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## Migration of Men and Changing Household and Societal Roles for Women in Former Migrant Labour Societies

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**Abstract:** *Studies on migration including those that have focused on the migrant labour system have emphasized the negative effects of migration of men – the suffering it brought to the women who had to live without men, its destruction of families and its impact on agriculture and productivity. My extended research on former migrant labour society in north-western Zimbabwe suggests, however, that the positives far outweigh the negative; the migration of men to cities had positive socioeconomic impacts for a significant portion of rural households and the women left behind. While men who worked away, managed to send remittances for the welfare of those remaining behind and households' investment, the absence of men, also allowed women to assume prominent roles within the household and community systems. My study thus stresses the importance of migration on development, and on the empowerment potential on women who take up prominent position in the household and society decision making structures.*

**Keywords:** *feminization of rural space, migrant labour societies, proletarianization of men, women households heads, Zimbabwe*

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### 1. Introduction

The majority of rural societies in Southern Africa – from Lesotho to Zimbabwe – were, and are still are migrant labour societies. Over the years, these communities have gained a reputation as societies built on labour migration and remittances. Labour reserve societies were special designated areas reserved for indigenous African people to 'provide for the reproduction of labour power, used elsewhere in the economy in capitalist production, on terms that make it available especially cheaply' (Bush and Cliffe 1984, p. 77). After the fall of colonialism and the emergence of democratic and transformative governments, first in crown colonies like Lesotho and then in settler states like Zimbabwe, these societies were not completely transformed and migration for labour remained central to livelihood development and household survival.

Understanding the true impact of labour migration in poor societies has been hampered by the dominance of a 'doomsday scenario' (Roe, 1995, p. 1065) structural Marxist narrative that focuses only on the negative aspects: The suffering that labour migration

brought to the women left behind who had to live without their men; its destruction of families; and its negative impact on agriculture. This narrative was often deployed in analysis of migrant labour regimes, which have for long been associated with the exploitative nature of capitalism, and often characterized as imposing an enormous burden on the rural system that had to bear the costs of labour reproduction, and those who remained behind who often found themselves with the burden of maintaining former migrants after retirement, illness, disability or old age (Potts, 2000). This meant that any positive aspects of migration continued to be overshadowed by the negative history of the development of capitalism in the region.

This is despite literature that recognizes the development impact of migration to migrant sending communities and migrant households. The development impact of labour migration has been recognized in post-independence literature in Zimbabwe, which showed that labour migrant households were relatively wealthier than those without labour migrants (e.g., Coudere and Marijsse,

1988; Maphosa, 2010; Weiner and Harris, 1991). This can also be noted in literature on agriculture, which has highlighted the role of the wage in agricultural investment (Boehm, 2003; Weiner and Harris, 1991; Worby, 2001), and in particular to the potential of migrant households to invest in livestock, farm equipment and inputs.

My intention in this paper, then, is to shed more light on this position, but I also want to emphasize the positive social impacts of the out-migration of men on the women housewives left behind in rural areas, often as custodians of households' assets including land. My analysis builds on existing scholarship on migration that explores livelihood development, remittances and accumulation both in the colonial and postcolonial periods, and the position of women within the whole process. It also engages with both historical and contemporary literature on circulatory migration, focusing on the centrality of worker-peasantry as a culture in former migrant labour societies in Southern Africa. I draw particular attention to the migrant labour reserves' social context and the men within these societies, and attempt to situate the position of women within this broad framework.

To gain a micro level understanding, I base my analysis on data from wide ranging studies conducted on communities on the southern fringes of the former Shangani Reserves between 2005 and 2016. These ethnographic studies focused broadly on worker-peasant dynamics and the changing gender roles in these societies. The ethnography focused on understanding the dynamics of a migrant labour society, and focused broadly on societal processes and transformation that has taken place overtime.

I particularly became interested in women and their changing roles in society following a campaign by women and youth against male firewood vendors one winter morning in 2006. The demonstrators termed the demonstration that led to the confiscation of firewood that was displayed for sale along the road and stock still in the forest, and eviction of the firewood vendors, who mainly came from the Shangani Valley further north. The demonstration of that winter morning and the composition of the demonstrators motivated my interest in women. This paper thus, draw data specific to the women and their position in society, the history of the people, and livelihoods.

My analytical starting point is Bridget O'Laughlin's argument that structuralist perspectives on migration, women and household organization have tended to be highly reductive - reducing gender to class - and totalizing by minimizing the importance

and complexity of social differentiation, while also failing to accommodate regional differences (O'Laughlin, 1998). She thus drew on other feminist writers' emphasis that 'women headed households are often a product of women's own initiative' and Colson (1962)'s view that 'women living in women-headed households may appreciate their degree of relative autonomy' (O'Laughlin, 1998, p.7). Still citing Colson's (1962) work in Zambia, she emphasized her observation that the periodic absence of migrant Tonga men 'opened up new areas of autonomy and control for women both in their agricultural work and in their social lives' (ibid, p. 5). This is an idea taken up here, with specific reference to the position of women in migrant sending communities in the Matabeleland region in north-western Zimbabwe.

In this paper, I examine the complex dynamics of migrant labour societies that unsettle traditional gender stereo-types, while also redefining women's roles at both the household and societal level. My focus is on how the absence of men through migration provided opportunities for women to be autonomous and take control of households and society decisions (Colson, 1962). By focusing on the complexity of migrant labour societies and the different position that women occupy, I want to illuminate differences between rural societies and caution against the risk of looking at the relationship between women and migration with a uniform eye (O'Laughlin, 1998).

An assumption crucial to my analysis is that men in these societies have guaranteed land rights (Potts and Mutambirwa, 1990); that they safeguard land rights by leaving wives and children on the land while they seek livelihoods elsewhere; and that women as *de facto* heads of households have complete control of this land (Thebe, 2012). This practice, as Nyambara (2001, p. 776) showed in his Gokwe study, was a common procedure for "booking" land' in former reserve. He captured this through an excerpt from Acting PC, Parker:

A significant factor in this situation is the high proportion of 'abandoned wives' left in the new areas... by husbands in employment in the major centres. The husbands take leave to effect the move, construct the huts and obtain their.... registration certificates. Thereafter they depart leaving their wives [and] children to deal with their conservation problems and responsibilities (cf. Nyambara, 2001, p. 776).

In the absence of men, women also had to assume responsibilities that were traditionally seen as being

within male territory at society level. In reflections on the context I emphasize in particular how women wives left behind to safeguard men's interests, manage to work around the enormous socio-economic costs associated with divided families and absent men to engage in short, medium and long term decisions relating to the household, farm and society. I argue for the continued importance of circular migration in poverty, where remittances provide a cushion to agriculture failure and lead to the empowerment of women within the household and rural space.

## 2. The 'dark gusu' frontier of Lupane District

In the interest of pursuing the analytical issues raised by the study focus on realities of women in migrant labour societies, I turn my attention to the 'gusu' frontier in south-western Lupane District, one of the many areas that were designated as labour reserves for emerging capital after colonial conquest. This is part of the 'dark forests' so vividly captured in Alexander et al. (2000)'s *Violence and memory: One hundred years in the 'dark forests' of Matabeleland*, and now constitutes large parts of the Menyezwa Ward, under Chief Mabhikwa Khumalo.<sup>1</sup>

This part of the 'gusu' frontier is located on the southern fringes of the former Shangani Reserves, about 180km from Bulawayo City along the A8 Highway (road connecting Bulawayo to Zambia through Livingstone Town). It is sandwiched by the Gwayi River to the south and the main highway to the north, with southern 'gusu' forest spreading across the Sotane Ranch into parts of the former Gwayi Reserves, and the northern forest spreading towards the Zambezi.<sup>2</sup>

Its location along the road connecting the reserves to Bulawayo City was ideal for the movement of labour and remittances. Equally, its geographical position at the semi-arid belt and the communal tenure system that governed land access and land rights made it ideal for a worker-peasantry.

## 3. The worker-peasantry of the 'gusu' frontier

It was established around the late 1940s by Ndebele households that were evicted from 'white' land – land expropriated for commercial agriculture and mining – although these migrant groups found in the area some forest tribes (the *sili*) (Alexander et al. 2000).

The Ndebele groups came from areas like Figtree, Insuza/Bubi, Inyathi and Nyamandlovu where capitalism had already taken root, and had been exposed to European influence since the late 1880s.

Chief Menyezwa Gumede, for instance, arrived in the area from Figtree in 1948 and became chief of groups from Bubi/Insuza, Inyathi and Nyamandlovu, and subsequent arrivals, especially in the post settlement period, which came from other contested areas, particularly those in peri-urban Bulawayo.

From the 1950s onwards, these parts of the 'gusu' and other similar areas to the north, received even more people that were evicted from Filabusi, Fort Rixon and Matopo (Alexander et al., 2000). As noted elsewhere (Thebe, 2017a), it is also possible that new arrivals in the 1950s and 1960s were referred for land in the reserves by early arrivals who were already established in the reserve region. Among them was a proletarian class that held jobs in the emerging industries in Bulawayo, people retired from their jobs, and others who were between jobs and took the opportunity in the reserves to build themselves homes before re-establishing themselves as urban workers again.

Of significance was the number of men who held jobs in the capitalist sector in Bulawayo, among those who took up land and established homes in these parts of the 'gusu' frontier. The fact that these men never gave up their jobs, and their families remained in the reserves suggests, as Nyambara (2001, 776) noted elsewhere, that their intention was merely to "book" land,...by leaving their wives at the new location, and then returning to work'. The main challenge in this arrangement was that the '[m]en who now went to work in Bulawayo could not be expected to cycle the 125-170 miles to and from the Shangani Reserve. Families would be divided'.

The key point here is that the origin of settlers and the patterns of life they had established prior to their eviction left these parts of the 'gusu' frontier dominated by a worker-peasantry, with interests both in rural land and the urban sector. Women were less involved in labour migration than men, and were left to oversee crop production together with other kin. With the development of road networks and transport system, men were able to circulate between the world of work and the rural space and to send remittances to those remaining behind.

Thus, men circulated between the city and the rural home, and lived a worker-peasant life. But it does not imply – as some from a Marxist tradition often portray it – that the women left behind had to bear the blunt and had to compensate for lost male labour. To the contrary, worker migrants, like in most traditional societies, often compensated for lost labour through resource-pooling. Resources were mostly pooled

together with other households, which could offer labour but lacked other agricultural resources.

#### 4. Women Spaces – The household space

Women were expected to fulfil household head duties by providing leadership and taking day-to-day decisions. This sits alongside some post-independence studies that showed that labour migrant households employed additional labour that was critical in agriculture production (e.g. Weiner and Harris, 1991). Women clearly recognized their household leadership roles in these communities, and executed them with authority.

As nearly all households were headed by women, either on a *de facto* or *de jure* basis, the leadership roles had become normal and they performed them naturally. Generally, when men were absent, the women organized agriculture tasks, but rarely performed the masculine activities like preparing the fields, which were often assigned to boys, or they would use remittances to hire people, or alternatively they had the option to organize '*ilima*' (communal work) for such tasks. Many labour migrant households, however, did not utilize this option, feeling content with the use of paid labour. In this way it was easy to manage and control how the task was being done; it also relieved the women of the burden of being physically present during '*ilima*', to concentrate on other tasks.

In these societies, all rural household tasks were considered the responsibility of the woman together with sons and hired helpers. The man's responsibility was to provide the financial resources, which the woman commanded; otherwise he rarely interfered in rural household affairs since his continuous absence made his grasp of realities relatively weaker. The man only had extended period of stay in the rural home once in year, when they would spend around a calendar month. At the end of each year, or soon after harvest (depending on the sectors they were employed), men would take vacation leave to spend time with their families.

However, both women and children considered the presence of men as something of invasion of their space. Women often felt that men were hijacking their responsibilities, and sometimes making wrong decisions. The uneasiness of women with the presence of men in the rural space can be inferred from the following quotation from one of the women:

He is here for only a month, but it feels like a whole year....*Angikwazi abafazi abahlala lamadoda bona*

*baphila njani* (i do not know how women who have men at home leave). His hands are all over, and he makes decisions...but he does not understand the environment. There is a reason why we do things the way we do them....I am ok with my boys. He comes, he starts projects and expects us to manage them....Remember, he will be gone soon...

In this society, like all migrant labour societies, men were not expected to be in the rural space, which was traditionally regarded as a terrain for women. As Boehm (2003, p. 5) noted in Lesotho, 'men were and are supposed to make money', and any man found in this space was denigrated and called by the derogatory name, '*umahlalela*'. Women married to non-working men often bore an added burden of having to make income through the performance of jobs outside their households including vending and performing tasks for others, or they would risk facing the prospects of poverty. Most women relied on piece work labouring for labour migrant households, while others were involved in vegetable vending locally or along the highway.

Through this method they were able to afford basics and tuition fees for children at school, who also assisted their mothers in these income generating activities. The man usually performed menial tasks for other households, but these were not paying well and were generally highly contested, which meant that households headed by non-working men could hardly escape the poverty trap.

Generally, no woman wanted a husband that is a '*mahlalela*', and women went to great length to ensure that their men were out of the rural space. The woman would often finance the migration journey through income from her additional activities. Another way women made sure the men were out of the rural space was by the deployment of the word '*mahlalela*'. I was informed:

... no man wants to be referred to as '*mahlalela*'. It is degrading and implies that a man is so jealous that he cannot bear to be away from his wife. If you want to see how angry a man can be, just call him '*umahlalela*'.....Women would sometimes call their husbands such names when they are angry, and that often did the trick.....they would off in a flash ...to prove that they are not what they are accused of...

Thus, women would use these societal stereotypes to rid themselves of the men. In these societies the migration of the men was associated with remittances that were often invested into the farm and other rural

activities. With the man gone and circulating between the rural and urban, the woman would assume control of everyday household decisions.

While, it was important for the man to migrate for work, it was important that people remember that he is the head of households. Women needed men in the households, but they did not want him to be permanently resident in the rural space. He was expected to visit frequently, weekly, fortnightly or monthly. One of the women explained the importance of the visibility of men in the home:

Kuhle ukuthi abantu bazi angisuye *umazakhela* (It is important that people are reminded that I am not a lonely woman).<sup>3</sup> By coming here frequently, ...is a sign that there is a man in this home, and people respect the home and me...no one respects '*umazakhela*'.

Generally, some men were content and granted the women the space to run rural household affairs in their absence, and expressed confidence in decisions often taken:

...she knows better about things around here than I do. She experiences the challenges and makes decisions based on her analysis of the situation. I cannot control this place by remote control..., if I have to make decisions on her behalf, what will guide my decision? She makes the decisions, I support her.... I still play an active role here, I provide the necessary support.

Engagement in migrant labour was not, however, uniformly distributed among households in this part of the '*gusu*' frontier: while households that relocated from former 'white areas' and descendants of such households had at least a member in wage employment, only a minority of members of indigenous '*sili*' households were in the same situation. Similarly, Ndebele men were more than twice more likely to work in the cities than '*sili*' men, who were mostly employed local (in the Sotane Ranch or Forest Commission) and preferred to circulate between the home and work on a daily basis. Thus, the socio-economic situation of labour migrant households was distinctly different from those headed by '*omahlalela*' (non-working men) – the former showed little interest in productive farming. In contrast to their non-working counterparts, labour migrant men did not need farming income to support families. While all of these households practiced agriculture, women made

everyday farm decisions including crop decisions - what crops to produce, in what quantities, and where?

For households in the latter category, there was no division of land into fields for men and other for the women, or male and female crops; land might have been allocated to the men, but it was treated as household land, worked and managed by the women. Women were not allocated land directly as women. However, since their husbands were guaranteed land rights by virtue of their membership of society, women as wives assumed *de facto* land rights. Land belonged to households and was allocated to men upon marriage, and for those men working outside the community the land was left in the custody of the wives.

At the same time, the wives understood that the land belonged to their households and did everything possible to protect the land allocations against encroachment by others. In cases of encroachment into such land by other members of the community, the women would often confront such people before filing a case of encroachment with the village court. Such incidents were common in the community because some men would take advantage of absent men and poach resources from their land. Most *de facto* women heads relied on the recognition of the households' rights to such land by the village and the headman, in any decision against encroachment.

Women married to labour migrant husbands had little incentive to produce cash crops, and as alluded to earlier, they were not allocated land to produce own crops; crops were produced at the household level. They were not expected to produce own crops since the husbands were not physically involved in the production of crops, and had no need for land to be specially reserved for their own independent use. Married women at an extended household worked separate plots, and while they had control of crop decisions they had little control over household decision, which were the preserve of the head of the entire household, who was permanently resident in the rural space.

All women who were heads of households made crop decisions that allowed them to benefit from the farming enterprise. One of the ways women made sure they derived benefits from their farm work was to intercrop grain crops with a variety of vegetable and legume crops. The traditional intercropping techniques continued to inform households' farming activities in this community despite the wide adoption of maize and the accompanying requirements to mono-crop.<sup>4</sup> Thus, women used their position in the household to produce crops that were important in their day-to-day

tasks like consumption crops and crops that could easily be exchanged for cash.

For example, households would intercrop maize in combination with sugar reeds, pumpkins and melons. Some produced groundnuts, round nuts or beans in combination with melons, pumpkins and sugar reeds, while others planted land with maize and sugar reeds and reserved other parts of the field for other combinations, depending on the quality of the soils. Proceeds from the harvest were controlled by the women, who sometimes sold the legume and vegetable crops. By so doing, women gained income to finance other responsibilities. Most women headed households did not sell the legume, vegetable and other crops that were intercropped with grain crops; these crops were consumed fresh and some was sent to other family members in the city.

The number of crop products that were grown for the market had increased in 2005 and 2016, and these women grew any crops that could generate immediate cash. The production of sorghum and millet, which had previously been produced by households on red clay and sandy soils respectively, had declined significantly as the women focused on a combination of crops that had a demand in the market. It should be made clear here that even maize, which was often produced for household consumption, was sometimes harvested in its green state and either sold fresh, roasted or boiled, to passing motorists, even at the risk of a low harvest. This had become a major source of food insecurity for many households in 2016 since proceeds from the sale of the crops were often diverted to satisfy other pressing households' needs and were never saved. The demand for certain crop species on the road market determined the choice of crops that the women preferred to sell from their fields. Different crops had different potential to generate income. The women showed a preference for sugar reeds and water melons and to some lesser extent pumpkins, because they could be sold fresh. These were also a good substitute for the maize staple during the period before the actual harvest, although pumpkins could still be sold after harvest.

### 5. Still women' spaces – The community space

In these former labour reserves the responsibilities of women extended beyond the confines of their households and to the community level. The high incidence of male migration meant that women had to represent their absent men at the community level, and were involved in community decisions through the village court. Women often attended to community problems as representatives of their households. Over

the years women in these societies have managed to negotiate their position in society, and positioned themselves as major role players in decisions that affected the community as a whole. As migrant workers, men played peripheral roles in the community as a whole. Exceptional cases were in situations where the men worked locally, or had no job, and there were villages where a large proportion of men were out of work.

As representatives of their households at the society level, women constituted the village assemblies. These women also attended the village court sessions and dominated decisions, especially in villages where the migration of men was prominent. Women considered their participation as normal, since there were fewer men in the community. The feminization of these societal space, which have long been regarded as male spaces, and the normalization of the situation can be inferred from the quotation by one women head of household:

We attend the village assembly, we deliberate on issues...*Sizokwenzani ngoba lana akunamadoda* (what should we do since there are no men here)? We have to stand up for ourselves ... the men you see here are on transit (*bayedlula*) ... they know nothing about this place.

In the times after the Fast Track Land Reform and Resettlement Programme in early 2000s, this was exacerbated by the death of male heads of households, massive out-migration of both men and women to South Africa and the relocation of others – mainly war veterans and other Zanu (PF) supporters – to resettlement areas in uMguza District. In this setting, there was a high proportion of female headed households (both *de jure* and *de facto*), and these women constituted the village courts alongside the few remaining men. In this way the women were at the forefront of societal decisions, and in this feminized spaces, which in some villages were characterized by acting women village heads, the position of women at society level was enhanced.

There were differences in the involvement of women among villages in these societies, depending on the extent of semi-proletarianization. There were two main categories of villages in these parts of the 'gusu' frontier: villages that were highly semi-proletarianized and those where the proletarianization of men was relatively less. This had been the case since the 1950s when the Ndebele first settled in these parts of the 'gusu'. This was further related to places of origin of certain lineage groups that comprised

these villages: some lineage groups originated from areas where capitalism had started to take shape, and men were already fully proletarianized. Women in villages where the proletarianization of men was not that high were not excluded from village assemblies, but their involvement was rather constrained by the availability of husbands at home.

The situation of the former was distinctly different – the active participation of women in the village assemblies meant that they had a huge influence on village growth and the management of the environment. In the ‘*gusu*’ frontier practice, households have sole control of land and could settle anyone on such land. In order for this to happen, the landholder must first present prospective settlers to the village assembly, where they are screened. The village assembly could still refuse to grant permission for new households to settle, if such developments would compromise parts of the village life. Exceptional cases were sons and daughters of the community, who had guaranteed land rights. This may explain why the villages in question had grown rather slowly, and the general lack of ‘*madiro-type*’ settlements, particularly in the area where Chief Gumede had initially settled. People traced this behaviour to then Headman Ncube, who was highly prudent in his management of the village, and to the fact that those who experienced his headship knew no other way of doing things.

In general, women did not shy away from confronting challenges affecting the community, and were quick to mobilize youths and whatever remained of the male population. The following case illustrates the role of women in solving challenges that affected their communities, even in the absence of men:

One winter morning in 2006, a group of predominantly women... from villages on the southern fringes of the former Shangani Reserves – between the Gwayi River and the Gwayi/Shangani rivers watershed forest, under Chief Mabhikwa Khumalo of Lupane District, in western Zimbabwe – organi[z]ed and participated in what they termed at the time, an ‘environmental cleansing ritual’. They marched along the A8 Highway and into the forest, confiscating firewood displayed for sale on the roadside and the stockpiles in the forest awaiting transportation to the markets in the city. Environmental cleansing, mostly related to rainmaking, is common practice in this region, and is often performed when dry spells persist for longer periods as an intervention to bring back the rains ... In this case cleansing is concomitant

to rainmaking. The ritual is initiated by community elders and led by *amawosana* (spirit mediums) at the local *motolo* (rain shrine), and performed mostly by men through a ritual known as *ukwebul’ ingxoza* (‘debarking a tree’)... The actual cleansing is focused on specific elements, such as exposed animal bones, cobwebs, nests of certain species of birds, and trees that were struck down by lightning, which are gathered and destroyed by fire... But the environmental cleansing of that winter day was different in many respects from the customary rainmaking: no *iwosana* (spirit medium) was involved, no ritual was performed, and more importantly, it mostly involved women. Furthermore, the focus was on the people – the firewood vendors, mostly men, who harvested firewood from remnants left after the logging companies had extracted commercial timber, and who had operated from the roadside for nearly half a decade without incidents (Thebe, 2017b, p. 1–2).

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, results from studies conducted in former labour reserves societies in north-western parts of Zimbabwe have challenged the ‘doomsday’ narrative on the impact of migration on women, by focusing broadly on the complexity of a worker-peasant society, and the implications for women’s situation at the household and society levels. By focusing on the complex dynamics of migrant labour reserves, the article attempted to present these societies as different kind of rural societies as highlighted by the feminization of everyday forms of decisions and use. It also tried to show how this setting and the institutional framework imposed an extra burden on the women and how they in turned framed their responses to these constraints and realities confronting their everyday lives, and turned them to their own advantage.

In former migrant labour reserves, where certain patriarchal principles have long been weakened by high rates of male migration, it is not so much a question of women assuming responsibilities previously handled by men, but rather, how such responsibilities played out at both the household and society level overtime. These societies are ostensibly female spaces where the absence of men have allowed women autonomy and authority as highlighted through women’s membership of the village assembly and seating female village heads. Lastly, the changed roles and responsibilities of women should be contextualised in terms of their sociological basis by

analysing the social context that gave women legitimacy to decision making and power to mobilize against threats.

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- <sup>1</sup>. The area is named after Chief Menyezwa Gumede who was among the first to settle on the Gwayi River side of the forest before relocating to Dongamuzi (Tongamudzi) in the Zambezi escarpment, and leaving the area under the jurisdiction of Mabhikwa Khumalo.
  - <sup>2</sup>. The Sotane Ranch spread from the southern bank of the Gwayi River into the Tsholotsho District border.
  - <sup>3</sup>. The term ‘*umazakhela*’ is Ndebele for a woman who establishes a home without a husband. However, in its derogatory application, it implies that the woman is immoral, and there is always this fear and belief that she will snatch other women’s husbands.
  - <sup>4</sup>. In order to spread the risk associated with agriculture failure, but also as a way to accommodate a variety of crop species on the same land space, both *de jure* women heads of households and those in the other category practiced intercropping. In reserve area agriculture, intercropping of crop species in different combinations, has been a traditional practices associated with the seed scattering method. It has survived the changes associated with the adoption of maize and the cultivator as a mechanism to ease the labour burden during the weeding season.

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