

## **Changing Landscape and Oral Memory in South-Central Zimbabwe: Towards a Historical Geography of Chishanga, c.1850–1990\***

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### **Abstract**

This paper is about a ‘place’ that effectively no longer exists – in the sense of being a recognisable unit of territory. ‘Chishanga’ has always been a term of contestation, referring more or less tenuously to a stretch of ground across which struggles for authority, power and identity have taken place. In tracking and examining these struggles using oral history techniques, the paper draws attention to the fallacies of a chiefdom-based approach to pre-colonial African history. At the same time, it emphasises the significance of the real and imagined geographies around which identities revolve.