed civilians along the border. Increased violence and atrocities along the porous border compelled both the Zimbabwean and Mozambican governments to curtail cross-border activities. The then commander of the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA), Lieutenant-General Rex Nhongo (Solomon Tapfumaneyi Mujuru), for example, urged people to 'choose between dying and not visiting their relatives in Mozambique'.² The cessation of the

Renamo 'war'³ in 1992, after a peace accord between Frelimo and Renamo, was followed by a long period of relative peace until 2013, when the latter re-ignited their operations in some parts of Mozambique and along the border with Zimbabwe. This was partly because the cessation of active fighting did not lead to successful disarmament and demobilisation of former Renamo combatants in Mozambique. Unsurprisingly, violence and the threat of it has continued to hang over the lives of civilians, especially among communities along the Zimbabwe–Mozambique border, where, as our study will show, official state control is precarious to non-existent. Yet, as we will demonstrate, the continued criminal activities also mirror larger political and economic problems in both countries and the insensitivity of state security interventions and peace-building processes to local borderland patterns of life. We will argue that government officials usually overlook the difficulties of stopping border crossings during a time of war for people whose identities, marriages, kinship networks and friendships straddle the border, as do essential institutions and resources, such as markets, grazing lands, farms, churches, clinics and schools.

While war is usually understood and examined in terms of the violence/peace binary, our study uses the category of 'war' to refer to the processes of violence that are not only associated with bombs, guns and deaths, but local processes of volatile politics, trade exchanges and conflicts that do not fit into the global definitions of war. Furthermore, we characterise the Renamo 'war' in this way in order to capture the transformation of the movement from an insurgent organisation to a political party founded on, and determined to achieve, democratic processes in Mozambique. Despite the transformation within Renamo's operations, organisation and ideology, Renamo is still largely viewed by scholars and politicians as an insurgent outfit rather than a political party.

Fears and anxieties among borderland communities living along Zimbabwe's eastern border have recently been heightened by the emergence of yet another military outfit in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province.⁴ These current concerns are tellingly captured by Mike Makuyana, a Zimbabwean peasant living in the Honde Valley borderlands, who pleaded that

the Zimbabwean government should not send soldiers to intervene in Mozambican matters because, when the Zimbabwean government helps Frelimo, Renamo soldiers get angry. Because of that anger, they will attack 'us' who live along the border. We are the first targets. So, we kindly plead with the government to stay away from Mozambican affairs.⁵

These remarks highlight how transnational instabilities in southern Africa affect border communities, who are often at the margins of the state when it comes to issues of security, development and livelihoods. This article uses these vignettes as an entry point into academic conversations, particularly in borderland and security studies, about the everyday experiences of ordinary people in war and post-war times. Through a 'bottom-up' model, we incorporate the voices of borderlanders into scholarship.⁶ People's voices, despite their hidden and multiple meanings that are not always easily accessible to scholars,⁷ offer views of the complexities of everyday life: how shared border life experiences change over time, and how borderlanders re-imagine their social, economic and political sovereignties in response to state interventions during civil wars. The bottom-up approach allows us to

centre borderlanders' experiences, examining how policies that are imposed from above affect their lives. We argue that the Mozambican civil war and the low intensity conflict since 2013 had a trans-border make-up as Renamo became an extension of Honde Valley trans-border communities. We will demonstrate that Renamo bandits and Honde Valley borderlanders sought ways of coexistence and mutual survival through exploiting a long history of kinship and economic and political connections. Furthermore, we show that the success of counter-insurgency strategies by the Mozambican and Zimbabwean state security forces also hinged on winning the hearts and minds of the borderlanders. This approach derived from a guerrilla war strategy that stressed persuading civilians to support war by non-violent means to establish mutual coexistence in a way that resembles the 'fish and water' relationship.

Throughout this article, we utilise the concepts of borderlands and everyday life to examine how the Honde Valley borderlands were transformed into zones of predicament and contestation as well as corridors of opportunities for the Renamo bandits, the ZNA forces and Honde Valley communities. Like William Zartman, we conceptualise borderlands as 'inhabited territories located on the margins of state power' and as proto-state peripheries, or what Lindsay Scorgie calls 'prominent peripheries'.⁸ Examining the cross-border nature of conflict in central Africa, Scorgie argues that 'the dominant contemporary model for explaining regional conflict is overwhelmingly state-centric in orientation, and it inadequately explains the structure of this type of violence'.⁹ Rather, she avers, the so-called peripheries of states – borderlands – need to be taken as not only the starting point but also the actual central reference point when it comes to regional conflict analysis. Following both Scorgie's and Zartman's lead, we view the Honde Valley borderlands as both proto-state and prominent peripheries that were transformed into centres of the Renamo conflict, overlapping the Mozambican and Zimbabwean geographies of territorial sovereignty. As argued by Zeller, the concept of borderlands helps 'analysts to move beyond tired, established views of borderlands as passive, or at best reactive, peripheries, or even mere geographic locations where states come into contact with each other'.¹⁰ We view the Honde Valley borderlands as outstanding spaces beyond the effective control of either Mozambican or Zimbabwean state power, showing how, as political units in their own right, they became central to forming socio-political and military-economic networks in southern Africa's regional conflict.

In addition, we follow both de Certeau's and Lefebvre's concept of everyday life or 'the quotidian' to examine not only 'average mundane existence' but potentially uncategorisable experiences.¹¹ Exploring everyday life as a site for resistance and appropriation, de Certeau brings to light the 'clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, the tactical, and make-shift creativity of groups or individuals already caught in the nets of discipline'.¹² In de Certeau's framing, the nets of discipline are a range of regulatory mechanisms that states use to control populations. We deploy this concept to examine how the Zimbabwean and Mozambican states use borders and apparatuses like the deployment of troops as 'nets' to discipline citizens and ensure state security over their national territories. Yet these 'nets', like fishing nets, are porous. They provide citizens with opportunities to define their own conventions and everyday lives in ways that sometimes openly or clandestinely contradict the nation state's prescribed conduct and ways of governing borderlands. For the Honde Valley borderland people, the presence of both the Renamo bandits and the ZNA forces

provided many business opportunities amid risks, violent encounters and everyday creativities to protest or subvert state power. Lefebvre used the everyday as 'what is left when you subtract the higher activities' and argued that in these everyday experiences lies the power of protest.¹³ The everyday life concept also enables us to examine aspects of socialisation and conviviality during the Renamo war.¹⁴

Methodological Note

This article combines ethnographic and newspaper archival research. Oral sources derived from interviews conducted during fieldwork in Honde Valley in 2019 and 2020 form the greater part of the data presented here. Our study site is located in the north-eastern highlands of Zimbabwe bordering Mozambique. As our main qualitative method, oral narratives from Honde Valley people enabled us to understand the Renamo war through the voices and eyes of those who witnessed it. The oral accounts that we gathered over a period of three months included life histories and semi-structured group and in-depth individual interviews with over 50 people who experienced Renamo violence.

The interviewees were recruited from the Chavhanga, Katiyo, Sagambe, Mandeya and Chisuko chiefly areas because these were the most affected during the Renamo incursions in the region. In addition, our decision to interview people from these areas came about because one of us (Nicholas Nyachega) knew about the stories of Renamo from growing up in Chavhanga and from his previous fieldwork in the area between 2016 and 2018. His knowledge of the area helped us to recruit research participants and aided our transcription and analysis of the oral texts. His father, Mr Luke Nyachega, also drew on his knowledge and experiences of the Mozambican civil war to introduce us to people who would not ordinarily have shared their experiences with us. In Katiyo, Chisuko and Chinaka villages, Mr Charles Gurure was our intermediary. He is a former plantation supervisor who is now semi-retired and works as a part-time orderly at Chisuko clinic, which serves trans-border communities. Mr Gurure's presence and introductions to interviewees put many locals at ease. Thanks to our prior acquaintance with, and connections to, some of the participants and the help of our local research assistants, we were able to interview some victims' surviving family members, neighbours and traditional authorities.

We conducted two group interviews at Rwera area beyond the Tangwena Mountain, which is regarded as the official border point between Zimbabwe and Mozambique. We also carried out participant observation, crossing the border several times in Chavhanga, Katiyo and Mandeya close to Nanhanga and Makore villages in Mozambique. These visits allowed us to obtain as many different perspectives as possible through listening and observing rather than actively asking questions. We were able to cross the border to Mozambique via Katiyo, witnessing how people were conducting cross-border shopping as well how they negotiated movement across the border with the border officials. In addition, having been introduced by the village head, George Manyanga, we took the opportunity to speak to two groups of Mozambican men and women, respectively. One of our group interviews happened at a funeral on the Mozambican side of the border where people from both Zimbabwe and Mozambique were brought together by a shared culture of mourning their departed relatives. Another occurred at a beer-drinking spot at MaD7 shops¹⁵ on the Zimbabwean side of the border, where people recounted their experiences during the

Renamo war. Everyone whom we interviewed had lived in either or both Mozambican and Zimbabwean border communities during the civil war.

All the interviews in Zimbabwe were conducted in ChiManyika, while those in Mozambique were conducted in a Shona dialect called ChiBarwe. Most of the interviews were conducted in people's homes, where privacy was guaranteed. Each interview began with self-introduction and a detailed explanation of our project. We experienced some interruptions during our fieldwork a couple of times. We temporarily cut off our research in October 2019, when the political environment in Mozambique became very polarised in the run-up to the controversial national elections that were later won by Frelimo. However, we were able to return to our research in February 2020, when the political situation had somewhat stabilised.

In our transcriptions and analysis of the interviews, we used thematic analysis, a process of analysing data according to themes within qualitative data in ways that establish commonalities and differences across bodies of evidence.¹⁶ For the oral sources, we looked at themes that emerged from both individual and group interviews, noting their connections and disconnections. Where narratives did not give clear timelines, we filled the gaps using archival sources and media reports. Media reports gave powerful commentary to developments within Mozambique during that period. However, since our article draws largely from oral sources, we valued the voices of the Honde Valley people over state media reports in order to achieve our goal of writing a history from below. In some cases, we conducted follow-up telephone interviews to verify some of the claims made by our informants in previous conversations. Again, we used our accumulated knowledge to cross-check narratives that appeared to contain inconsistencies.

'Being' and 'Becoming' Renamo: Identity Politics and the Renamo Phenomenon

Although historically 'separated' by the border, the Honde Valley borderlanders share common ethnic, kinship and cultural ties and economic and political traits. Their ties influence how they enact their local sovereignties and everyday lives in ways that sometimes contradict national governance and security regimes. Thus, while the Mozambican and Zimbabwean states assume power in these borderlands, borderlanders have local systems of socio-political power and ordinary ways of life that often contradict official state policies and provide opportunities for civilians and combatants from both Mozambique and Zimbabwe. This has made these borderlands 'proto-state peripheries',¹⁷ areas where residents have their local ways of doing things that sometimes openly contradict and, at times, are in harmony with national sovereignties and territorial jurisdictions.

Ethnic and cultural relations forged between Renamo fighters and Honde Valley civilians before Zimbabwean independence are important to our explanation of how Mozambican rebels could operate stealthily in zones where the Zimbabwean government applied several counter-insurgency operations.¹⁸ Local narratives reveal that defining who was, and who was becoming, Renamo in the Honde Valley borderland is complex and poses several questions about how nation states concoct citizenship and the identities of populations that they seek to control. It was easy for some Zimbabweans to join the Renamo ranks and for

Mozambican Renamo bandits to become part of Honde Valley communities because of the local patterns of life, transnational marriages, kinship connections and friendships, as well as the overlapping geographies of economic and political life.¹⁹ These connections even shaped how Renamo operations, including looting and violence, occurred.²⁰ In his study of the Tangwena borderland communities, about 80 kilometres north of the Honde Valley, Donald Moore noted that many people revealed how Renamo followed kinship connections or political networks across the border, sometimes attacking villages to settle old scores through collateral damage.²¹ Similar studies in the Kenya–Somali borderlands also demonstrate how shared historical experiences fostered by common ancestry, religion, culture, economic exchanges and transnational networks, among other things, caused substantial fusion and fission of identities during the 1950–60s pan-Somali movement and the 1990s Somali civil war’.²²

In Honde Valley, Renamo bandits took advantage of existing socio-political and economic relations among borderland communities.²³ As Marombedza, a Zimbabwean national who lives in Pandagoma village on the Mozambican side of the border, revealed,

in my life, growing up in this area, people always had good relationships. My father was a village-head; people from both Mozambique and Zimbabwe would come to our home. It would only occur to you that you are in Mozambique or Zimbabwe when one of you mentioned it. The relationships have always been good. The people intermarry. I learnt at St Paul in Mashena in Zimbabwe. We do not think about the border, we are relatives and we share resources. We only know that so-and-so stay at this area and come from this area.²⁴

Marombedza’s testimony reveals the way borderland residents think about the border and how their relationships are not restricted by the border. He insisted that ‘our relationships do not have borders’.²⁵ Similarly, Njonda, a Mozambican villager living beyond the Tangwena Mountain in Rwera, emphasised that, ‘due to our intermarriages, we do not have borders between our family. My son is across the border [in Zimbabwe]. My daughter is also across the border [in Zimbabwe]. We do not see the border because of our marriages’.²⁶ Given these fluidities, ‘being’ Renamo was a complicated matter that transcended national identities.

None the less, the war somewhat altered the parameters of socio-economic interactions between borderlanders, especially these ‘borderless’ family connections. At the peak of the war, particularly in the late 1980s, state authorities imposed strict interpretations of nationality and labelled residents as either Zimbabwean or Mozambican. Cross-border movement among borderlanders was discouraged because, ‘if a “Mozambican” was caught on the “Zimbabwean” side, he was suspected to be a Renamo spy’.²⁷ Although the Zimbabwean government assisted people moving into keeps (protected villages) in Honde Valley, Mozambican refugees had a hard time: they were caught in what de Certeau called the ‘nets of discipline’.²⁸ While some people exploited these ‘disciplining nets’ to gain business advantages and protection, others had terrible experiences that included being tortured or killed. Manyanga argued that,

while we received protection, it was a curse to some extent being a Mozambican. In some cases, if the Zimbabwean soldiers suspected you of connecting with Renamo bandits, you were beaten terribly or killed regardless of your innocence. Also, in some cases, these soldiers took away the wives of the other ordinary men, threatening to kill them if they refuse. Some of the soldiers were involved in the love affairs with young girls, which led to some pregnancies.²⁹

These predicaments of being and belonging saw individuals of both Mozambican and Zimbabwean origins using clandestine avenues to gain some control of their lives and creating enduring solidarities in the face of violence. Reporting known Renamo operatives when they came to the Zimbabwean side was not easy for Mozambican refugees, given the intricate nature of cross-border relationships. Manyanga added that

we would report them to Zimbabwean soldiers. We regard Zimbabwe as our homeland, and we view Zimbabweans as our brothers and sisters and we would not want anything bad to befall them. So, we protected each other. But in some cases, for example if my brother is a Renamo bandit and he comes to my home to seek refuge, I would welcome him.³⁰

In order to discourage the fraternisation between Renamo units and borderlanders, both the Mozambican and Zimbabwean security forces sometimes tortured and killed 'border trespassers'. So serious were these efforts that, between 1988 and 1992, some Honde Valley inhabitants were forcibly moved into protected camps, mainly located in schools such as Chavhanga, Pachije and Katiyo. During the day, Zimbabwean soldiers allowed the inhabitants to conduct their daily activities, such as working the fields, washing and searching for food. At night, they would return to these protected areas, since Renamo usually operated at night.³¹

Accessing logistical and intelligence support from a community guarded by Zimbabwean security forces required ingenuity on the part of the rebels. In the Honde Valley, Renamo intelligence relied on local accomplices or recruits, who had vast knowledge of what was happening in the borderlands. Besides these underground accomplices, active Renamo combatants gathered information by attending local funerals and beer-drinking gatherings, only to return during the night to raid their targeted victims for food and money.³² Misheck Nyapwere, a Honde Valley resident and a survivor of Renamo cross-border punitive expeditions, shared the view that Renamo units 'were coming after people who had food, and were helped by people from our areas who knew where food was. They were also coming here to sell meat and cannabis for survival because they did not have farms to grow their own food'.³³ In addition, Renamo raided the funerals of people whom they thought were rich, owned businesses or were formally employed. As Nyapwere further revealed, often Renamo did not deliberately set out to disparage funerals or harm the mourners. Rather, they were simply seeking to steal food and would even take clothes and live chickens.

The case of a family that was raided in 1988 is a clear example of Renamo's well-planned raids on specific targeted groups. The Gurures were a chiefly family on both sides of the border, and the funeral of their son, who had been a soldier, attracted mourners from both

sides of the border, including Renamo units. Charles Cherai Gurure narrated the raid in the following terms:

[m]y younger brother, who was working in the ZNA as a W2 Sergeant Major, passed away in 1988. When the soldiers who had brought his body left after the burial, Renamo bandits raided our home that very night. My younger brother, who was a special constable in the police, was present and had his short-barrel FN rifle with him. Renamo bandits started firing, exchanging fire with my brother, and one Renamo fighter was injured on the hand ... all the people came out of the houses. My aunty, Moddy Marekera, came out naked and ran as far as Madhora without her clothes. They took all the clothes and some other items.³⁴

Despite these depredations, Renamo had enough sympathisers and collaborators within the borderlands, as well as familial relationships, to be able to extract valuable intelligence. However, since that did not give them widespread support or a decisive edge over their adversaries, Renamo bandits sometimes resorted to abductions and other forms of forced recruitment. Given the nebulous definition of 'nationhood' that existed within these borderlands, Renamo units boosted their numbers by recruiting 'Zimbabweans' into their ranks and sometimes used them for raids on borderland communities.³⁵ Owing to the fact that they were press-ganged and forced to live in squalor, some of these recruits fled the organisation and became refugees in the Honde Valley and elsewhere in Zimbabwe. Shepherd Bello's testimony puts this into perspective:

I was born at Katandika, in Mozambique. I grew up in Mozambique together with my parents and we later separated when I was 17 years old. My parents were separated in 1979 when my mother was abducted by Frelimo forces, whilst my father and I were press-ganged by Renamo soldiers afterwards ... Since I was a young teenager, Renamo wanted to recruit more soldiers on their side, and young teenagers were most wanted. My colleagues and I spent three months in the bush because we didn't want to be recruited as soldiers. In 1982, my uncle Mupori, who lived in Zimbabwe, came to see my father, and I used this opportunity to escape to the Zimbabwean side ... In Zimbabwe, I lived at some homesteads working as a houseboy doing various types of chores, working in the fields, cooking and laundry.³⁶

Bello's story highlights the predicament that many youths faced and the opportunities that cross-border kinship relations provided. Given his relationship with Mupori, he was generally treated as a family member. In other cases, people moved to Zimbabwe and sought refuge at random homesteads across the border. Thus, when war raged in Mozambique, the communities across the border in Zimbabwe provided a sanctuary for people fleeing forced recruitment and persecution by Renamo.³⁷ In many cases, those who made it to the Zimbabwean side worked as general hands in homesteads and on the Aberfoyle tea estate.³⁸ Chazanewako Dzinduwa, an elder in Chimuswe village, also noted that some of the migrant workers he knew working in Aberfoyle tea estate came to Zimbabwe from Mozambique in the late 1970s and 1980s, when the Renamo war in Mozambique intensified.³⁹ Because the tea estates like Aberfoyle and Katiyo offered homes known as *maKomboni* (compounds) for workers, migrant workers, including Malawians and Mozambican refugees, often preferred to settle on the estates as workers rather than in

homesteads where they risked being stigmatised. The account from Mrs Chigava, a refugee from Mozambique, is particularly revealing: 'I worked in Zimbabwe. There was no segregation in the tea estate. When I worked as a coffee and tea-picker, we were paid money and soap. I remember winning an award of 50 dollars and soap. Your strength to work determined what you earned. If you worked more, you earned more'.⁴⁰

None the less, settling in Honde Valley and working on tea estates did not shield refugees from the challenges of belonging or the stigma associated with 'being' Renamo. The stories of refugees who found their way into Zimbabwe highlight their predicaments. Manyanga explains:

I have one wife. I have six children and amongst them, those in Zimbabwe have Zimbabwean identity cards whilst those in Mozambique have Mozambican identity cards. As time goes on or after I have passed away, I think that there are going to be divisions amongst my children, or they will separate since they are regarded as from different countries. My Mozambican homestead is just two kilometres away from the border. In 2005, during the economic crisis in Zimbabwe, my first- and second-born sons attended Pachije primary school, but because of the hardships in Zimbabwe, I decided to transfer them so that they would learn at a nearby school which was near our homestead in Mozambique. Currently, my first-born is in his second year at a Mozambican college, whilst the second-born is doing his form 5 there in Mozambique. In Zimbabwe, I stay with four children, the third-born is in form 2 at Sagambe High School, fourth-born – grade 7 at Sagambe primary, fifth-born – grade 5 at Sagambe and the last-born is in grade 1 at Sagambe. I can speak both Portuguese and English, thus it's easy to communicate with all my children.⁴¹

Manyanga's predicament demonstrates the crisis of belonging in the borderlands and helps to explain why it was easy for borderlanders to vacillate between 'being' Renamo, Mozambican or Zimbabwean when it best suited their goals. The ambiguous and unconventional nationalities/identities manifested in the borderland communities were an outcome of the efforts by civilians to eke out a living in a struggle that paid little, if any, regard to their quotidian challenges in a war environment.

Disrupted Lives, Economic Opportunities and Alternative Borderland Livelihoods?

This section examines how the presence of Renamo bandits altered the local socio-political and economic patterns of life. We argue that, despite violence and forced recruitment, alternative livelihoods and new opportunities emerged. In fact, as we will show, Renamo bandits inserted themselves into the socio-political and economic fabric of the Honde Valley borderlands, adding to the continuum of everyday activities that such communities embraced and engaged in. Operating from their bases in the mountain ranges that are contiguous with the official Zimbabwe–Mozambique border, Renamo bandits traded game meat, including impala, elephant and kudu, with people from the tea estates (Aberfoyle and Katiyo) in exchange for different food commodities.⁴² This trading model became a lucrative venture for some Zimbabwean borderlanders. As Oscar Martínez observed in the US–Mexico borderlands, borderlanders often have an enterprising attitude that enables them to exploit changing border conditions.⁴³ This was true of the Honde Valley borderlanders.

Borderlanders of different genders, classes and ages exploited the changing conditions brought about by the Mozambican civil war and Renamo presence in the region.

Regarding class and economic status, wealthier people such as business owners had more access to the trading opportunities that Renamo bandits provided. Thus their livelihoods became more diversified during the Renamo war, as their business opportunities ranged from selling much-needed food supplies to clothes, drugs and minerals, among other things. Similarly, in his study of the Sudanese civil war in the 1980s–90s, Luka Deng observed that the richer households benefited from the wartime economy, although, in the Sudanese case, wealthier households tended to diversify their primary livelihood activities less than poorer households.⁴⁴ In Honde Valley, as Dzinduwa noted, civilians in the depressed war economy encouraged each other to acquire Renamo commodities.⁴⁵ Renamo bandits moved beyond their sanctuaries and merged with local borderland communities as part of their intelligence strategy and sought opportunities to trade their goods with Zimbabwean civilians during beer gatherings. Donald Moore's characterisation of Renamo fighters as 'brutal bandits' who lived 'beyond the sites of human dwelling',⁴⁶ therefore, ignores the 'human' and 'sociable' character that Renamo bandits could assume. While Renamo bandits brutally murdered civilians along the border, we argue that there is another side of the story, often concealed by this account. According to Kumadzi, the son of a former Frelimo combatant, beer parties were very important sources of intelligence and business for Renamo bandits.

They drank alcohol with Zimbabwean men and women. The rebels would discard their military paraphernalia and wear civilian clothes to blend in. So, by befriending civilians, they would gather vital information on trading partners and the whereabouts of people who owed them. They used their beer-drinking exploits to scout routes and the locations of their trading associates' homes, and to gather intelligence.⁴⁷

Renamo bandits were not alone in seeking out opportunities in these borderlands. ZNA units were also aware of the changing dynamics of border life and they exploited several opportunities available to them. Njonda revealed that ZNA soldiers crossed the border in search of cannabis.⁴⁸ As another Mozambican refugee who interacted with both parties revealed, 'it was not only the Matsanga (a local name for Renamo bandits) who smoked. Renamo bandits came here to drink with people and they would leave their guns behind to travel as far as Sagambe'.⁴⁹ Njonda concurred: 'I was once caught by soldiers when I was drunk in Sagambe. The businesses of exchanges and beer-drinking attracted Renamo bandits'.⁵⁰

Without doubt, Renamo activities disrupted the rhythm of life in Honde Valley. One revealing testimony is by Misheck Mujangu, who survived a Renamo attack in March 1990 in which five members of his family were killed.⁵¹ Mujangu's testimony tells a story of both violence and the opportunities that emerged.

Before Matsanga, people participated in day-to-day activities, for example, fishing and having beer. There was a beer called *Mugobera* (Saturday beer) where people would have fun especially during weekends. Dason was a man who brewed beer

and people usually gathered at his place to have fun. But when Matsanga came, these activities were disturbed. People were afraid that if they gathered at one place, Matsanga would easily attack them. People bought beer from Chikomba's beer hall and drank it in their homes not in the bar.⁵²

The civil war was a period of many encounters, including both social and economic exchanges and negotiations, trusts and betrayals. Njonda revealed that, in the Sagambe keep, they were given fields to plough and they drank alcohol with the Zimbabwean soldiers.⁵³ Marombedza explained,

I had encounters with them in the border. We would traverse the border and we would clash about us border jumping. We, however, came to an agreement in which we would inform them when we crossed the border to work. We came to Mozambique to harvest bamboo plants for basket-weaving'.⁵⁴

He further revealed that

the basket-weaving and selling business did not get affected because people came to Sagambe where basket weavers converged. Being in a centralised place like the Sagambe protected village, people from as far as Harare would come to buy baskets at one place and would not go around the village. As a result, we worked very hard to meet the demand. So the war did not affect our basket-weaving and selling business.⁵⁵

Continued Renamo threats have not only caused political instability in the region but have also compelled some families to consider relocating. Episodic violence since 2013 has made life precarious for some sections of the border communities. One such case is that of Bello, who had stayed continuously in Zimbabwe between 1982 and 2002 but then decided to relocate his family back to Mozambique, where he is currently staying. Despite having two Zimbabwean wives, Bello decided to go back to Mozambique in 2002 because his status as an unregistered alien became untenable. He could not buy land in Zimbabwe, so he decided to build just across the border but continued to 'smuggle' and sell his bananas in Zimbabwe.⁵⁶ In Honde Valley, people of Mozambican origins, like Bello, often become the target of political victimisation, particularly during elections. People like Bello, who have families on both sides of the border and known allegiances to political parties in both countries, may be suspected of being used by ruling parties in both countries to cause electoral fraud. Ahead of the October 2019 national elections in Mozambique, Renamo units viewed the voter registration of Mozambicans by the Comissão Nacional de Eleições (National Electoral Commission) in Honde Valley as cheating. They therefore threatened that, if they lost the elections to Frelimo, they would come again to fight the Zimbabweans.⁵⁷ With regard to the resurgence of Renamo and the election-related threats, Bello observed that:

certainly Renamo wants to fight Frelimo and they have established bases near the border. Life in Mozambique is not pleasant. For example, if one had a chance to get a lot of money, he would not build houses or invest in that country because he will be thinking that the war will destroy everything, and the person would find it wiser to

spend all the money and enjoy the luxurious goods at that moment. If the war comes again, for example, it will destroy the lifestyle of the people. Most of us will be forced to move permanently to the Zimbabwean side, where we feel more secure. We will move because the war will destroy our livelihoods; we have seen that in the past.⁵⁸

These remarks reveal that the Mozambican civil war had a detrimental effect on some borderlanders' livelihoods. Yet, as already revealed, it provided others with opportunities to accumulate wealth.

Civil–Military Relations in Honde Valley

As the previous sections have shown, there was a very thin line between 'being' or working with Renamo and being an ordinary citizen caught between the two fighting forces. For its part, the government of Zimbabwe deployed security forces to counter the Renamo insurgency. However, this intervention had contradictory results. At a tactical level, Honde Valley became a battleground pitting Mozambican and Zimbabwean security forces against Renamo bandits. Indeed, Mutizamhepo remembers some of the engagements involving Mozambican security forces and Renamo forces at St James Makuwa (present day Tamuka Club) close to Chinaka village and another battle at Nyakaura village.⁵⁹ While the Zimbabwean government worsened Renamo's logistical conundrum by moving Mozambicans living on the border to Nyamombe refugee camp in Nyanga and other places in the interior, Renamo bandits increased their cross-border raids for logistical support. For instance, in 1987, Renamo bandits raided St Peter's Mandeya school in Chinaka and took a Form 4 male student identified as Tarisai Masiya hostage.⁶⁰ During the same raid, they kidnapped Rosy Nyamhundu, a local girl, and Mr Chipondeneni together with his two sons, who were used as porters.⁶¹ Similar raids increased in Honde Valley during the late 1980s in Chavhanga, north-east of Chinaka, such that the Zimbabwean government created Pachije and Chavhanga primary school keeps in 1989.

However, incessant Renamo attacks in the late 1980s convinced village heads and Zimbabwean soldiers that Renamo units were following their relatives who were refugees in the keeps.⁶² Since these keeps had been ineffective in undermining Renamo's logistical support, the state authorities resorted to relocating refugee families further away from the borderlands to places like Mutare, Macheke and Bindura districts. In 1990 alone, 36 Mozambican families were relocated from Pachije village for allegedly maintaining connections with Renamo rebels or for not showing sufficient motivation to report any Renamo activities in the borderlands. Ten out of the 36 families were sent to the Mazowe area, which is more than 300 kilometres away from the Honde Valley borderlands.⁶³ Among those who were relocated was Njonda, who had crossed into Zimbabwe in 1982 and worked in Macheke, Mutanhaurukwa and Chinamora districts before settling in Honde Valley's MaD7 area in Kumadzi village after the ceasefire in 1992.⁶⁴ Whereas some Mozambicans were forcibly subjected to these resettlements, others, like Charles Cherai Gurure, voluntarily resettled in order to escape Renamo's forced recruitment and victimisation. After losing household goods in several Renamo raids that caused a sense of insecurity, the Gurure family migrated from Hauna to resettle in the Chikomba area of Honde Valley at Bvute village.⁶⁵

It is important to underline that some locals, like Mozambican refugees, were shepherded into keeps such as Chavhanga and Pachije primary schools, where they were required to perform their everyday activities. However, others clandestinely resisted the requirements. Chazanewako Dzinduwa, who defied the rules, explained his encounters and how he was viewed.

There was a person in the area, a *muzukuru* (a niece) who would go around telling people that I was cooking for Renamo bandits at my home, and that was why I was not in the keep at night. I was then targeted by the ZNA soldiers who came to my house one night and ordered me to open the door for them. While I was in the house, I wondered if it was the army or Renamo ... I refused to open for them. As I slept, I was determined not to go out. Little did I know that they were still outside my house waiting for me. Whilst I was seated inside, I heard the tractor coming. I then cooked my sadza and they could even hear me do so. I then ate my food. I also washed my face whilst in the room. After I had finished eating, I then went outside to urinate. Then suddenly they said to me 'what are you doing here?' And I said, 'You once beat me at school there, right?' The soldiers continued, '*mudhara tipewo fodya hombe, mbanje*' ('old man, give us marijuana').⁶⁶

This account captures the tone, emotion and troubled feelings of villagers and government forces. In as much as the government forces represented the military, their identities were not rigid, they could also act as civilians who wanted to liberate themselves from the duties assigned to them by the state. The '*mudhara tipewo mbanje*' scenario was not an isolated experience. These encounters also show how, during war, individual lives often combine self-discipline and governments' disciplining mechanisms, regulatory regimes and notions of what constitutes 'good' or law-abiding citizens. In Honde Valley, local situations created different dynamics and behaviours, opportunities and uncertainties for Renamo units, civilians and state agents.

The counter-insurgency measures within borderland communities led to the imposition of martial law, which in turn affected civilian–military relations. One challenge was that the way national security officials operated was not always understood by those whom they were supposed to protect. Operationally, the security forces also created a partially trained local militia called the Youth Brigade, which served as the first line of defence along some parts of the porous border. Many felt that the soldiers, unlike the local Youth Brigade personnel, did not treat their calls for help as emergencies, and alleged that some soldiers abused local populations. Mutizamhepo explained thus:

if you compare the work done by ZNA soldiers, the Sixth Brigade and local Youth Brigade, the youths worked harder than the ZNA soldiers. For example, some civilians in Mandeya area reported to the soldiers that Matsanga had come into their area, but the soldiers were reluctant to respond, and only left their camps in the morning to investigate what had happened during the night. It seemed as if they were afraid of Matsanga. But the Youth Brigade even followed Matsanga at night and attacked them. There is another incident where Matsanga came to Chinaka and took Mrs Makore and other women and fled. The commander of the Youth Brigade

in the Chinaka village – Mr Ndlovu – sent 11 Youth Brigade members who successfully rescued the women that same night.⁶⁷

While the Renamo war presented opportunities for some people, it disrupted aspects of local social life and coincided with a new struggle against HIV and AIDS. Socially, there was a sense of disintegration as patriarchal control loosened. Some women and girls became pregnant by soldiers operating in Honde Valley, through rape as well as consensual relations. Many villagers believe that this ‘brought’ venereal diseases like HIV and AIDS. The community suffered the full brunt of fractured social relations as soldiers disturbed and broke families when they forced themselves upon married women. Gurure explained further:

the war benefited some people. For example, some women made a lot of money. As far as I know ... people died of HIV/AIDS ... I know these things because I was a supervisor. These are the years when AIDS started spreading in Zimbabwe. I had 450 people who worked under my supervision. I can say that a large number of these people died because of their *paMudhuri* [at the wall] soldier’s camp activities ... People would be involved in multiple sexual relationships. They would go to Renamo bandits for dried meat and get involved in sexual relationships. They would also do the same with Zimbabwean soldiers. Many of them died because of these tendencies.⁶⁸

The changing wartime social relations can be better understood through civilians’ narratives of how they constructed soldiers’ ‘moral character’ and pushed back against the ‘abuse of the gun’. Collins Chisuko narrated how soldiers would come from Mandeya to Chisuko village to drink beer and have extra-marital affairs with local women. Adopting a patriarchal lens, Chisuko argued that sometimes women were to be ‘blamed’ because they ‘marketed’ themselves to these soldiers, especially in the way they smiled and walked.⁶⁹ Chisuko almost fell victim.

One day I went to Mutare leaving my wife and my mother at our homestead. Around 4 p.m., one of the ZNA soldiers came to my homestead in my absence demanding that my wife sell some vegetables to him. Our vegetable garden was about one kilometre away from home. My wife refused to go to the garden because she suspected that this soldier didn’t really want some vegetables but instead wanted to abuse her. The soldier threatened her and even pointed a gun at her saying that if she refused, he was going to shoot her, but my wife still refused. So the soldier said that he would return a few minutes later to check if I was back because he wanted the vegetables, and if I wasn’t back, the soldier said that he was going to force my wife to go to the garden. When they heard this, my mother and my wife were afraid. Soon after the soldier went away, they quickly sought refuge in our neighbour’s house. I later returned from Mutare that same day and I found no one at home. I first thought that Matsanga was at my homestead. I quickly went to the garden where we used to hide when we heard that Matsanga were in our area, but I didn’t find them. I then went to our neighbour asking about the whereabouts of my family, only to find out that they were hiding there.⁷⁰

Fortunately for Chisuko, his father was a headman and knew some of the senior military officials operating in his village, so he reported the case directly to them. A parade was quickly conducted, and the culprit was identified.⁷¹ However, these cases were generally not solved by the chiefs or headmen because traditional leaders had no authority over ZNA and Renamo soldiers operating in the area. Similarly, in her study of Renamo operations in Mozambique's Manica province, Jocelyn Alexander noted that, even though chiefs possessed administrative and religious authority, in practice they exercised very limited control over Renamo soldiers.⁷² The chiefs' powers were compromised because they obtained donations for rain-making ceremonies in the form of cloth from Renamo soldiers.⁷³ Their power was also compromised by the military power that both Renamo and ZNA soldiers were able to exert over the chiefs and villagers. As Chisuko noted, 'during the time of Renamo war, the one who had a gun was more powerful than anyone else, including the headman'.⁷⁴ At Janaso village, 'a ZNA soldier even went to a certain homestead and tried to take someone's wife by force, stating that the woman was not a village man's type'.⁷⁵ The soldier did this because he had a gun and he used it to try and take the woman violently in the presence of family members.⁷⁶ Although the soldier received punishment from his ZNA superiors, locals increasingly became concerned the soldiers were not protecting people but were instead destroying families. In addition to instances of sexual violence, there were some women who had consensual sexual relations with soldiers. In Mandeya village, Charles Macheka recalled that there was a married woman who would not hide in the bushes at night like other villagers but instead slept in the soldiers' camp.⁷⁷ When her husband, who worked in Mutare, found this out the couple divorced.⁷⁸

The presence of soldiers with guns also altered everyday local power dynamics and social relations between people like Gurure (who was both a tea estate supervisor and a soccer coach), local headmen, businessmen, women and children. Gurure revealed how his social relationships at Katiyo estate were affected by the presence of soldiers from the mid 1980s. It was not long before the soldiers openly clashed with Gurure and other men over local women.⁷⁹ Gurure narrated the following account:

one of my girlfriends named Irene was cheating on me with an army sergeant stationed at *Pamudhuri* [soldier's camp] whose name was Goddy ... We were involved in a tit-for-tat scenario with Goddy. He was a sergeant and I was a supervisor. That is where the problem was. They gave us help, but we are human beings. The assistance was sometimes undermined by soldiers' individual actions. The army officer created some problems for me.⁸⁰

The story of Gurure's love triangle is noteworthy because it helps to shed light on the social relationships and other aspects of conviviality established during wartime in the borderland. After discovering that he was being double-crossed, Gurure confronted his nemesis and the woman at the camp. This was quite unusual, given that soldiers were almost a law unto themselves at the time. However, Gurure, whose brother was also in the army force, knew that fraternising with civilians and making women sleep at the camp was not allowed. He, therefore, tried to outmanoeuvre his rival by threatening to make a formal report to his superiors. Gurure eventually lost the contest as the soldier went on to marry the woman in question.⁸¹

Traditional Leaders, State Power, Renamo Sanctuaries and Spirituality

While ordinary people complained about state interventions, traditional leaders such as chiefs and headmen were kept at the margins of administrative power during Mozambique's civil war. Although Renamo restored traditional authorities that had been removed during Frelimo's socialist experiment in Mozambique, their relationships with traditional leaders in Honde Valley were different. The presence of both Renamo units and Zimbabwean security forces undermined the authority of traditional leaders. The chiefs and village heads did not intervene in conflicts arising out of Renamo activities in the Honde Valley, preferring instead that individuals deal with their own issues without involving them.⁸² According to Gurure,

the chiefs and other traditional leaders like *sabhuku* [village-head] would not take it seriously even if you talked about Renamo. They did not want to be in the middle of the chaos. The chiefs should have invited people to dialogue and, through the respective village-heads, worked to understand why Renamo units were crossing the border to come and harm the people in his area. Our chief should have asked why that was happening. We did not see him do that and we do not know if he saw the situation as normal.⁸³

Charles Muyambo concurred with Gurure in explaining that chiefs did not want to intervene as it was risky. He added,

the chief himself was targeted by Renamo bandits because he was part and parcel of the government. He also feared for his life, and he knew that he could be targeted by Renamo at any given time. Chiefs and village heads were targeted, and this explains why no one spoke about Renamo bandits. It was also difficult for them to admit that they had seen Renamo fighters ... It was not their fault. They simply warned people against borrowing from Renamo bandits, but they were not very vocal. They did not want to provoke Renamo units.⁸⁴

Interestingly, despite targeting some traditional leaders for punishment, Renamo bandits used various religious sanctuaries and military bases across the borderlands as sites of power and autonomy. Their reliance on sanctuaries and bases that emphasised cultism and spirituality enabled them to create their own spaces of power, where they organised their strategies beyond the limits of both Mozambican and Zimbabwean state power. Renamo is largely viewed through the lenses of criminality, violence and suffering. However, these characterisations mask other social dynamics, such as their use of spirituality. An analysis of Renamo's wartime dimensions of spirituality provides fresh scholarly interpretations regarding Renamo war historiographies. K.B. Wilson examined the under-researched spiritual aspects of Renamo strategies in Zambezia province. He argues that 'cultic' and 'spiritual' dimensions were central to the organisation and ideology of violence in the Renamo war from 1975 onwards.⁸⁵ In central and northern Mozambique, Renamo recruited three lion-spirit mediums (*mhondoro*) who lived with the captives in Renamo settlements but were treated with respect by Renamo. Rank-and-file Renamo fighters and their commanders often consulted the *mhondoro* mediums when they were ill or before going to battle.⁸⁶ Wilson's effort to understand the spiritual dimension of the Renamo war has not

been followed up by scholars of the civil war, many of whom have tended to emphasise violence and suffering.

In the Honde Valley borderlands, Renamo fighters also sought out spirit mediums, cult leaders and diviners. A prominent spirit medium called Mudhomboti, who lived in Macheke B village, regarded 'himself as a powerful spirit medium who had both an English and a Shona spirit'.⁸⁷ Mudhomboti is said to have 'provided' magical powers and spiritual protection for Renamo fighters, and guidance on their war strategy.⁸⁸ Mudhomboti also acted as a conduit for contraband goods such as game meat, ivory and gold.⁸⁹ Stories of borderlanders being rescued by spirit mediums and *n'angas* (traditional healers) from Renamo violence further highlight the importance of these spiritual dimensions. Muyambo almost became a victim of Renamo violence but was rescued by a Renamo spirit medium, who assured the Renamo commander at Chito base that 'Muyambo was not the person who had borrowed from them'.⁹⁰ The fact that Muyambo was set free underlines the spiritual authority that mediums exercised and the esteem with which they were held by Renamo fighters.

A related dimension that is useful for understanding Renamo's presence in the region is that of territoriality – ownership of space – and conviviality in the borderlands. This provides a valuable prism through which to understand how the Renamo war transformed borderlands into entangled and contested social–political landscapes. Renamo leadership had long emphasised its claim to a certain territory, specifically in the southern provinces of Mozambique, covering the Gorongosa area stretching to areas adjacent to the Honde Valley, such as Zaramira and Chito Mountains. They emphasised their freedom, sociability, conviviality and drinking and were committed to opposing Frelimo's efforts to disrupt their way of life in the borderland sanctuaries like Gorongosa, Chito and others.⁹¹ These long-standing claims to this territory have endured, and there are present contestations between Renamo and Frelimo over the Chito Mountains sanctuary, where Renamo fighters are currently mining gold.⁹²

Conclusion

This article has examined how Renamo insurgent operations transformed the Honde Valley borderlands into a battlefield. We revealed how the civil war tore apart the social fabric and disrupted the rhythm of everyday life in Honde Valley. As a contribution to the ongoing scholarly conversations in the field of borderlands and security studies, our article has emphasised how the Honde Valley borderlands were corridors of many opportunities and contestations during the Renamo war. Despite the violence and creation of keeps as 'nets of discipline', borderlanders enacted several strategies to reclaim control over their everyday lives. The borderlanders, with their enterprising attitudes, created several synergies for both Renamo insurgents and some corrupt and undisciplined ZNA personnel who operated in the area from the late 1980s until the early 1990s. Owing to the fact that some of the people living in the Honde Valley borderlands were of Mozambican origin or had ties to people on the other side of the border, defining who was Renamo or who worked with Renamo was a complex undertaking. The social, economic and political ties in the Honde Valley pre-dated contemporary nation states. These in turn enabled Renamo bandits to penetrate and work within the local communities for various purposes, such as recruitment of soldiers and

acquiring supplies to sustain their war in Mozambique. This significantly affected the rhythm of life in many communities on the borderlands. Despite the challenges that Renamo bandits brought to the Honde Valley, we contend that their episodic attacks did not turn borderland communities into paralysed societies where violence and suffering became the primary characteristic of daily life. While some mourned their relatives who were killed by Renamo, others profited from their trading partnerships and cross-border interactions. Additionally, some families established new homes in Mozambique, creating overlapping and ambivalent socio-economic and political identities that have led to ongoing accusations, administrative and security challenges as well as many opportunities for borderlanders.

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Notes

1 T. Mkandawire, 'The Terrible Toll of Post-Colonial "Rebel Movements" in Africa: Towards an Explanation of the Violence against the Peasantry', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 40, 2 (2002), pp. 181–215.

2 'Cross-Border Visits Banned', *Manica Post*, Mutare, 16 October 1987.

3 See our different framing of 'war' in this study.

4 Zimbabweans from across the political spectrum have chastised the Zimbabwean government for a unilateral deployment of the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) troops to fight terrorists in Cabo Delgado as 'not only illegal but foolish and costly'. Many advocate the involvement of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) rather than what they perceive as misguided adventurism; 'Zimbabwe's Deployment of Troops in Mozambique Not Only Illegal but Foolish and Costly – Biti', available at <https://news.pindula.co.zw/2020/05/02/zimbabwes-deployment-of-troops-in-mozambique-not-only-illegal-but-foolish-and-costly-bit/>, retrieved 4 May 2020.

5 Interview with Mike Makuyana, Chisuko, Honde Valley, 20 September 2019. All interviews for this article were conducted by the authors, and all interviewees consented to being identified.

6 Borderlanders are individuals or communities with an enterprising attitude to exploiting changing border conditions. They are often characterised as politically ambivalent people who can manipulate their identities to have access to opportunities. As argued by Paul Nugent, the practical governance of borders and borderlands therefore arises out of the quotidian interplay between state actors and the ordinary people who populate, move through and trade within the borderlands. See P. Nugent, *Boundaries, Communities and State-Making in West Africa: The Centrality of the Margins* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019); O.J. Martínez, *Border People: Life and Society in the US–Mexico Borderlands* (Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 1994), p. 20.

7 A. Isaacman, 'Peasants and Rural Social Protest in Africa', *African Studies Review*, 33, 2 (1990), pp. 1–120.

8 See W. Zartman, *Understanding Life in the Borderlands: Boundaries in Depth and Motion* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 2010); L. Scorgie, 'Prominent Peripheries: The Role of Borderlands in Central Africa's Regionalized Conflict', *Critical African Studies*, 5, 1 (2013), pp. 32–47.

9 Scorgie, 'Prominent Peripheries', p. 32.

- 10 W. Zeller (citing Scorgie), in 'Editorial', *Critical African Studies*, 5, 1 (2013), p. 2.
- 11 M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984); H. Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life: Volume One* (London, Verso, 1991); A. Ludtke, *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995).
- 12 M. de Certeau, 'General Introduction', in de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. xiv–xv.
- 13 Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life: Volume One*. See also M. Sheringham, *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006).
- 14 The concept of conviviality has been used to express many forms of mutual sociability. Some Africanists have used the concept of conviviality to illustrate 'the sociability and institutions that drinking engenders', such as initiation rites, weddings, puberty rites, cementing ethnic-based ties, and so on. For more discussion on conviviality, see E. Msindo and N. Nyachega, 'Zimbabwe's Liberation War and the Everyday in Honde Valley, 1975 to 1979', *South African Historical Journal*, 71, 1 (2019), pp. 70–93; I. Lobnibe, 'Drinking Pito: Conviviality, Popular Culture and Changing Agricultural Production at the Rural–Urban Interface in Brong Ahafo, Ghana', *African Geographical Review*, 37, 3 (2018), pp. 227–40.
- 15 The name MaD7 refers to a large area with several villages whose families live on both the Zimbabwean and Mozambican sides of the border. The origins of this name are traceable to a caterpillar bulldozer called D7 that broke down at this area in the 1960s and was abandoned there. Interview with Benedito Daimon Samwaya Njonda, Rwera, Mozambique, 2 October 2019.
- 16 See V. Braun and V. Clarke, 'Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 2 (2006), pp. 77–101.
- 17 Zartman, *Understanding Life in the Borderlands*.
- 18 W. Mwatwara, 'The "Logic" of Renamo Civil War Violence: Trans-Border Communities and Renamo Incursions in Eastern Zimbabwe, 1980s–1992', *Southern Journal for Contemporary History*, 45, 1 (2020), pp. 145–70.
- 19 Interview with Chazanewako Dzinduwa, Chimuswe Village, Honde Valley, 6 February 2020.
- 20 Mwatwara, 'The "Logic" of Renamo Civil War Violence'; see also N. Nyachega, 'Beyond War, Violence and Suffering: Everyday Life in the Honde Valley Borderland Communities during Zimbabwe's Liberation War and the Renamo Insurgency, c.1960–2016', (MA dissertation, Rhodes University, 2017).
- 21 D.S. Moore, *Suffering for Territory: Race, Place, and Power in Zimbabwe* (Harare, Weaver Press, 2005), p. 44.
- 22 K. Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders: Greater Somalia and the Predicaments of Belonging in Kenya* (Athens, Ohio University Press, 2017).
- 23 Interview with George Manyanga, Mbare Musika (market), Harare, 5 August 2019.
- 24 Interview with Judah Marombedza, Rwera, Mozambique, 2 October 2019.
- 25 Group interview 2, with Mozambican men, Rwera, Mozambique, 2 October 2019.
- 26 Interview with Benedito Njonda, Rwera, Mozambique, 2 October 2019.

27 Interview with George Manyanga, Mbare Musika, Harare, 5 August 2019. Matsanga is a local term used interchangeably with Renamo. There are two interpretations about this name. First, the founder of Renamo was one who broke from Frelimo, called Andre Matada Matsangaissa, and Matsanga became a local shorthand for his followers. Matsanga became a cult figure for Renamo. As Wilson argued, Matsangaissa is credited with extraordinary powers and numerous accounts of his death – or ultimate lack of it – circulate among the Renamo soldiers and local populations. Another version says that Renamo units were called Matsanga because they lived in the bush and often disguised themselves and covered their paraphernalia with *tsanga* (reeds), thus they were called men of reeds, men of the bush. The first understanding is, however, more convincing. For more details, see K.B. Wilson, 'Cults of Violence and Counter-Violence in Mozambique', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Special Issue: Political Violence in Southern Africa, 18, 3 (1992), p. 543; Moore, *Suffering for Territory*.

28 M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

29 Interview with George Manyanga, Mbare Musika, Harare, 5 August 2019.

30 *Ibid.*

31 *Ibid.*

32 Group interviews with Benedito Njonda and Judah Marombedza, Pandagoma, Mozambique, 2 October 2019.

33 Interview with Misheck Nyapwere, Sagambe, 22 August 2019.

34 Interview with Charles Gurure, Chisuko, Honde Valley, 14 September 2019.

35 Interview with Revai Bote, Mandeya, 25 October 2019.

36 Interview with Shepherd Bello, Rwera, Mozambique, 2 October 2019.

37 *Ibid.*

38 *Ibid.*

39 Interview with Chazanewako Dzinduwa, Chimuswe Village, Honde Valley, 6 February 2020.

40 Interview with Mrs Chigava, Pandagoma, Mozambique, 20 October 2019.

41 Interview with George Manyanga, Mbare Musika, Harare, 5 August 2019.

42 Interview with Chazanewako Dzinduwa, Chimuswe Village, Honde Valley, 6 February 2020.

43 See Martínez, *Border Life*; S. Chávez, *Border Lives: Fronterizos, Transnational Migrants, and Commuters in Tijuana* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2016).

44 L.B. Deng, 'Livelihood Diversification and Civil War: Dinka Communities in Sudan's Civil War', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 4, 3 (2010), pp. 381–99. For details of changing social relations in Sudan's borderlands during the civil war, see J.D. Majok, *War, Migration and Work: Changing Social Relations in the South Sudan Borderlands*, Rift Valley Institute Report (2019), available at <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/War%2C%20migration%20and%20work%20by%20Joseph%20Diing%20Majok%20-%20RVI%20X-Border%20Project%20%282019%29.pdf>, retrieved 16 September 2021.

- 45 Interview with Chazanewako Dzinduwa, Chimuswe Village, Honde Valley, 6 February 2020.
- 46 Moore, *Suffering for Territory*, p.45.
- 47 Interview with Simba Kumadzi, Pandagoma Mozambique, 20 February 2020.
- 48 Interview with Benedito Njonda, Rwera, Mozambique, 2 October 2019.
- 49 Interview with Judah Marumbedza, Rwera, Mozambique, 2 October 2019.
- 50 Interview with Benedito Njonda, Rwera, Mozambique, 2 October 2019.
- 51 Five civilians who were murdered are Esitere Changwena (50), Beauty Mujangu (12), Dadirai Mujangu (9), Kudakwashe Mujangu (6) and Doca Chaoneka (5). Four other villagers were injured when the insurgents attacked them at night, *Manica Post*, 6 April 1990. For more discussion, see Nyachega, 'Beyond War, Violence and Suffering', pp. 132–7.
- 52 Interview with Misheck Mujangu, Sagambe, Honde Valley, 22 August 2019.
- 53 Interview with Benedito Njonda, Rwera, Mozambique, 2 October 2019.
- 54 Interview with Judah Marumbedza, Rwera, Mozambique, 2 October 2019.
- 55 *Ibid.*
- 56 Interview with Shepherd Bello, Rwera, Mozambique, 2 October 2019.
- 57 Interview with Member Mutizamhepo, St Columbus School, Hauna, 28 September 2019.
- 58 Interview with Shepherd Bello, Rwera, Mozambique, 2 October 2019.
- 59 Interview with Member Mutizamhepo, St Columbus School, Hauna, 28 September 2019.
- 60 *Ibid.*
- 61 *Ibid.*
- 62 Interview with George Manyanga, Mbare Musika, Harare, 5 August 2019.
- 63 *Ibid.*
- 64 Interview with Benedito Njonda, Rwera, Mozambique, 2 October 2019.
- 65 Interview with Charles Gurure, Chisuko, Honde Valley, 14 September 2019.
- 66 Interview with Chazanewako Dzinduwa, Chimuswe Village, Honde Valley, 6 February 2020.
- 67 Interview with Member Mutizamhepo, St Columbus School, Hauna, 28 September 2019.
- 68 Interview with Charles Gurure, Chisuko, Honde Valley, 14 September 2019.
- 69 Interview with Collins Chisuko, Chisuko Village, 15 September 2019.

70 *Ibid.*

71 *Ibid.*

72 J. Alexander, 'The Local State in Post-War Mozambique: Political Practice and Ideas about Authority', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 67, 1 (1997), pp. 1–26.

73 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

74 Interview with Collins Chisuko, Chisuko Village, 15 September 2019.

75 The interviewee wanted the family concerned to remain anonymous.

76 Interview with Collins Chisuko, Chisuko Village, 15 September 2019.

77 Interview with Claudius Macheke, Mandeya, Honde Valley, 10 October 2019.

78 *Ibid.*

79 Interview with Mike Makuyana, Chisuko, Honde Valley, 20 September 2019.

80 Interview with Charles Gurure, Chisuko, Honde Valley, 14 September 2019.

81 *Ibid.*

82 Interview with Chazanewako Dzinduwa, Chimuswe Village, Honde Valley, 6 February 2020.

83 Interview with Charles Gurure, Chisuko, Honde Valley, 14 September 2019.

84 Interview with Charles Muyambo, Chisuko, 22 September 2019.

85 Wilson highlighted the nexus between soldiery and sexual power in the Zambezia, showing the violent and ritualised nature of relationships between women and Renamo soldiers. As many studies have shown, Renamo bandits sometimes raped women as their husbands and children watched, to instil fear. In addition, captured women underwent ritualised allocation. Wilson, 'Cults of Violence and Counter-Violence', p. 528. In her study of the Angolan civil war, Silva revealed how diviners used their divination baskets among refugees in the Angola–Zambia borderlands during the Angolan civil war. For more discussion, see S. Silva, *Along an African Border: Angolan Refugees and their Divination Baskets* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

86 Wilson, 'Cults of Violence and Counter-Violence', p. 541.

87 Interview with Member Mutizamhepo, St Columbus School, Hauna, 28 September 2019.

88 Interview with Charles Muyambo, Chisuko, 22 September 2019. K.B. Wilson also reviewed similar roles that spirit mediums performed for Renamo in Mozambique's Tete province, where Renamo spirit mediums provide protective magic (especially before battles) and divine future dangers. Not only were spirit mediums important for military reasons, they were also used to establish relations with local populations and to exert Renamo hegemony over rural populations who trusted in the power and influence of spirit mediums. See Wilson, 'Cults of Violence and Counter-Violence', p. 542.

89 Mudhomboti was assassinated in 1993, after the civil war had already ended in Mozambique, for defaulting on payments. Interview with Member Mutizamhepo, St Columbus School, Hauna, 28 September 2019.

90 Interview with Charles Muyambo, Chisuko, 22 September 2019.

91 Before his death, outspoken Renamo leader Alfonso Dhlakama had declared from his Gorongoza base, in Portuguese–Shona blend language, that they would stay forever in their forests if Frelimo did not attack their strongholds. Verbatim, he said *'tinotogara hedu makore muno tichimwa hedu saravezha nevakadzi wedu, asi mukatiambira basi, tinokutumirai vafana wedu kucitademo'*, 'we will stay here for many years, drinking beer with "our" women, but if they provoke us, we will send our young men to their city'. Wilson argues that, in fact, Dhlakama 'is known to have told his combatants that the "spirits" of Renamo will pursue and kill anyone who defects', emphasising the spiritual and cultic elements of the Renamo war. Wilson, 'Cults of Violence and Counter-Violence', p. 542.

92 Interview with Mike Makuyana, Chisuko, Honde Valley, 20 September 2019.